

EXCURSUS 1

Trevor Fishlock on THE "EUROPEAN" ELECTIONS

Those who are committed to a United Europe found the recent European parliament elections a disappointment. There was some hand wringing at the top: The president of the European Commission called the results catastrophic. That was an overreaction. Some British newspapers characterized the elections as a "Eurobore." They were not. Nevertheless, there is a central lesson to be drawn from the elections: that the community's institutions and the members of its infant parliament have to do more to fire the imagination of Europeans. Education—What is the European community for?—is the most pressing task.

The vision of a United Europe emerged from decades of constant warring on the Continent, warring which culminated in the mutual devastation that was World War I and, only twenty years later, World War II. Europeans sought to end what amounted to a continuous civil war by meshing inextricably their economic and political interests. The earliest European assembly following the Second World War was an unofficial "congress of Europe," which met at The Hague in 1948 under the presidency of then leader of the opposition in the British parliament Winston Churchill.

Much of Europe was still in rubble when the first major step toward European unity was taken in 1951. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established under the Treaty of Paris with a membership of six: Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. This organization owed its existence to Robert Schuman, foreign minister of France and one of the founding fathers of the European community.

The Treaties of Rome in 1957 created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). The parliament that originally

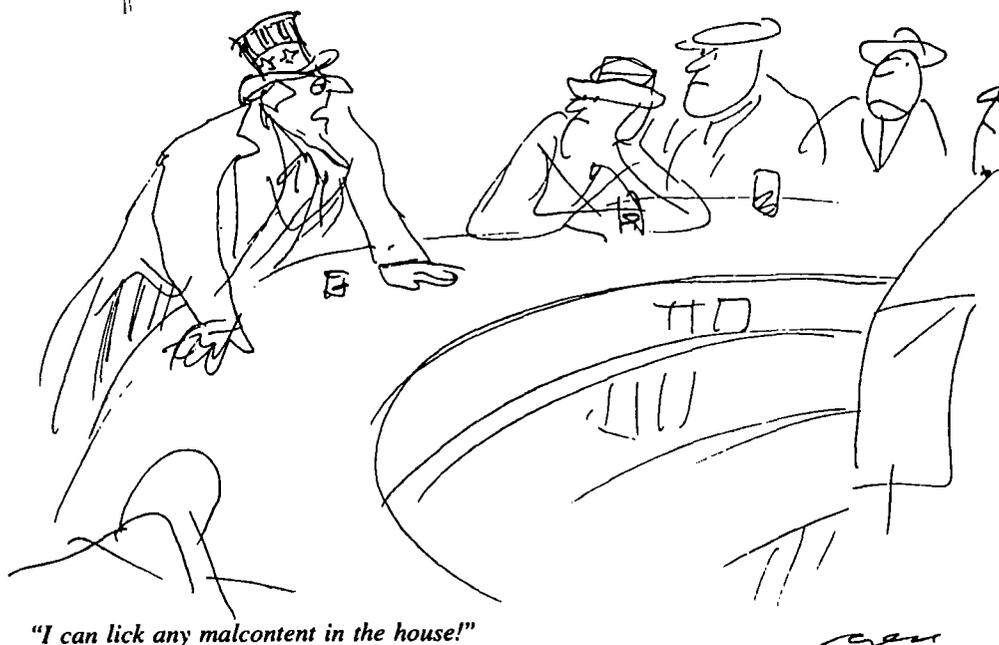
had been set up for the ECSC was now expanded to include these two new organizations; and in this larger form it met for the first time in 1958 in Strasbourg, France, drawing its members from national parliaments.

Britain joined the community, popularly known as the Common Market, in 1973. An earlier attempt had been vetoed by General de Gaulle. The British agonized over the decision, some of them feeling, as they do still, that sovereignty would be compromised or lost and that the financial burden of membership would outweigh the benefits. A referendum finally settled the matter. Denmark and Ireland also joined in 1973, and Greece in 1981. The parliament now stands at 434 members, each of whom represents about half-a-million people.

The first direct elections to the parliament were held in 1979, representing a significant step on the road toward unity. The second, most recent elections demonstrated that despite the pan-European nature of the parliament, people voted on local/national issues rather than on Europe-wide ones. Thus the elections in the ten member-countries tended to be opinion polls about or protests directed at individual governments.

Voter turnout in 1979 was 62.6 per cent; in 1984, 60 per cent. (Belgians and Italians—42 million of the community's 191 million eligible voters—are required by law to vote.) In fact, the turnout was lower in every country but Denmark; and here the increase in voting was attributed to the enlivening of the campaign by anticommunity candidates. The Danish pro-Europeans, however, won the day.

The most apathetic voters were the British. Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister, and Neil Kinnock, leader of the Labour opposition, were photographed casting their votes early (a curious spectacle, as neither is known as a lover of the Common Market), but the British did not follow suit. The British turnout was 32.4 per cent, compared with 32.6 per cent in 1979. Mrs. Thatcher embodies much of Britain's suspicion of Europe. Critics in her own party accuse her of being unduly strident in dealing with the community, particularly in regard to Britain's budget contribution. In her time Britain has appeared the outsider on the European stage;



"I can lick any malcontent in the house!"

and in famous rows over money, milk, and meat, European unity has been very strained. In a recent kerfuffle, French farmers blockaded British meat trucks. An affronted Britannia, in a guise of the *Sun* newspaper, shouted "Hop off you frogs!" on its front page and invited readers to submit anti-French jokes.

The voting in Britain was construed by some as a protest against the Thatcher government. The Conservative party's share of the vote dropped by a fifth, and Labour took fifteen seats from the Tories. Because Britain has no proportional representation as in the rest of Europe, the Liberal/Social Democrat alliance gained no seats although it had nearly a fifth of the vote.

The antigovernment vote was high in France. The slump in the Communist vote and the rise of the far-Right National Front, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, was a sensation. President Mitterrand was obviously encouraged by the Communist decline, as he wants his Socialist party to be the one that speaks for the bulk of the working class. Monsieur Le Pen campaigned on nationalistic, populist themes: law and order, an end to immigration, moral rejuvenation, and the Russian menace. By winning ten seats, his party made a dramatic entrance onto the French and European political stage, an event reminiscent of the Poujadiste breakthrough in France in the 1950s.

In Germany the left-wing ecology party, the Greens, won 8.25 per cent of the vote, their highest score in a national poll. They campaigned against the community in its present form but made it clear they want to change it from inside. They won seven seats. Greens in Belgium won two.

In Italy the Communists overtook the Christian Democrats for the first time, by a margin of 0.3 per cent. It is doubtful that there was a sympathy, or mourning, vote for the Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer, who died during the campaign. In fact, the Christian Democrats were considerably comforted by signs that their long decline has bottomed out.

All in all, the new European parliament looks much like the old, with the same center-right emphasis, but with a larger socialist presence due to British Labour party gains. France's Socialist-Communist alliance was hurt by the center-right opposition; but the ruling Christian Democrats in Germany lost very little ground.

The low turnout in Holland was attributed to a decision by the pragmatic Dutch not to vote for an assembly without power. And here lies the dilemma of the European parliament. Direct elections have given it a new political authority and prestige, but only up to a point. What is still missing is real authority. The parliament can adopt the community budget, deliver opinions on proposals for community legislation, and supervise community institutions. But it can do little else. It is difficult to persuade people to vote for such a body. Unfortunately, the problem has a certain circularity: People will not vote for a parliament without power; the parliament cannot gain more power until people turn out in such great numbers that it can demonstrate it has a mandate to accrue powers. Thus the European parliament has reached a crisis of credibility.

If discouragement is to be controlled, parliamentarians and institutions need to convey to the people the basic ideals of the community. There is much at stake.

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EXCURSUS 2

Anna Baron on HAITI'S REBELLION

In early May, despite signs that yet another round of repression was under way in Haiti, U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz certified to Congress that Haiti was making "significant progress" in human rights and political liberalization. As evidence, he pointed to the return from exile in February of Gregoire Eugène, president of Haiti's Christian Social party and professor of constitutional law at the University of Haiti, noting the resumption of publication of *Fraternité*, the magazine edited by Eugène. In light of such "progress," the Reagan administration was requesting \$54 million in aid for Haiti for the fiscal year beginning October 1.

Within a month there was enough evidence of intensified repression in Haiti to call into question the Reagan administration's contention that the country was taking steps toward democratization. The most recent example was the arrest of three leading Haitian journalists: Eugène himself, Dieudonné Fardin of *Le Petit Samedi Soir*, and Pierre Robert Auguste of *L'Information*. The three, never formally charged, were accused of worsening a bad situation by reporting and commenting on the latest disturbances in Haiti.

Fardin was held for three hours at the Dessalines Barracks adjoining the Haitian "White House" in Port-au-Prince. Upon his release he reported being reprimanded for the tone of the latest articles in his magazine, some of which had suggested the country would see no progress without the establishment of opposition political parties. Early in May the government had banned all political parties, claiming that a new law to regulate their activities would soon be promulgated. Auguste received harsher treatment, undoubtedly because his magazine's previous issue had dealt exclusively with the riots that had taken place in May. The twenty-eight-year-old journalist was kept in jail for three days. He was severely beaten, his right arm broken, and the magazine's press equipment was seized and destroyed.

Eugène, handcuffed during the twenty-seven hours he spent at Dessalines Barracks, reports being "berated" by Minister of Interior and Defense Roger Lafontant for an open letter to President Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier printed in *Fraternité*. Here, Eugène had asserted that the president's self-styled "economic revolution" had foundered and that it was high time the Haitian government took steps to "defuse" an explosive situation. He also challenged the life-presidency of Duvalier, who inherited his power and title from his late father, François ("Papa Doc"), in April, 1971. Eugène's press has been destroyed. Upon his release he was placed under house arrest, which continues. Visitors have been detained, some for more than twenty-four hours. The family's handyman was arrested while shopping for food and medicine for Eugène, his wife, and two young children. On the same afternoon, a courier from the U.S. Embassy was stopped in front of the Eugène house in Port-au-Prince and an envelope containing press releases sent by the USIA to the journalist was seized. Eugène's only link with the outside remains his telephone. (In a phone interview on July 1, Eugène noted that the chief of police had permitted the