CrossMark

An Accidental Special Issue

This was not intended to be a special issue. Instead, my task as editor was simply meant to be that of selecting an interesting selection of pieces from those articles available, or nearly ready, for publication. But upon looking at the list of possible candidates it quickly became clear that a large number dealt squarely with the history of European integration and that two others concentrated on other aspects of Europe's post-war institutional landscape. It therefore seemed to make sense to group them together.

To do so seemed all the more appropriate in this, *Contemporary European History*'s anniversary year. The journal has long been an outlet for important new research on European integration – a facet of *CEH* also highlighted by our virtual special issue on European integration history which will be launched in summer 2016 – and writing about the multiple cooperative structures and institutions that have played so crucial a role in Europe since the Second World War. To underline this strand of the journal's output by putting together a special issue in our twenty-fifth year of production therefore seemed very fitting.

The first piece revisits one of the most important, but least historically studied, alterations in the way that the integration process has been run, namely the creation in the mid-1970s of the European Council. Summits of Europe's leaders have now become so central and so routine a part of the integration process that it is easy enough to forget that they were not a feature of the original institutional design but rather a belated and controversial addition. Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol's article takes us back to the dawn of European summitry, acknowledging the contestation that surrounded this institutional change, but also pinpointing the reasons why it quickly became a central and enduring feature of the European Community (EC)/European Union (EU).

Eirini Karamouzi and Emma De Angelis, meanwhile, explore the emergence of another characteristic of the EC/EU system that is now almost taken for granted but which again postdates the Community's origins, namely the link between enlargement and democratisation. Once more the chronological centre of gravity of this transformation lies in the 1970s – a decade once dismissed as one in which the integration process was 'stagnant', if not moribund, but now increasingly viewed as the starting point of the EC/EU's slow evolution from a narrow entity in both geographical size and policy remit to the much larger and more complex structures that we know today. The birth of this idea, the authors demonstrate, was in part a

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reflection of those states applying for Community membership during the 1970s, but also the result of the Community's own search for a big new idea with which to justify integration at a time when ceaseless economic growth appeared much harder to achieve than had been the case in the 1950s and 1960s.

Britain's own discomforts during the decade and a half that it spent on the sidelines of the integration process are the focus of Matthew Broad's article. The United Kingdom's closest allies and companions during much of the time that it spent on the outside of the Community looking in were the Nordic countries, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. There was hence some discomfort in London when these four countries began to explore the idea of establishing Nordek, a grouping which would promote economic and political links between them but to which the British were not invited. The United Kingdom's reaction, Broad shows, veered from containing this development, to seeking actively to prevent it and then finally to guarding against its re-emergence.

Veera Mitzner continues both the Nordic theme and that centring on the anxieties that can be generated by non-participation in a cooperative project. Her article highlights the way in which the Finnish government reacted with alarm and consternation when it was not included in the original list of invitees to the launch of François Mitterrand's European high technology initiative, Eureka. The determination shown by the Helsinki government to redress this omission, she suggests, indicates that the start of Finland's turn towards multilateral cooperation in Europe should be traced to the early to mid-1980s, rather than the immediate post-Cold War period as has tended to be argued by earlier analysts.

Finally Linda Risso's contribution widens the focus to encompass NATO. But the Atlantic Alliance towards which she directs our attention is not the military entity with which most readers will be familiar. Instead, she places the spotlight on the Nixon administration's determined attempt to use NATO as a vehicle for promoting environmentalism. The story of how the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society came into being, the motivations of its American originators and the hesitations of the British and many of the other European governments at this US initiative, offers a strange but illuminating insight into the dynamics of another organisation's internal evolution. NATO would not ultimately become the key international forum for discussions of how to protect the environment, but it went much further in this direction than most historians have realised.

Two review articles round out the collection. Umberto Tulli analyses recent literature on the search for a European identity in the 1970s, using these works to explore external relations and institutional evolution within the European Community. Eric Pullin takes a slightly different tack, reviewing a collection of new books which investigate the success of Europe's forays into secrecy and intelligence networks during the Cold War.

Overall the editors hope that this accidental special issue helps to underline how much vibrant new research continues to be done on Europe's post-1945 institutional development. At a moment when such institutional ties and patterns of behaviour are being contested and challenged as never before, it is also timely to remember

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how central such structures have been to the continent's recent past. Multilateral cooperation has never been easy nor free from controversy, but it has been a highly distinctive feature of Europe's development since the Second World War. There is hence much scope for historians to contribute to the current debate about its future.

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