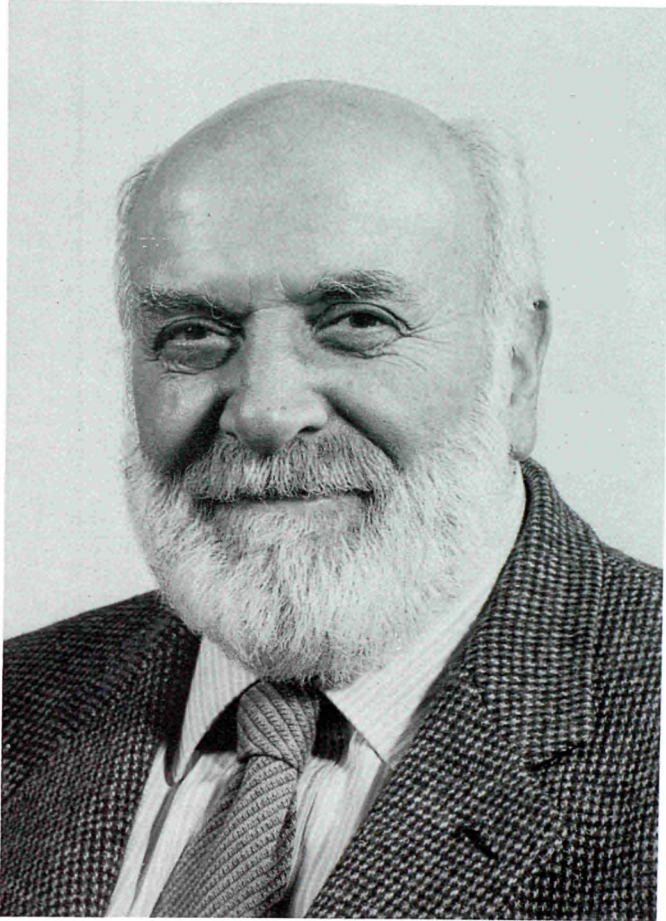




EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Battling for the Union
Altiero Spinelli



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Preface

by Lord Plumb, President of the European Parliament

A year has passed since the death of Altiero Spinelli. The European Parliament, on the initiative of its Committee on Institutional Affairs, has decided to remind the public of the battle that he had waged from within the Parliament for the creation of European Union. Through the efforts of Altiero Spinelli and a group of MEPs Parliament undertook an unprecedented action which lasted from 1981 to 1984. And the European Parliament succeeded where others had failed: it demonstrated that a consensus can be achieved among the European political forces in favour of effecting European Union.

It was a great success for the European Parliament, although after the draft Treaty was adopted the Member States only put into effect a part of the Assembly's proposals.

But the great merit of Parliament's endeavour had been above all to trace out clearly the road towards European Union which is now to a large extent dependent on the initiative of the Parliament elected by the peoples of Europe.

The resolution tabled by Mr Herman and adopted by the Assembly on 17 June 1987 definitely endorses the strategy mapped out in the Draft Treaty voted in 1984.

It is in the spirit of carrying on Altiero Spinelli's combat for European Union that I want to pay tribute to his memory.

Contents

Preface by Lord Plumb, President of the European Parliament

Introduction 7

PART ONE

Chapter 1: The origins of the Committee on Institutional Affairs 9

Chapter 2: Initial guidelines of the Committee on Institutional Affairs concerning the reform of the Treaties and the achievement of European Union 12

Chapter 3: The substance of the preliminary draft Treaty establishing the European Union 18

Chapter 4: The draft Treaty establishing the European Union 23

Chapter 5: The Dooge Committee and the Milan European Council 30

Chapter 6: The proceedings of the Intergovernmental Conference 36

PART TWO

Chapter 1: Tribute by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Pierre Pflimlin 45

Chapter 2: Altiero Spinelli's life recounted at commemoration ceremonies in Rome and Strasbourg 47

Introduction

This brochure retraces, in words pronounced by Altiero Spinelli himself, the extraordinary venture of the European Parliament which began with its institutional initiative of 1981 and led to the drawing-up and adoption of the draft Treaty establishing the European Union on 14 February 1984 and the adoption by the Intergovernmental Conference in December 1985 of the Single European Act.

‘You must all know the short story by Hemingway, about an old fisherman who, after catching the biggest fish of his life, tries to get it back to shore. But bit by bit the sharks eat it, so that when the old man returns to shore, all that remains is a skeleton.

Mr President, with the vote it will take in a few minutes, Parliament will have caught the biggest fish of its life. But it must bring it back into port. So let us be careful, because the sharks will always be there waiting to devour it. Let us try not to return into port with a skeleton.’

Thus, on 14 September 1983, Altiero Spinelli spoke of the outcome of the initiative when the resolution on the substance of the preliminary draft Treaty was tabled.

Part One

Chapter 1: The origins of the Committee on Institutional Affairs

But how did the European Parliament come to catch the big fish?

The story begins in 1980 with the setting-up of the Crocodile Club: on the initiative, notably, of Altiero Spinelli, 180 Members of the European Parliament worked for a year to prepare this exploit. On 9 July 1981 they introduced a motion — which was to be adopted by a very large majority — in which the European Parliament resolved:

- (a) to take full initiative in giving fresh impetus to the establishment of European Union;
- (b) to create a permanent committee on institutional problems as from the second half of the term of office of the European Parliament whose task it would be to draw up amendments to the existing Treaties;
- (c) to instruct the Subcommittee on Institutional Problems of the Political Affairs Committee to submit to it proposals for a clear division of powers.

In a speech on 7 July, introducing an initiative signed by a large number of Members, Altiero Spinelli said in Parliament:

‘Madam President, on behalf of 180 Members of differing political attitudes and national origins, I request this Assembly to approve the resolution entitled “The creation of an *ad hoc* committee to present proposals on the state and the evolution of the Community”.

This request does not stem from an impulsive irritation occasioned by the difficulties now assailing the Community. It is no mere improvisation; the parliamentarians of the “Crocodile Club” began to study its terms a full year ago, and during that year the discussion has extended far beyond the confines of the Club, provoking support, uncertainty, meditation, and investigation. Nor is our request premature, for exactly two years have now passed since the elected Parlia-

ment began its work, and each of us has had an opportunity to explore the possibilities offered by the European structures as they are today: their limits, the profound and growing contradiction between what the Community should be and what it is.

...

It is not an awareness of the Community's new tasks that is lacking. What is lacking is the ability to deal with them effectively at the proper time; often it is impossible to deal with them at all using the Community institutions as they exist today.

At this moment, a crucial one for Europe and for our Assembly, this resolution calls upon us to decide whether we of the European Parliament, in the name of the peoples of the Community who elected us, are able to assume the responsibility of discussing, drawing up, voting upon, and presenting for ratification by the constitutional bodies of each Member State a draft treaty containing the outline of the Community's new tasks and the institutional reforms they imply.

...

In approving this resolution, we must be aware that we are starting a fresh chapter in the life of our Assembly, that we are initiating an audacious political action which will be long, complex, and difficult, and which will not exempt us from pursuing our current activities, although it reaches far beyond them.

In order that this new chapter may bring success, we should first of all seek increasingly to involve the efforts of the entire Parliament. For this reason we request that a new parliamentary committee be created, a committee which, irrespective of its final appellation, will deal only with this issue. The committee will eventually present interim reports calling upon Parliament to decide among the existing options and to seek, through broad debates, the widest possible consensus, so that each of us may be fully aware of everything contained or implied in the project of reform when the final vote is taken.

In the second place, in order for this initiative to succeed it must be extended beyond the confines of this Chamber.

For the first time the debate on Europe will no longer be restricted to a small minority; it will become instead a central theme of European political life. Our peoples will finally be able to decide, through methods of democratic participation and not through the initiative or

obstructionism of one government or another, whether or not they will proceed with European unification.

I ask you to give the calendar of our initiative your careful consideration. If we begin work in the next few months with the least possible delay, the final draft of the reform programme will be ready in a year and a half or two years. In the course of the last year of our parliamentary mandate we will present the project to the Member States for ratification; it is inconceivable, however, that it will be ratified within the same year. The second European elections will therefore be above all an appeal to the voters not only to elect the Members of the European Parliament but also to make known to the national parliaments whether the popular will is favourable or unfavourable to the ratification of the treaty submitted to them by our Assembly. This, ladies and gentlemen, in its true dimension, is the democratic battle for the construction of Europe in which our resolution invites your participation.'

Chapter 2: Initial guidelines of the Committee on Institutional Affairs concerning the reform of the Treaties and the achievement of European Union

Following Parliament's vote, the Committee on Institutional Affairs was set up in January 1982. Mr Mauro Ferri was appointed chairman and Mr Jonker, Mr Pannella and Mr Nord, vice-chairmen. The preceding two years' debate in the Crocodile Club had not been in vain. Within five months the committee, spurred on by Altiero Spinelli who was appointed rapporteur, was able to submit its report.¹ On 6 July 1982 Parliament adopted the corresponding resolution. Its preamble and the first two paragraphs clearly state the motives inspiring this initiative.

The European Parliament,

- A. whereas participation in the European Communities — and in the forms of cooperation based on them — has been beneficial both to the Member States and to the international community, but the passage of time, the experience acquired and the emergence of new political and economic challenges make reforms necessary,
- B. aware that the political, social and institutional development of the European Community falls far short of meeting the needs and the aspirations of European citizens,
- C. convinced that, in the face of exacerbating international conflicts,

¹ Altiero Spinelli was the coordinating rapporteur and Mr Karel De Gucht, Mr Jacques Moreau, Mr Gero Pfennig, Mr Derek Prag, Mr Michel Junot, subsequently replaced by Mr Hans-Joachim Seeler, and Mr Ortensio Zecchino were the rapporteurs on the individual topics. Other members of the Committee on Institutional Affairs at its constitution were: Mr Van Aerssen, Mr Antoniozzi, Mr Blumenfeld, Mr Ephremidis, Mr Fanti, Mr Forth, Mr Hänch, Mrs van den Heuvel, Mr Jackson, Mr Johnson, Mr Kallias, Mr Lücker, Mr Macario, Mr de la Malène, Mr Piquet, Mr Plaskovitis, Mr Radoux, Mr Rogers, Mr Ruffolo, Mr Saby, Mr Schieler, Mr Seidlinger, Mr Spencer, Mr Van Miert, Mr Verroken and Mr Visenti, with the following substitutes: Mr Adonnino, Mrs Boot, Mr Cariglia, Mr Ceravolo, Mr Clément, Mr Cohen, Mr De Pasquale, Mr Deschamps, Mrs Dupont, Mr Fischbach, Mrs Focke, Mr Friedrich (Ingo), Mrs Gaiotti de Biase, Mr Giavazzi, Mr Goppel, Mr Gremetz, Mr Haagerup, Mrs Hammerich, Mr Ippolito, Mr Irmer, Mr Israel, Mr Jackson (Robert), Mr Luster, Mr Megahy, Lord O'Hagan, Mr Petersen, Mr Pflimlin, Mr Prout, Mr Puletti, Ms Quin, Mr Sälzer, Mrs Scrivener, Mr Seeler and Mr Zagari.

the Community must finally fully assume the role due to it in the world — that of catalyst of peace and development,

- D. convinced that reform of the institutions, indispensable though it is for improving the functioning of the Community, cannot replace joint action to meet the political, social, economic and technological challenges of today and tomorrow,
- E. convinced that reform of the institutions must be adapted to the new responsibilities of the Community arising from the slowing down in quantitative growth, increasing unemployment, the shortage of energy and raw materials, the threat to the natural foundation of life, the introduction of new technologies, etc.,
- F. whereas current efforts to achieve a better functioning of the institutions under the existing Treaties should be tenaciously pursued pending the necessary reforms which Parliament has undertaken to prepare,
- G. having regard to its Decision of 9 July 1981 whereby it decided to set in motion itself a new political and legal process aimed at establishing European Union,
- H. convinced more than ever that the texts introducing institutional changes should be drawn up by Parliament itself, if necessary in successive stages,
- I. convinced that public opinion, provided it is well informed, will vigorously support moves towards European Union,
- J. having regard to the first report from the Committee on Institutional Affairs (Doc. 1-305/82),
 - 1. Recalls that:
 - (i) the objective of European Union was fixed as early as 1952 by the Treaty establishing the first Community and has been reaffirmed since then on numerous occasions in the Treaties and various agreements, declarations and initiatives, as described in the Committee on Institutional Affairs' selection of texts;
 - (ii) advances made towards the objective of the Union, although considerable, have been spasmodic and inadequate to meet the economic and political challenges which the Community encoun-

tered, and these achievements are increasingly threatened by nationalistic practices and a return to traditional diplomatic procedures;

and declares that:

- (iii) achievement of the Union remains indispensable if joint actions more forceful, bolder and enjoying greater popular support than heretofore, are to be undertaken to counter the Community's growing dependence and vulnerability;
- (iv) the need for reforms is made all the more urgent by the forthcoming enlargement of the Community to include new Member States.

2. Considers, therefore, that, on the basis of the Treaties and Community agreements, declarations and acts currently in force, a draft of modifications of the Treaties should be prepared, defining the tasks, competences and institutions of the Union in accordance with the Community's fundamental values.

Introducing the resolution in his capacity of rapporteur, Altiero Spinelli, at the plenary sitting of 5 July 1982, traced the progress of European construction in order to explain the aim of the initiative. He laid particular stress on the need for a common political will.

'Mr President, it would have been difficult to imagine a more suitable time to hold a parliamentary debate on the guidelines to be given to the Committee on Institutional Affairs for its further work.

...

First, let us dwell briefly on the role of the Community in world politics. For decades we allowed the principal responsibility for our destiny in this regard to remain in the hands of our American ally, adopting an auxiliary role ourselves.

...

The course of events, which I will not describe here since it is well known to everyone, has brought us to a point where not one or other of the Community countries but all of them together urgently need to assume new, great and serious responsibilities. These responsibilities concern our contribution to peace, to security, to the proper and productive management of alliances, to the freedom of international

trade, to monetary stability, to a new world economic order which firmly binds the recovery of our more advanced economies to growth in the less advanced countries.

In our countries there is a broad and fundamental agreement on the need to assume these new responsibilities.

...

What we lack is an adequate European institutional system able to mould the common feeling into a common political will through a joint effort to find the necessary compromises; a system able to create a broad and reliable consensus around the common will and ensure the necessary continuity in international action.

The methods so far employed by the countries of the Community have included initiatives by one or other of the Member States, taken in the belief — and sometimes the legitimate belief — that the country in question was giving practical effect to a frame of mind shared by all. They have included intergovernmental agreements laboriously reached through so-called political cooperation or intergovernmental monetary cooperation. On issues concerning commercial policy there has been recourse to the complicated procedure laid down in Article 113 of the Treaty of Rome, but it is a noteworthy fact that recently, on the first occasion when the application of this article had strong political implications, the failure of two Member States to comply with the Community decision was tolerated.

One has only to consider these chaotic methods employed to deal with the serious problems of the European presence on the world scene to understand that it is impossible for us to be satisfied with them much longer. Indeed, there is a great danger that the very meaning of our Community in the context of world politics will dissolve in the face of these inconsistencies, and that each of our countries will return to the pursuit of the delusion of anachronistic national sovereignty.

The picture is no different if we shift our gaze from the world scene to the Community one. During the great development of the 1950s and 1960s the Treaties establishing the Community, together with their commitments, their supporting institutions and the laws and policies derived from them, did fail in some areas and were affected by certain institutional distortions, but they were on the whole adequate to perform the central task of the Community and made a considerable

contribution to its development. Thanks to the rules of the Common Market, an unprecedented degree of interdependence and integration among the countries of the Community was attained.

In the 1970s, however, and even more so in the early 1980s, the picture changed completely. Unemployment, inflation, high energy costs, structural inflexibility, decreasing competitiveness on the world market and acute regional imbalances began to take their toll. The ecological crisis, which threatens the proper relationship of man with nature, became more acute, as did the crisis of the quality of life, which threatens the proper relationship of man with his fellows and flaws the democratic consensus of which we were so proud. All of these are the new ills now shared by all the countries which make up the European Community. But these ills strike to a different degree and in different ways in each of them. In each country our governments, and with them the political forces — the governmental ones no less than those of the opposition — are desperately struggling against all these ills. I say “desperately” because in nearly every case coherent action at the national level alone is either impossible — because it needs to be completed by converging and compatible action by the other countries to which we are most closely bound, that is, the other countries of the Community — or possible only at the cost of destroying a greater or lesser degree of interdependence with these other countries. The Community, which should guarantee this convergence and compatibility and, when necessary, assume direct responsibility for action on the European level, has neither the necessary authority nor the institutions suitable for dealing with these problems.

For this reason we have a Commission which promises great programmes and then does not even dare to elaborate them because it fears they will not be approved; we have a European Council which outlines great objectives and then allows the Councils of Ministers, prisoners all of 10 different national ways of thinking, to obscure these objectives and let them melt away; we have a Parliament which solemnly approves great resolutions on hunger, on own resources, on the better functioning of the present institutions and so on, but must then resign itself to having its resolutions ignored and never put into effect.

These are the reasons which necessitate a reform of the Community and of the para-Community institutions of political cooperation and the EMS.

The brief summary just made of the great internal and external tasks facing the Community should be more than sufficient to answer once and for all the criticism that the development of the Community in the direction of an ever more meaningful European Union demands not so much institutional reforms as a common political will.

It is obvious that at the beginning of every development of a stronger union there must be a sense of a shared destiny, a *destin partagé*, a feeling of “togetherness”. The very fact that we in this Assembly, elected by our fellow citizens in each of our countries, have for years been able to hold discussions, to join together in defining aspirations, plans, demands, to understand one another even when we see things differently, proves that this common political ground exists.

So that this feeling may be translated into a common political will, however — and by these words I mean a decision to carry out joint action — it is essential that there should be democratic institutions with a European background representing a consensus on the part of both the citizens and the Member States, that there should be parliamentary institutions for European legislation, that there should be an executive institution to oversee the implementation of common policies and that there should be a judicial institution to guarantee that European law is respected.

The task given to our committee on 9 July of last year by this Parliament was to formulate the major objectives of European Union — of which the Community, political cooperation and the EMS are only partial forms — and redefine institutional competences and the necessary institutional reforms.

...

At a time when the Community and the Member States are wondering about their own and the Community's future, at a time when the feeling of bewilderment is widespread, when there is a strong temptation to seek inspiration in outdated forms only because there is no courage to speak of new ones, at such a time the present debate and the vote which will conclude it cannot fail to have great political significance. If, as we hope, the outcome is positive, this will mean not only that the European Parliament will have had the courage to lead the way, but also that all those who vote for the guidelines will have committed themselves to explaining these guidelines to their parties, to their electors, to their national parliaments and governments. It will

mean more than the adoption of just one more parliamentary resolution to join the innumerable others; it will signal the beginning of a democratic political battle for the Europe of the 1980s, for a Europe made *by Europeans for Europeans*.’

Chapter 3: The substance of the preliminary draft Treaty establishing the European Union

Once the guidelines were adopted, the Committee on Institutional Affairs spent a year putting together the draft Treaty. At Altiero Spinelli’s side, six rapporteurs worked on different aspects of the draft: the institutions, law, the economy, social policy, finance, international policy.

Altiero Spinelli, as coordinating rapporteur, introduced the motion for a resolution in these words:

‘Mr President, in order to carry out the task assigned to it by Parliament in July last year, the Committee on Institutional Affairs appointed six rapporteurs to draw up the six sections making up this motion for a resolution, and me to coordinate their contributions and bring them together in a single text. I shall accordingly be confining myself to a presentation of the motion for a resolution in broad outline and an exposition of its political implications, while my fellow rapporteurs will be speaking to their respective sections.

The essential features of this motion for a resolution can be summarized as follows. First, it is not a work of improvisation. It is not so much to my six colleagues and myself as to the committee as a whole that the draftsmanship and coordination should properly be attributed. Under the intelligent, determined chairmanship of Mr Mauro Ferri, it has spent an entire year reading and rereading every paragraph of every section, quite often reworking them completely, so as to reflect the broadest possible consensus in each case.

Before proceeding to the final vote, it invited proposals for amendments from the political groups and, finding that these were largely compatible with the existing text, it incorporated them more or less in

their entirety into the final text that it eventually adopted, by a majority of 29 votes to 4, with 2 abstentions.

Secondly, this motion for a resolution is on a theme which is not new to Parliament. In drafting it, the Committee on Institutional Affairs has adhered faithfully to the guidelines which Parliament voted by a very large majority to approve in July 1982. The text therefore merely gives concrete form to a political/institutional vision already embraced by this House.

Thirdly, contrary to what has been rashly suggested, this motion for a resolution is not a leap in the dark. On the contrary, the intention has been to base it on what has been achieved to date in the institutional and political aspects of the construction of Europe, in other words on the *acquis communautaire* proper and the commitments entered into in respect of political cooperation and the European Monetary System. We are confronted by serious new political and economic problems calling for common action or cooperation among European nations, but neither the competence nor the powers vested in the existing European institutions are adequate for the purpose of dealing with them effectively.

The motion for a resolution proposes a redefinition of the institutions' respective areas of competence and powers with the aim of rekindling confidence in the construction of Europe among the peoples of the Community, confidence which is being eroded by the current state of institutional and political disarray in the Community. Ladies and gentlemen, I shall not insult you by enumerating these problems or the shortcomings of our institutions, with which you are all too familiar.

They are a perennial topic within this Chamber and beyond. Without trespassing on the ground to be covered in my colleagues' report, I draw your attention to the fact that the competence vested in the Union has been geared to the problems with which it will have to cope, but the motion for a resolution proposes that its competence be exercised in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity and insists that there must be a high degree of agreement whenever a transfer of competence to the Union is envisaged for the purposes of intergovernmental cooperative action and whenever common action by the Union is conducted for the first time in one of the fields specified in the Treaty.

Having thus affirmed that unification of our peoples around common policies cannot be achieved other than gradually and with their

democratic consent, the motion for a resolution nevertheless then addresses the problem of reform of the existing institutions so that each is able to function effectively in the framework provided by the Union and none is able to steal a march on the others and obstruct all action, which has been the situation in the past and remains so today.

The institution in which the citizen is represented, namely the Parliament, the institutions in which Member States' governments are represented, namely the Council of the Union and the European Council, and the institution responsible for applying the laws and enforcing the Treaty, namely the Commission, have been redefined in the light of the positive and negative lessons of the past 30 years.

I conclude by repeating that this motion for a resolution is neither a leap in the dark nor an abstract construct. It is the reasonable, measured response to the real problems that arise in connection with the competence and powers of the European institutions. Any suggestion of reducing the scope of this competence and these powers would be comprehensible only to those who are against the European Union, but not to those who are committed to it.

I come now to a fourth feature of the motion for a resolution: it is not an expression of the thinking and ideology of a particular group. The drafting process has been a collective effort, with conservatives and communists, liberals and socialists, christian democrats and anti-clerics, people from the left and the right, federalists and moderate Europeans taking a hand. That it has been possible to work together to produce a coherent, constructive text demonstrates the marked degree to which the European idea now transcends the traditional ideologies of our parties. The other side of the coin, admittedly, is that no one finds the text exactly as he would have written it. Nevertheless, what each of us should be looking for is not the ideal wording according to our own lights, but that which is likely to meet with the widest approval, since European unity cannot be partisan in its inspiration. It has to be the expression of a very broadly-based consensus cutting national frontiers and political alignments.

...

I now come to the fifth feature of this motion for a resolution. We are forever reading in the newspapers or in statements by ministers and other politicians that the best solution to our economic, external policy and security problems would be the European solution, that to fail to

go through with the effort of European unification would amount to exposing our peoples to disastrous effects on their economies and their independence, but that the necessary European political will is unfortunately lacking. Proof of this is found in the pitiable meetings of the Council, not least the most recent, which was supposed to have been a first step towards implementation of the solemn commitments entered into at Stuttgart, while the Genscher/Colombo report could be described as a great deal of effort for precious little return. Further evidence is found in the temptations to succumb to protectionist introversion which are seen on all sides.

It would admittedly be very ingenuous to expect a European political will to spring from the action of national ministers with an interest in making their national political will prevail, to expect these ministers to entrust their civil servants, whose function is to give concrete expression to the national will, with the task of drawing up plans for European initiatives, or to expect these procedures to provide the springboard for the development of a European political will.

National governments and ministers are put in office by free national elections, and their displays of misgivings in regard to the idea of Europe are accounted for in terms of the misgivings that their electors themselves feel. Once again, how ingenuous and, in many cases, how insincere.

National elections, and indeed the whole of national political life, conditions the electorate's reaction by concentrating exclusively on national problems and offering exclusively national solutions.

Even if the distrust shown towards the idea of European development was not a consequence of the conditioning of national political life and even if it really did reflect the opinion of our countries' citizens, these citizens have nevertheless freely elected this Parliament and it should therefore adopt the same attitudes and express the same misgivings as their ministers. Consequently, any attempt made by the Parliament to progress beyond the Communities in their present state would suffer the same fate as the Genscher/Colombo initiative. In that case, it would have to be acknowledged that the will for unification of Europe does not exist.

The facts of the situation are otherwise, however: the progress of the debates and voting in Parliament, between July 1981 and July 1982, and more recently the discussions and voting in the Committee on

Institutional Affairs have demonstrated beyond doubt — and there will be further confirmation if, as I confidently expect, tomorrow's vote is strongly in favour of this motion for a resolution — that the European political will exists and that it is in this Chamber that it finds expression.

Admittedly, it still remains for us to show consistency and determination in our actions, but we shall have an opportunity to discuss this in a few months.

For the time being, though, let us concentrate on the demonstration that we have given — and are going to give today and tomorrow — of the existence of a political will to build a united Europe which is more effectual, more democratic, and more confident in itself.

Of course, you will be told, and will have been told time and again over the years, that you really count for very little, but I say to you that if you acquiesce in this scornful denigration of the European elections and your own status, if you settle for seeking only those things which tally with your governments' current wishes, then in that case, ladies and gentlemen, you really will be politically weak and insignificant and you will be dominated by those who make national policy, since those who show themselves to be weak are always imposed upon. But if you are conscious of the dignity vested in you as Members of the European Parliament and aware of the political responsibility that you carry as the representatives of Europe's citizens, you will find the courage for the effort needed to make your parties, your national parliaments, your governments heed this shared European will as expressed by you.

Tell yourselves that, however much they may conceal the fact, they all have uneasy consciences and are therefore very unsettled in their attitudes to Europe, since on the one hand they know what will happen to our peoples if the European venture fails and yet, on the other hand, they are stifling efforts to promote it.

The sixth feature of this motion for a resolution is its timeliness. Scepticism about the future of Europe is spreading dangerously and the Council, which has hitherto been the sole repository of real power in Europe, is doing nothing to allay it, in fact it is doing quite the opposite. The political and economic outlook for our countries looks bleak and will become even bleaker if the prospect of the gradual unification of Europe recedes. In the prevailing confusion of the situation, our action is the one beacon discernible on the European

horizon, the only source of hope. The importance of this debate and the vote to follow cannot be overstated, because, once this motion for a resolution has been carried, the next stage will be the preparation of a preliminary draft treaty to be drawn up in proper form by the Committee on Institutional Affairs with the assistance of eminent jurists, which will then be submitted for your approval in January or, at the latest, February 1984. That will be the signal for commencement of the political battle to secure approval by our national governments and parliaments. We can worry about that during the intervening months. At this stage, let us begin by lighting the beacon.

...

Let Pascal's wager be an example to you, since if this venture — the most important of the first elected Parliament — should founder, you will have lost nothing for having supported it, but if battle is joined, it would be very sad if one day you had to say: "We were there when it started, and we were expected. There was an important part for us to play, but we stayed away for no very good reason."

I would invite those of you who have not yet made up your minds to reflect, before making your decision, that this message comes to you not only from the rapporteur of the Committee on Institutional Affairs but from every supporter of European unity in this House and throughout the Community.'

Chapter 4: The draft Treaty establishing the European Union

The big fish was caught. The European Parliament was about to adopt the draft Treaty by an enormous majority¹ on 14 February 1984. Introducing the text, which had been drawn up with the aid of four eminent lawyers, Altiero Spinelli, visibly moved, stressed particularly that the ideas contained in the draft were not merely his. On the contrary, they represented the common position of Parliament:

¹ 237 votes to 31 with 43 abstentions.

‘Mr President, during the election campaign five years ago, I promised my constituents who were not on the centre-right but on the left that I would pursue this matter. I have kept that promise. Today, having reached this point, the end of one chapter and the beginning of another which others, perhaps, will complete, and as I look back on the task that I have tried to accomplish here, I have to tell you that it is my view that if the ideas contained in this draft and the resolution had not been in the minds of the great majority of this Parliament, it would have been quite impossible for me to put them there. I have merely practised the art of maieutics, after the manner of Socrates. I am the midwife who has delivered Parliament of this infant. Now we must nurture it. Thank you.’

But the battle was only beginning: Spinelli reminded the Assembly that clarity and firmness would be needed if that battle was to be won:

‘Today in this House, the European Parliament must explain firmly and clearly the political reasons for our proposal. It must explain them to itself, to the governments and parliaments of the Member States, to the parties, to the social groupings and, above all, to our citizens in whose hands in four months’ time we shall be placing the mandate for which we canvassed five years ago. It is to the clarity and firmness of that explanation that I want to contribute with this introduction to the debate.’

Our proposal for institutional reform and the Genscher-Colombo Plan came into being at almost the same time a little over two years ago and have a great deal in common. Both stem from recognition of the contradiction between the growing need for European unity and the obvious danger that it might not merely fail to develop, but actually regress. Both projects express the view that the fundamental reason for this crisis is that the objectives to be achieved are too narrowly defined and the way in which the Community operates is inefficient. Both projects, therefore, focus on institutional reform. They are alike, too, in reflecting their authors’ acute awareness that results can be achieved only by a compromise between those engaged in the search for a solution.

However, the methods used in the two approaches to the problem have been very different. The negotiators of the Genscher-Colombo Plan, ministers and diplomats, derived their legitimacy from their capacity as State representatives as such. Although they were aware that they were

dealing with problems of Community significance and dimension, they were all bound by the nature of their institutional position to see things primarily from the national point of view. In the case of our project we derived our legitimacy from our role as the elected representatives of the Community's citizens, as the most authentic trustees of nascent European democracy. Coming as we do from the political and social life of our countries, we are all conscious of the need to take the problems of our respective countries into account. But our institutional task is to see things first and foremost from the European standpoint. We now know the results of these two different approaches. During the Genscher-Colombo Plan negotiations the national perspective inevitably prevailed. European considerations gradually faded and the final declaration proposes in effect that intergovernmental action should be strengthened to the detriment of supranational action. In the course of the work on the draft on which we shall be voting this evening, far from becoming weaker the European aspect actually became clearer, surer, as the work progressed.

Our text makes the Commission into a genuine political executive and preserves a legislative and budgetary role for the Council of the Union. It recognizes that there are fields in which problems should be dealt with by the European Council by the method of cooperation. But it prohibits the intergovernmental method from encroaching on the sphere of common action and, at the same time, leaves a way open for certain matters to be transferred from the sphere of cooperation to that of common action. In one sense it has been providential that the Athens Council came between Stuttgart, where the Genscher-Colombo Plan was voted on, and Strasbourg, where we are voting today on the draft Treaty. For the Genscher-Colombo Plan Athens was a real *hic Rhodus, hic salta* and it failed to make the crucial leap. It had proposed strengthening the intergovernmental method and Athens demonstrated the logical, never mind political, impossibility of conceiving and carrying through by that method large-scale policies which need to be pursued over a long period, to be based on broad consensus and to overcome certain rigid national attitudes. But the disaster in Athens also showed unexpectedly what the previous Councils, despite their creeping paralysis, had managed to shield from public gaze.

For the first time, the Athens Council revealed that there was a real possibility that the union achieved in the Community could collapse and sacrosanct national egotism could return. Everyone feared the

effects of such a collapse and began to look for a means of refloating the ship of Europe.

Our draft Treaty could not have appeared on the political scene at a more opportune moment, for it is the only politically and intellectually valid reply to the failure in Athens. Our reply, like all true and genuine things, is both easy and hard to digest. It can be summed up in very few words: matters of common interest can be administered only by a genuinely common authority. Anyone who seriously desires to escape from the Athens impasse must support our project, but what a mass of taboos to overcome before people will see the truths staring them in the face!

Once approved, our draft Treaty will not go to the Council, which would hand it over to the diplomatic representatives, who would dissect it and bury it. We shall deliver it to the national governments and parliaments, asking them to set in motion the ratification procedures.

The Committee on Institutional Affairs is recommending that Parliament follow this path principally for two complementary reasons. In the first place, this elected Parliament must be clearly and specifically conscious — and proud — of being the only European body in which the citizens of Europe as such are represented, in political groupings which are the same as those that exist in the national contexts. It follows that it is the only European body capable of drawing up a constitutional proposal without losing sight of the European perspective and with the participation of the political forces of all the Member States. In the second place, the national governments and parliaments are clearly aware of the need to push ahead with European integration and therefore to say yes or no to a scheme for Europe. But, if they sit down round a table in the persons of national ministers, of parliamentary delegations to draft a text, the national reflexes of the individual minister or parliamentary delegation are inevitably triggered so that they automatically begin again to discuss things from the point of view of necessarily divergent national demands. Diplomatic negotiation would quickly predominate once more for reasons of national interest and the European Parliament's text would soon be reduced to a working document and eventually laid aside.

Of course we cannot rule out the possibility that our draft Treaty will encounter such obstacles, that Parliament will have to take it back, put

it on the last again, so to speak, and reshape it. But let us wait and see before deciding to do that. Let us be careful not to demote our proposal now from the level of an official project from the only political assembly qualified to propose a text on European institutional reform to the level of a working document humbly submitted by a Parliament unsure of its right to draft it.

...

That is when the real battle for the Union will begin and the European Parliament's role will continue to be vital, for it will have to direct and inspire a difficult and exacting operation which cannot succeed unless we learn to be single-minded.

Our political groups will be asked to exert all the influence they can on their parties and thereby on their related political groups in the national parliaments. We shall explain and publicize our draft Treaty during the next election campaign. We ask here and now that the next Parliament take all the necessary measures to overcome the obstacles and secure ratification.

I should like to draw your attention, too, to Article 82 and to the compromise amendment which refers to it and which the committee asks you to approve. The article says that unanimous ratification by the present Member States is not required for the Treaty to enter into force between those that do ratify it. It will then be for the latter to decide on the date and procedure for the entry into force of the Treaty and to negotiate new relations with the States which have not acceded. I draw your attention to the fact that such a quorum means that at least six States must have ratified the Treaty and seven in a Europe of Twelve; so the smaller States will have a decisive say in the matter.

If we left any doubt as to whether a start could be made without the full number ratifying the Treaty, we should be putting the success of the enterprise into the hands not of those who are most decided, but of those States which are most hesitant, even potential opponents, condemning the entire undertaking to virtually certain failure.

Among the hesitant countries I am thinking — and I am not the only one to do so — of France, watching her with particular attention, anguish and apprehension because of the probably decisive impact which her response will have on all the other countries of the

Community. The hesitation of many of our French colleagues in this House is a clear indication of serious hesitation among the leaders of their country.'

And it was to France that he turned in the closing part of his speech, thus opening a dialogue that France was to take up:

'Once again, it is almost providential that France holds the Presidency of the Council in this first half of 1984, which starts with today's vote on the draft Treaty of the Union and will end with the European elections. Of course, no one can expect all the accumulated damage of the Athens fiasco and long before to be made good during these months, but we are entitled to expect that the way in which they can be redressed might be discovered and mapped out.

The French Government is, therefore, under an obligation during these six months to ponder the crisis in Europe and ways of dealing with it with greater intensity and more imagination than in past years. We should, I believe, advise it not to expect much from the bilateral meetings it is so keen on.

To be sure, it is possible, even likely, that a series of compromises of a short-term nature will be found during these meetings, but one can bet on it that they will be bad compromises, because they will put off the institutional crisis for a year or two, when it will explode all the more dangerously for having been deferred.

Useful though they may be for specific limited agreements, inter-governmental negotiations are bound to produce bad compromises, when what is needed is a large-scale, lasting policy.

Our Parliament must, with this evening's vote, say to all the people of France, but above all to the President of the Republic, who recently appealed for a return to the spirit of the Congress of The Hague and spoke of the need to achieve political unity, that we look to the French Presidency of the Council to do more than come and speak to us in ritual fashion, at the end of its half-year, of the Council's trifling achievements during that period; instead we expect it to recognize that our proposal is the reply, the only viable reply to the life-and-death challenge facing Europe and, with it, France, and we look to the French Government — I really do mean the French Government, not the European Council — to adopt the draft Treaty and to announce

that it is prepared to begin the ratification procedure as soon as the minimum number of countries required by the Treaty for its entry into force have similarly committed themselves.

In that case, these six months of the French Presidency would go down in history.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, I ask the House to vote massively for the committee's resolution and the amendments which it is recommending.'

The response of France was not slow in coming. In a speech on 24 May 1984 the President of the French Republic, François Mitterrand, declared France's willingness, Altiero Spinelli thanked him and at the same time warned of the dangers to which the project was now exposed:

'Mr President of the French Republic, Mr President of the Council, following the vote on 14 February on the draft Treaty, the German, Belgian and Italian Parliaments have already started preliminary debates on the subject. The French Senate has already prepared a first, excellent, report on the draft. But with your solemn announcement that France is ready to take the initiative in bringing about political union, our draft becomes *the* subject of European construction. A new chapter has opened.

Since it will be difficult to do so in writing, let me thank you, Mr President of the Republic, and I think I speak on behalf of the entire Parliament, for giving this undertaking, but let me also draw your attention to the dangers to which the draft and the initiative are open. If adjustments were found necessary — and this almost certainly will be the case — the task should be entrusted, not to experts or diplomats, but to the new Parliament, the legitimate representative of the citizens of Europe. Mr President of the French Republic, we are counting on you.'

Chapter 5: The Dooge Committee and the Milan European Council

Following the French commitment it was decided — at the end of June 1984 in Fontainebleau — to set up an *ad hoc* committee consisting of the personal representatives of the Heads of State or Government and chaired by Senator Dooge of Ireland.

In its interim report submitted in November 1984 — and again in its final report which was adopted in the spring of 1985 — the committee followed Parliament's suggestions. But the European Council of December 1984 postponed consideration of the report.

Altiero Spinelli thereupon introduced a resolution which commented on the report and criticized the Council's failure to take a decision:

‘The first comment is that we find it extraordinary that the Council should have taken so long over the transition from the stage of the existing Community to that of a real political and economic union.

“The house is on fire”, one might say, and this morning's debate on the budget provided yet further confirmation of the ever-widening gulf that has developed between what Europe needs and what the existing Community is able to do for it. Ten months have elapsed since this Parliament presented our countries with a draft for dealing with this situation, a detailed draft into which it had put a great deal of thought. And when a report which for the most part confirms the ideas contained in Parliament's draft (it has been described as an interim report, but it could more appropriately be called a final report) is submitted to the Council, the Council does not even begin to examine it, but defers it for six months.

Are you not afraid, gentlemen of the European Council, that the favourable conditions under which it would be possible to make a start now will have disappeared six months hence, before we have been able to take advantage of them? We therefore ask that, in six months' time, you will not still be just debating this issue but making up your minds.

The second comment is that the Dooge Committee, in its majority proposal for an intergovernmental conference to be convened in the near future to negotiate and sign the final draft of the Treaty on the Union, defines the conditions for participation in this conference in

terms which we find acceptable as long as they are properly understood. Quite obviously, the basis of such a conference must be the overall results achieved to date in the construction of Europe, by which I mean both the *acquis communautaire* proper and the Stuttgart declaration. Our draft is quite clear on this point, stipulating that the *acquis communautaire* must be maintained until such time as the Union, once it has come into being, decides to develop or modify it.

This said, the *ad hoc* Committee proposes that the conference should draw its inspiration from the spirit and method adopted in Parliament's draft Treaty. Now these words, if they are to have any meaning, must be interpreted as signifying that the conference will work on the basis of Parliament's draft Treaty, proposing modifications where it considers them appropriate, but not changing the spirit or the method. If this prerequisite were disregarded, if all and sundry were allowed to ascribe whatever meaning they chose to the words "European Union", if the spirit and method adopted in our draft were to be ignored, a ghostly presence left to roam the corridors of the conference centre, it would be a foregone conclusion that the conference would be a failure, producing only semblances of solutions.

In addition to these two comments, our motion for a resolution contains a formal request: to be involved in the drafting of a treaty on political and economic union — a union capable of meeting the great challenges which neither our States nor our existing Communities are any longer in a position to meet — which cannot be regarded as a routine task for our diplomatic staffs.

While it is true that a treaty must have been negotiated among our governments before they can sign it and propose it for ratification, it is also undoubtedly true that this particular Treaty will be one containing the actual constitution of a union of States and citizens. But, as Europeans, our citizens are legitimately represented by this Parliament. Consequently, the European Parliament calls upon the *ad hoc* Committee to propose in its final report in March, and the European Council to adopt in June, a method of negotiation which does justice to the originality of the construction of Europe, bringing in the intergovernmental conference and Parliament as partners in the drafting of the Treaty. This Treaty should be treated as final and ready for ratification once it has been adopted in identical terms by the intergovernmental conference and the Parliament of all the peoples of the Community.'

The European Council of March once again deferred the decision to the European Council to be held in June in Milan.

Meanwhile on 17 April 1985, Parliament adopted a report by Mr Croux stating its position in regard to the proceedings in the European Council concerning European Union. On the same day Parliament also adopted a report by Mr Seeler on the reactions of the national parliaments — which on the whole were quite favourable — to the draft of the Treaty.¹

In June there was a heated debate on what action was now to be taken: on 11 June, Altiero Spinelli, replying to a speech by Mr Andreotti, insisted on the need to call an Intergovernmental Conference with a specific brief for the achievement of European Union — if necessary limited only to those States which were in favour and to associate Parliament with the drafting of the final text.

‘I should like to recall what are the crucial points today, on the eve of the Milan Council. They are not so much concerned with the extent of the power of Parliament, the power of the Council and the power of the Commission, nor the extension of powers, but rather with the drawing up of a procedure for achieving all these objectives. We have asked, and continued to ask, that at Milan a decision shall be taken, not on the content of the Union, because that would be asking too much, but a decision to call an international conference to start negotiations. And we also ask that an end be put to all thoughts of additional protocols, or of more or less solemn declarations, of which the history of the Community is full.

Secondly, we ask that the Conference be called with a precise mandate which will permit work to go on quickly, and changes to be made. We

¹ At its constituent meeting the membership of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, following the 1984 elections, was as follows: Mr Spinelli (Chairman), Mr Croux, Mr Seeler and Mr Gawronski (Vice-chairmen), Mr Van Aerssen, Mr de Camaret, Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti, Mr Cohen, Mr Columbu, Mr De Gucht, Mr Didó, Mr Ephremidis, Mr Evrigenis, Mr Fanti, Mr Fitzgerald, Mr Giavazzi, Mr Hänsch, Mr Lecanuet, Mr Mabros, Mr Megahy, Mr Musso, Mr Nord, Mr Prag, Mr Stauffenberg, Sir Jack Stewart-Clark, Mr Sutra de Germa, Mr Toksvig, Mr Van Miert, Mr Zagari and Mr Zarges. The substitutes were: Mrs Anglade, Mr Antoniozzi, Mr Bardong, Mr Beazley (Christopher), Mr Chiusano, Mr Clinton, Mr Coste-Floret, Mr Cryer, Mr Friedrich (Ingo), Mr Iodice, Mr Ippolito, Mr Jackson, Mr Newton Dunn, Mr Pannella, Mr Papapietro, Mr Penders, Mr Pfennig, Mr Romeo, Mr Toussaint, Mr Vetter, Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul and Mr Würtz.

are making clear the objective. We recognize the right to make changes, but we are setting a limit — respect for the spirit and method of the Parliament. The result will be a mandate that will make it possible to believe that, within a year, a definitive text can be arrived at.

The third thing that we ask for is that the Conference will be held even though not all of the governments may wish to take part, since the only way to get them all, or almost all, present is for the majority to say: “We shall make a start, even though you are not there.” If, instead, we continue to leave any doubts about this, I am convinced that the Conference will not happen, or if it does, it will have no precise objective.

Fourthly, we ask for the Parliament to be associated with the drawing up of the final form of words, but we have not been able to obtain any assurances regarding this. “Associating” the Parliament, as we understand it, does not however mean having one of those kinds of interinstitutional conciliation which we all know to be so laughable: they are meetings where the Council listens to what certain representatives — who are said to be representatives of the Parliament — have to say and then, having listened, bids them goodbye, sends them packing, and decides on its own as to what it wants. At most, it informs the Parliament. “Associating” the Parliament means, as we have said and repeated time and again, that when the Conference comes to the first reading, after a certain amount of formulation has taken place, this must be discussed by the Parliament in accordance with normal parliamentary procedure — that is to say, with its work in committee and its decisions taken in plenary session. And if there are to be changes in the text there will be appropriate conciliation procedures, as is always the case when two sets of proposals have to be reconciled in order to arrive at a joint text. And only when a joint text has been arrived at will that text be submitted. I should like to emphasize that this request is not due to any vanity on the part of a Parliament that wants to be in on everything. It is simply logical, because, whilst on the one hand this draft is a Treaty, which must therefore be discussed by the representatives of the different governments, on the other hand it is also a constitution, and as such it must be prepared by the representatives of the citizens of the Community that is being formed — in other words, by this Parliament. From the political standpoint we have to remember that within the Conference there will undoubtedly be good European ministers who, when they can find a few hours — excluding

the hours when they sleep — to deal with European matters, will deal with them. But then they have to deal with the problems of national life, and they will leave the European matters to their administrations, their diplomats. And we have seen them at work in recent months, all the diplomats without exception: they were the sharks that I referred to in my speech. They were the ones who set about trying to emaciate this draft and reduce it to a paltry affair. I am sorry to have to say that even in the Commission's own administration there have been instances of this kind, when instead we should have expected the very opposite.

Parliament's participation is a guarantee that ordinary citizens — just like all the other citizens of all Europe — who have been given a representative mandate, can succeed — thanks to the way in which this institution works — in secreting — if we can put it like that — the supranational element and engendering the creation of a genuine common will. That is why we think it is fundamental that Parliament should be associated in a real way with the drawing up of the final text.

Now your report, Mr Andreotti, is vague about precisely these points. And yet it will be these problems on which decisions will be taken in Milan, and on these decisions will depend the verdict whether Milan has been a success, a new chapter in the building of Europe, or whether it has been yet another chapter in the process of chipping away at the Community. You will not dodge this dilemma at Milan. I ask you to bear in mind that it is the fourth time that the Parliament is asking you — and tomorrow it will ask you solemnly again, with a resolution that I am sure, will be adopted by a very great majority. These are the requests that the Parliament is now putting forward. On this basis we shall have all the time, later on, to discuss whether this or that institution shall have greater or lesser powers, and how wide or how narrow shall be the new competences to be given to the European Union.'

Following the outcome of the Milan European Council, Parliament approved the decision to call the Intergovernmental Conference. Alterio Spinelli in a speech on 9 July stressed the historic importance of the Summit, but reiterated Parliament's concern:

'The European Council in Milan marked a historic turning point in the life of the Community, because it recognized that, with the Community and political cooperation as they are today, it is neither possible to

tackle new problems nor to hold on to the gains that have already been made; because the majority of the Council rejected the idea that we can get out of the impasse in which we find ourselves by simply making the instruments which the Community has at its disposal work better, and therefore decided to call an intergovernmental conference to fix, in the form of treaties for ratification, the fundamental laws necessary to reform the Council's decision-making procedure, to increase the role of the European Parliament and the Commission's managerial powers, and to define new fields of joint activity in the economic and political field.

...

Since it is a treaty between States that has to be drawn up, it must naturally be discussed by the governments in an intergovernmental conference, and approved and signed by them before being finally presented for ratification. But it is not simply a treaty: it is the fundamental law that a Community already in existence wishes to enact so as to become a real Union. And that, in true democratic manner, must be done and approved by the Assembly that legitimately represents the citizens of the Community.

For this reason we formally demand that, after having duly discussed and approved the text of the Treaty, the Conference refer it back to the Parliament for it to be read a second time, and that, if there are any differences between the Conference's text and that of the Parliament, an appropriate conciliation committee should suggest a compromise text to both parties.

...

We wish the Conference success, whilst pointing out, however, that if the Conference were to fail to achieve unanimity, the governments of all those Member States in favour should proceed to draw up and adopt a Treaty of Union.

...

The door must always remain open to countries which are slow to follow and, in the meantime, interim arrangements should be devised by common accord between the Union and the States concerned.

...

Mr President, even those who denigrate this Parliament most bitterly, even the proudest defenders of so-called “pragmatism” must acknowledge that if at Milan our governments finally shook off their European torpor, and if they decided to undertake the reform of the Community and the construction of the Union, that was only possible because this Parliament had continued working, in a measured way but still tenaciously, for that Union.

In Milan, with a characteristic reaction of rejection, at the very moment of accepting the idea of reform that was submitted to them by the Parliament, our Heads of Government ostentatiously ignored the Parliament’s draft, and its request to continue to be one of the “constituent powers” in the building of the Union.

What do you want, gentlemen of the Council? Grounds for another quarrel with the European Parliament? This, Mr President of the Council, is quite a dangerous path to tread, both for the Community of today and for the Union of tomorrow. Please tell this to your colleagues!

Chapter 6: The proceedings of the Intergovernmental Conference

The Conference opened in September and its work was very closely followed by Parliament which, on 23 October 1985, put an oral question to the Commission on the progress of the Conference.

Replying to Mr Delors, Altiero Spinelli, speaking as Chairman of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, criticized the Conference’s attitude to Parliament and warned of the danger of an institutional crisis:

‘...’

On only one point, I think, has the Conference clearly achieved something — the formal refusal to give Parliament the right to take part in the drafting of and final voting on the text.

Yesterday, in terms bordering on insult, the Conference told us, having planned information meetings with our President, that it understood our institution’s concern and that, in the same spirit, the Conference

would be submitting the results of its work to Parliament, i.e. that it would be reporting to it.

When we invited it to say whether, once it had reported on the final text, it would be prepared to consider the report as the outcome of a first reading and cooperate on any changes with Parliament, the answer was clear — there would be no second reading. In the case of something as important as the reform of a political body that is supposed to be democratic and already has a directly-elected Parliament, this means that this Parliament is cut out of the whole constituent procedure and looks rather like a vast, busy café where people express opinions with no political weight behind them.

Parliament is faithful to the spirit and the method of its draft and does not consider it to be intangible, something to take or leave. It is prepared to seek every avenue to real progress based on a broader consensus. What it is unwilling to accept is its draft being thrown out and Parliament itself being kept in limbo and insignificant as far as the consultation procedure is concerned.

The Committee on Institutional Affairs suggests, Honourable Members, that this debate end with a vote on a resolution it has adopted unanimously, so that Parliament's will is set down in writing. By this resolution, Parliament, first, does not accept the Conference's answer, second, claims the right to genuine participation and, third, calls the governments' attention to the risks of the serious institutional crisis that would threaten the Community if the governments endorsed the Conference's decision. Everything points to the fact that the governments must go back on this decision and take our request seriously.'

At the end of November the Conference produced its initial conclusions which the December European Council endorsed in principle.

In a resolution of 11 December Altiero Spinelli violently criticized the proposed solutions which he described as highly unsatisfactory:

'Madam President, this Parliament asked the European Council and the Intergovernmental Conference on numerous occasions, in resolutions and orally, to be effectively involved in the preparation of the draft Treaty and the final vote on it before it was signed and submitted for ratification.

The Council and the Conference loftily rejected or ignored these requests. And you have come here, Mr President of the European Council, convinced that your task is to inform us, not even to consult us.

We owe thanks to President Craxi and Mr Andreotti for having appreciated that such scorn for European democracy could not advance the development of European unity.

By reserving their acceptance of your conclusions until the European Parliament had given its judgment on your efforts, they have ensured that this Parliament is not reduced today to listening to what you have to say and then applauding or hooting, as the case may be. The European Parliament will be judging your efforts, and you will have to take account of this. Thus we can see a glimmer of European democracy on the horizon.

Having studied the conclusions of the European Council, having closely followed the proceedings of the Conference from start to finish, and having taken account of the contribution from the political groups in this House, the Committee on Institutional Affairs is proposing a motion for a resolution to express Parliament's judgment. The judgment that we are commending to you is carefully considered and measured. It acknowledges that, after 30 years' existence, the Conference has addressed the main problems of the Community. However, we are forced to the conclusion that you have failed to find a proper solution to any of them.

I do not have enough time to examine each of the committee's conclusions one by one and shall therefore, with your leave, consider three or four of them which cast light on the rest.

You have apparently seen the completion of the single market, the European area, as the keystone of your edifice. You have included this objective in your conclusions, defining what you mean by it, setting a deadline for completion in 1992 and introducing majority voting in the Council on certain issues instead of unanimity. But you have kept the requirement for a unanimous vote on the matters which are of greatest importance to the creation of this single market, such as tax harmonization, free movement of persons and, most important of all, monetary policy.

Moreover, you have also allowed the so-called "Luxembourg compromise" to survive. When President Pflimlin and I myself raised this problem with you — on more than one occasion — at the conference,

there was no answer. And President Delors now assures us, as though he were President of the Council, that the Council is going to abolish the right of veto by amending its rules of procedure. But Mrs Thatcher was more forthcoming in the House of Commons where she stated that the Luxembourg compromise, which allows a Member State to invoke a very important national interest to prevent a decision from being taken, was unaffected, that it remained fully in effect.

What all this amounts to is that the unanimity method, in one form or another, remains the rule in Council decision-making. And this is the instrument with which you intend to ensure that what should have been accomplished in the 12 years from 1957 to 1969 is going to be carried through over the next seven years? A likely story! You are so sure that you cannot keep to this commitment that you have felt it necessary to state in your conclusions that the definition and deadline have no legally binding force! In other words, neither our citizens nor this Parliament will be able to invoke the text of the new Treaty to insist that the commitments which it contains be adhered to and given effect if you have not so decided.

Apart from this, I listened in amazement to the words of President Santer and President Delors on the progress made when referring to monetary reform.

You are proposing that we move forward by keeping the same powers and the same voting methods, in other words unanimity, as in the past. No, I tell a lie, you are actually proposing a considerable retrograde step, since institutional developments — such as the creation of a real European Monetary Fund which, under the European Monetary System, could of course have been decided upon unanimously, but decided by the Council — would now entail revision of the Treaty. And you regard this as a step forward in policy on the Community's monetary capacity?

Thirdly, you have completely ignored the serious and increasing dissatisfaction with the inadequacies of the system for financing the Community. Where in the world is there a country where the budget has had to be rejected by its parliament three times in six years? Every year, in fact, an acute interinstitutional crisis erupts. The European Parliament had made detailed proposals for reform which were responsible. You had only to read the chapter on finance in our draft Treaty: it was not maximalist, it was very moderate.

Finally, Parliament has been asking, demanding even, for a long time that action be taken to put an end to the situation — unworthy of a Community which considers itself democratic — of having an elected parliament which is devoid of legislative powers. All that you have offered is to recognize that Parliament has the right to express its opinions twice instead of once and then meekly hope that the Commission in its wisdom will agree with some of them and submit them to you for your approval. Moreover, this would only apply within the very limited range of 10 cases, out of the 40 where majority voting would apply. For the remainder, and for all cases where voting would have to be unanimous, mere consultation would remain the rule.

I will spare you any further analysis. What I have said explains why the Committee on Institutional Affairs is inviting you to consider the results of the European Council as unsatisfactory overall and unacceptable in their present state, especially, but not only, as far as the powers of the European Parliament are concerned. In a spirit of cooperation with the Conference and the Council, our motion for a resolution gives an immediate indication of the spirit of the amendments which Parliament is proposing to the Council meeting on 16 and 17 December. It invites the Council to incorporate into the text drawn up by the European Council a limited number of clarifications and amendments concerned, in particular, with cooperation between Parliament and the Council so as to establish a real procedure for co-decision. It also calls for the restoration of the Commission's total responsibility for the implementation of decisions. I must admit to being full of admiration for this Commission which is able to maintain that its responsibilities have been increased when it has been told in unequivocal terms that "the Council is going to remove some of your executive powers because it might decide to take them over itself".

In a display of a strange sense of democracy, it has been said in certain Council quarters that if Parliament is looking for a fight, it will get one. Let me close by saying that Parliament does not want a fight, either with the Council or with any other institution; all that it wants is to see the development of a democratic and efficient Community. It wants to be respected. For this reason, it must pursue its aspirations with strength and dignity.'

The text adopted by the Conference on 16 and 17 December did not take account of Parliament's disquiet. Parliament on its part renewed

its criticism, first voiced in December, as in this speech by Altiero Spinelli of 16 January 1986:

'I can well imagine how embarrassed the President-in-Office of the Council must have been when he gave us the results of the Intergovernmental Conference. He often found himself on a sticky wicket, and for two reasons. In the first place, it is rather difficult to defend the arrogance of the Council and the Conference, which rejected any participation by the European Parliament in drawing up institutional reforms. Secondly, it is rather hard to explain how after all the work by Parliament, the Dooge Committee, the Milan and Luxembourg Summits and the Intergovernmental Conference the net result is, as many people suspect, a dead duck.

I shall make a brief analysis of these two aspects of the Single Act which we are considering now. The Community is a political body with its own organs: administrative, executive, legal and representative. Its laws, which are applied in specific areas, are distinct from the laws of the Member States and we all want the European Community to have a basis in European democracy. Consequently, if there has to be change in its constitution, it should be the representative institutions which push for these reforms; in other words, the Parliament which represents the citizens of the Community and the Council which represents the Member States.

There is, to be sure, no provision for this democratic process in Article 236 of the EEC Treaty, but according to traditional diplomatic practice, drawn up at a time when the Community existed only on paper and before there had been any European elections, Article 236 saw the revision of the Community constitution in the same way as an international act concerning the States' foreign policy and not as an internal act of a developing Community.

The fact is that the work of drawing up reforms was started not in diplomatic circles but by the elected Parliament. When Parliament's initiative forced the governments to understand that reform was necessary, they turned to Article 236. In order to comply with the basic needs of European democracy, the European Parliament then proposed that Article 236 be applied in such a way as to allow Parliament to take part in the formulating and drafting of the Act.

We called on the governments, meeting in conference, to give a political undertaking to discuss with Parliament the text of the reform and to sign it only if it had been drafted by both the institution which represents the citizens of Europe and the institution which represents the national governments.

This demand was ignored in a highhanded fashion. Ministers and diplomats from the Member States monopolized the preparation of the reform and proved — for the benefit even of those who were reluctant to believe it — that the representatives of Europe's voters are quite capable of having a common and constructive vision of European union — but not our national diplomats. It is what is to be expected. The political thinking of the European Parliament is European in scope. The political thinking of the Conference is an amalgam of national ways of thinking. This experience should provide the European Parliament with some conclusions for its future work.

Let us have a look now at the dead duck which has been produced. The Single Act speaks about the establishment of a single market, monetary resources, cohesion, regional policy, research, technological development, the environment, social policy and political cooperation. The important and decisive factor is not the definition of these policies — which are always rather vague — but rather the very precise definition of the institutions and instruments which are needed to carry out these policies.

The first thing we have to note is that the Council has retained its monopoly of legislative decisions. In other words, it has retained without any change the undemocratic and bureaucratic oligarchy of Community legislation. Any powers which have been taken from the national parliament will remain in the hands, not of the European Parliament, but of a few senior officials and ministers from the Member States who are in fact outside any political direction and control.

Secondly, the Single Act sanctions the Council's takeover of executive powers which should belong to the Commission. It is laid down that the Council has the right to take over certain of the Commission's executive powers and perform them itself, but it would not know how to go about it and this would reinforce the system of consultative committees, which this Parliament has consistently criticized, whereby a committee of national civil servants — often of the second rank —

can always veto any executive decision by the Commission and refer it to the Council.

Thirdly, the Council retains the unanimous-vote system with its paralysing effects on major decisions. Granted, in seven or eight cases the unanimous vote gives way to a majority vote, but the pernicious Luxembourg compromise is retained, whereby each State has the right to plead significant national interest and thereby ensure that there is no vote unless unanimity has been achieved. Consequently, apart from matters of minor importance, the life of the Community is still going to be paralysed by the veto.

The Dutch Presidency is preparing to put on the Council's agenda the reform, in the regulations, of the Luxembourg compromise. This has not been promised, however, by either the Council or the Conference. In fact, one or two heads of government have already stated formally that the Luxembourg compromise is unaffected by anything in the Act, and we have to keep our hands off!

Fourthly, in the seven or eight cases where it was decided that there will no longer be a unanimous vote — and only in these cases — and contrary to what was said, if I understood him correctly, by the President-in-Office of the Council who said that this change would apply in all cases where a unanimous vote was not required — listen to this! — Parliament would have the right to be consulted twice instead of only once and to know that its requests would be acted on only unanimously, which is something that the Council can already do because it can unanimously change in any way it wants any text which it is considering. And the Council expects us to be grateful for its generosity!

Fifthly, there is nothing about the introduction of a common monetary policy, without which it is simply ridiculous to talk of a single market and a free capital market.

Sixthly, there is nothing new — and in fact the matter was not even discussed — with regard to the reform of the Community's finances. And yet the financial system of the Community is evidently in a sorry state, because every year it throws up institutional crises and drastically curbs the Community's income, which makes a joke of social and regional policy and scientific research, because the money is not there and all these sectors need Community money and yet according to the Single Act they are to be reinforced.

Lastly, it is ridiculous to have put into this Single Act articles on cooperation alongside those on Community reform, because there is nothing new when it comes to political cooperation, which is far from providing even the basis of a common foreign policy, and also because there is no link at the Community-cooperation level to allow a gradual switch from the haphazard, fairly meaningless intergovernmental cooperation which we have at present to a genuine common formulation and response in foreign affairs.

These, then, are the reasons for which the Committee on Institutional Affairs asks you to approve a motion for a resolution which reiterates the opinion voiced in the resolution of 11 December 1985, in which Parliament considered that the results of the European Council meeting in Luxembourg were generally inadequate and could not accept the proposed modifications in their present form.

The Single Act has in fact incorporated the December decisions in its articles but there is nothing new in it. There is no reason therefore to change our opinion of it.

However, there is more to the motion for a resolution than these criticisms and this opinion. In voting for it, Parliament will show that the question of European Union is still an open one, because it has not been solved yet, and it will show its commitment to working out a way of bringing it to the attention of our citizens. The Committee on Institutional Affairs is seeking your mandate to prepare the strategy for this and to submit it to your approval.'

Despite the disappointment, Altiero Spinelli took up the initiative again. If the sharks have eaten away the big fish — then we must put to sea again!

'Ladies and gentlemen, when we voted on the draft Treaty of Union, I mentioned to you the short story by Hemingway about the old fisherman who catches the biggest fish in his life, which then gets eaten up by sharks so that he arrives home with only the bones of the fish. Well, we have arrived home too, and all we have left are the bones of the fish. This is no reason for Parliament to give up the struggle. We have to get ready to venture out again, with better tackle to catch our fish and to save it from the sharks.'

To the doubters ready to vote a resolution stating: 'Parliament is resigned to accepting . . .', Altiero Spinelli answered: 'That is not true!'

Part Two

Chapter 1: Tribute by the President of the European Parliament, Mr Pierre Pflimlin

At the time of the commemoration of the anniversary of Altiero Spinelli's death the membership of the Committee on Institutional Affairs was as follows: Mr Almirante, Mr Baudoin, Mr Boesmans, Mr Bru Puron, Sir Fred Catherwood, Mr CiccioMessere, Mr Collinot, Mr Croux, Mr Fanti, Mr Giavazzi, Mr Huckfield, Mr Hume, Mr Lecanuet, Mr Luster, Mr Moroni, Mr Nord, Mr Pajetta, Mr Prag, Mr Seefeld, Mr Tognoli, Mr Vega y Escandon and Mr von Nostitz, with the following substitutes: Mr Alber, Mr Anastossopoulos, Lord Bethell, Mr Bonde, Mr Cabanillas Gallas, Mrs Cassanmagnago Cerretti, Mr Chiusano, Mr Clinton, Mr Cohen, Mr de Gucht, Mr Fanton, Mr Graziani, Mr Hänsch, Mr Ippolito, Mr Jackson, Mrs Lehideux, Mr Mavros, Mr Motchane, Mr Planas Puchades, Mr Prout, Mr Romualdi, Mr Rothley, Mr Seeler, Mr Toussaint and Mr Vetter.

‘With the death of Altiero Spinelli the European Parliament has lost one of its most outstanding members, one who was a paragon of clear-sightedness, courage and faith.

The lucidity of his vision was manifest when, confined by the Fascist regime to the island of Ventotene, in the midst of war, he drew up his federalist manifesto which, he believed, would open for Italy and for Europe the road to salvation. He thus became one of the first prophets of Europeanism.

Today, it is with profound sadness that I see the passing away of one of the last prophets of Europe.

Altiero Spinelli remained faithful all his life to the federalist ideal. He knew well enough that the final objective, the United States of Europe, could not be achieved soon, but with unrelenting obstinacy he fought for partial advances towards that goal.

That was the inspiration of his activity within the Commission of the European Communities and within the European Parliament. It was his belief that our Assembly, representing the aspirations of the peoples, must shoulder a task which — despite the undertaking given in 1972 at the summit meeting of the Heads of State or Government — had been neglected by the governments: the establishment of European Union. It was on his initiative that the Committee on Institutional Affairs was created which was to draw up the Treaty on European Union adopted by our Assembly in February 1984. A few months later, at the Summit of Fontainebleau, the idea was given consideration. The Heads of State or Government set up a committee to prepare the reform of the European institutions.

At that moment Altiero Spinelli, and many others beside him, thought that a decisive breakthrough had occurred. Alas, disappointment followed on that time of hope. The Intergovernmental Conference, called after last year's Milan Summit, drew up a text, the Single Act, which stops a long way from establishing European Union.

Altiero Spinelli was vociferous in his disappointment, but he did not give up. He belonged to that race of heroes who never give up. He called on our Parliament to continue the fight, with a new target — the European elections in 1989 which, he thought, could produce a constituent assembly. He knew it was an objective that would be hard to attain. Consequently, he felt the idea must be promoted by other means: hence his last, very recent initiative to bring together politicians and intellectuals to think out jointly new ways of pursuing the same fight — the struggle for a united Europe. In a message to them a few days before his death, he expressed his disillusionment, but also his unshakeable determination. Truly, he fought for Europe to his last breath.

Going from our midst, he has left us his admirable example and a last message of hope. At this time when Europe seems to be sinking into a quagmire of false realism, when our leaders seem to be motivated solely by national egoisms, you, Altiero Spinelli, soldier of Europe's cause, say to us: "Stand up and hold high the flame of the European ideal. Carry on the fight!"

A nome del Parlamento europeo, Altiero Spinelli, ti dico la nostra ammirazione, il nostro grazie.'

Chapter 2: Altiero Spinelli's life recounted at commemoration ceremonies in Rome and Strasbourg

On 23 May 1986 Altiero Spinelli died in Rome at the age of 79. The European Parliament paid tribute to its eminent Member in Rome, at the funeral, in Strasbourg at the June part-session, and at a special commemorative meeting of the Committee on Institutional Affairs. The President of the European Parliament said:

'I believe that all of us feel that the death of Altiero Spinelli leaves a great gap in our Parliament. During the last legislative period and until quite recently Parliament's work was marked by his strong personality. As a substitute member of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, I had the opportunity to witness what he achieved by combining in a remarkable way a sense of purpose in pursuing the goals he had set himself and a spirit of understanding and conciliation which enabled him to take up many of the comments and amendments put forward by the members of the committee, all of whom rightly shared a feeling of pride in its achievements. Altiero Spinelli was a man of exceptional qualities. He was admired, of course, for his intelligence, culture and experience but what was more remarkable was that he retained into old age the qualities of youth, that is energy and enthusiasm. We sometimes saw him lose his temper at our defeats, or make harsh judgments but he never, never gave up. It is this that impressed me most deeply; his determination to continue the campaign for European Union never faltered up to the last day of his life. Even when in hospital and knowing that he was critically ill he went on fighting to the end. With a number of other Members of Parliament, including Mr Ripa di Meana and Mr Jacques, he recently convened a meeting of some 60 people in Brussels to discuss new approaches, based on the draft Treaty adopted by the European Parliament but seeking to mobilize public opinion because he realized that in the face of ministers, undoubtedly aware of their responsibilities but who often put the defence of national interests above the determination to advance the course of European integration, the European Parliament had no chance of achieving its objective in the long run without the support of public opinion. I know that only a few days before his death he was still holding talks to prepare for this meeting of which he had high hopes.

Ladies and gentlemen, a meeting like today's is an occasion for sadness but I am convinced that it should instead be an occasion for hope. The great movement towards European unity has been made up of men driven by conviction and determination. Over the years we have seen the spread of what some call "Euro-pessimism" and have seen even the most convinced Europeans assailed by doubt and scepticism.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us look to the example set by Altiero Spinelli. Like him, let us not give in to such doubts. The best tribute we can pay him is to carry on the cause to which he was committed.'

In Rome, Virgilio Dastoli, secretary-general of the Italian branch of the European movement, spoke of the moral heritage of Altiero Spinelli, whose closest collaborator he had been:

'Dear Altiero,

It was you who taught us that the force of an idea lay in its capacity to arise again, with greater strength, after every defeat.

Dear Altiero,

It was you who taught us to continue the struggle in hope. Because of purblind nationalisms, the great quarry which you — like Hemingway's old fisherman — had caught, was reduced to a miserable fishbone by the time it was hauled into port. Tired by his exploit, the old fisherman sleeps now, "dreaming about the lions".

But we, who remain, now have before us a great opportunity to carry on the fight and put out to sea again at once, so as to bring about by democratic means the federal union of Europe. Today we say farewell to Altiero Spinelli, but the dialogue which we began with him in our midst will continue, just as Altiero Spinelli will live on in the continuation of the struggle to which he devoted his life.'

It was a struggle that began many years ago — against Fascism, as Nilde Iotti recalled:

'His political commitment began at a very early age: he was barely 17 when he took up the struggle against Fascism and joined the Communist Party. The year was 1924 and it was neither comfortable nor easy to be an anti-Fascist; things did not get better with the promulgation of the special laws in subsequent years. For his participation in the clandestine opposition, to which he brought all the generosity and enthusiasm of his nature, he was sentenced by the Special Tribunal to 16 years and 8 months of prison. He was then only 20 years old, of an

age when for most young people life and adult thinking are only beginning, when a solid background of practical and intellectual experience has not yet been formed, when the mind and the spirit are not yet ready to face such a great self-sacrifice and be so cruelly tried. All the more impressive, then, the force of character and the intellectual maturity he displayed before that Fascist court and during those long years of imprisonment and then internment. They were all the years of his youth. They played a key role in his development, in his intellectual formation and political thinking. He devoted these years to study, and, as soon as he was allowed, he began discussions with his prison companions — outstanding personalities whose names and memory we hold dear — who, like him, had waged the anti-Fascist struggle and later were to fight together, though from different positions, in the Resistance. In a very beautiful book entitled “Io, Ulisse” (“I, Ulysses”) Spinelli has told the story of these years, the road he travelled — in study and reflection — to the point where he rejected the Soviet experience and Stalinism and moved away from the communist ideological and political positions, breaking with the Party in 1937. It was a period of intense intellectual questing from which emerged the ideal of a free and united Europe that was to become the focus of all his efforts.’

This extraordinary period in the life of Altiero Spinelli, testifying to his courage and intellectual capacity, had deeply impressed the President of the Commission of the European Communities, Jacques Delors, who said in Strasbourg:

‘What struck me most was his strength of character. Reading the first volume of his memoirs and in the hope that others will record and publish the sequel, even if it is not exactly what Altiero Spinelli would have wished, I realized that in fact, however repugnant to him the Fascist regime in Italy was, he could have saved himself from imprisonment by issuing certain statements. My sincere impression is that he opted not to say the few words that would have enabled him to have a different life; he opted for 16 years of solitude, 16 years in which he was sometimes even deserted by his friends, 16 years in which he made a new beginning, but I am certain that during those 16 years he acquired the qualities essential for the role he played in the history of Europe.’

Spinelli’s battle for the unity of Europe was the consequence of the federalist option he chose on Ventotene.

Mario Albertini, Chairman of the European Federalist Movement, spoke of the difficult period in Spinelli's life following his release from the island of Ventotene:

'He was alone: all his anti-Fascist friends were returning to Italy where a tradition was waiting for them in which they could take their place: they had a party to which they could relate, an ideology to guide their thinking and, above all, a State, that is a power structure, within which they could carry on their political activity. Altiero Spinelli — as the concluding pages of his diary recount — was alone: with just the text of the "Ventotene manifesto" in his pocket, some ideas in his head and a few friends around, looking to him for the signal that the thing can be done. It was a situation which can only be described, explained or understood in terms of political heroism, for he was indeed a hero of rationality. He was alone: a man standing alone who believed that it was possible to begin from the start work for the reform and salvation of our countries; alone, but convinced that he had reason on his side; in the apparently absurd situation of a man who is alone and different from all those around him — this man began the work. And we have seen, the world has seen, Europe has seen that he was right. This is why he has earned this exceptional tribute: he was right — his was the rational choice.

He believed that true democracy and peace could only be built in a dimension transcending that of national States. This task, as Spinelli wrote, was not for some other generation in some indeterminate future to accomplish, but for that same generation which, with him, had lived through the bitterness of Fascist and Nazi nationalism and their terrible results. This was the profound conviction with which he left Ventotene, an island that was to remain forever in his heart. It was there that, together with his friends Ernesto Rossi and Eugenio Colorni, he had found what he himself called the compass that would guide him on the high seas of politics. He was deeply convinced that the creation of a democratic European federation was the only way of ensuring that the peoples of Europe can themselves make, rather than be subject to, decisions which determine their present and their future, the only way of preserving and developing democracy. His were no Utopian aims, but a far-reaching political programme, in accordance with Max Weber's saying, which he liked to repeat, that we must aim for the impossible in order to achieve what is possible. At times perhaps he might have seemed Utopian because of his single-minded, radical and

exclusive choice of European unity as the objective of the battles he fought as a democrat and a reformer. And we all know how hard, slow and full of contradictions the road travelled by the European Community has been so far and how distant the attainment of that target may seem.’

Spinelli’s struggle never ceased, but it reached one of its peaks in 1954, at the time of the *ad hoc* Assembly.

In Strasbourg the Dutch Minister, Mr Deetman, spoke of the importance of this period:

‘Even long before European integration, of which the European Parliament is such a crucial part, had taken shape, Spinelli’s philosophy was European in its design and in this he was far ahead of his time. With his death Europe has lost one of the first generation of Europeans, Europeans whose lives were deeply marked by the experiences of the Second World War and who saw closer cooperation between the peoples of Europe as the best safeguard against a repetition of the atrocities which occurred between 1940 and 1945 and as opening up a future in which Europe occupies an important position between the two superpowers which emerged after the war. In 1954 Spinelli demonstrated that he was a committed and dedicated advocate of a federal Europe. As one of the most active members of the Brentano Committee, it was partly thanks to him that a draft statute for a European political community was formulated within a few months, when the subject was on the agenda at the time of plans for a European defence community.

After serving for six years as a member of the European Commission, in 1976 Spinelli continued his efforts to promote a federal Europe as a member of the directly-elected European Parliament.’

About his decision to stand in the European elections Mr Albertini had this to say:

‘He felt that it was the forces of the Left that would be the most interested in a project as radically innovative as the European ideal, that the ideas of democratic development and the reformist aims of the Left needed, for their realization, a more united and more democratic Europe. It was in line with this reasoning that Spinelli rejoined the ranks of the party to which he had belonged in his youth. It was a thoroughly transformed party which had become one of the forces for

democracy and reform in Europe, indeed one of the most important among them and was in fact the political force which was closest to the line he was following and the battle he was waging. With this force, for the last 10 years of his life, he maintained a lively and creative relationship in common commitment and common action in the cause of democracy and Europe. Yet, though elected on Communist lists, he was never a man of the Party. His actions and thoughts were, as before, inspired by his critical spirit and his posture of proud independence, always strained towards an aim which, by its nature, lay beyond all partisanship or parties and required the widest cooperation of different movements and opinions. Spinelli in fact believed that the objective of European construction should not serve as a colour to tie to the mast of any existing power structure, but should create a completely new European Parliament, and because of this, Strasbourg inevitably became the most appropriate arena of his political activity — an activity which made him a national and a European statesman.’

Mr Cervetti, Chairman of the Communist and Allies Group in the European Parliament, also recalled the events of that time:

‘Which of us, individuals, groups, political parties, did not have our differences of opinion, disagreements or wrangles with Spinelli; we certainly did. I do not so much mean the old quarrels which led to what did not always prove to be irreparable splits — however sharp-edged and painful they were at the time — I am thinking more of topics of heated debate, sometimes bitter, always impassioned and in which Altiero’s presence will be missed. However, I wanted to recall the salient features of his political thinking and action, his resolve, his determination, ultimately his radicalism and democratic and popular vision emphasizing one point more than another, since it was here that we find the real reason, the real common ground between him and us, between our views on Europeanism.

As an illustration, it is enough to recall his famous apology in which he drew a significant, amusing and profane parallel, a perhaps irreverent comparison between the spread of Christianity and Europeanism on the one hand and the role of Saint Paul and the Italian Communists on the other. Perhaps it would be fairer to recall that his was not a conservative Europeanism, if one can use the word without being accused of a contradiction in terms, his was not a static Europeanism but one based on innovation and renewal.

...

If his democratic Europeanism provided an opportunity for us to come together or to come together again, it was also a basis for cooperation, a stimulus to understanding and a determination to reach agreement between all the democratic and popular forces of Europe.'

As a member of the European Parliament, he was deeply committed to its work: enough to recall his efforts in the matter of the budget and of the Community's own resources.

But the speakers paying tribute to his memory emphasized above all his greatest achievement, the draft Treaty on European Union, which the European Parliament adopted in 1984.

Mr Croux, the first Vice-chairman of the Committee on Institutional Affairs reminded the committee's members of the events of that time:

'This special meeting of the Committee on Institutional Affairs has been convened to pay tribute to Altiero Spinelli. He was the founder of our committee, the coordinating rapporteur on the draft Treaty on European Union and had been our chairman since 1984.

As members of the Committee on Institutional Affairs, who had the privilege of working regularly and often very closely with Altiero Spinelli over a period of five years, we wish to express our feeling of gratitude, affection and admiration. We are grateful for the presence here today of many of our colleagues and would particularly like to thank the Presidents of Parliament, the Council and the Commission who, by their presence, have lent this meeting of our committee special significance.

Many people have already referred to the historical significance of Altiero Spinelli as one of the founders of the European movement, as the author of the Ventotene manifesto over 40 years ago and as a man of action with a prophetic vision.

Today, however, we remember him first and foremost as a great parliamentarian who made an eminent contribution to the first directly-elected European Parliament, particularly through his initiative for European Union.

It is the duty and vocation of an elected representative to express the deep-seated desires and aspirations of the people. Today such aspirations undoubtedly include pressure for European unity and European cooperation. European integration is a deep but sometimes un-

conscious desire on the part of the peoples of Europe, with differences from one country to another but none the less a fundamental factor of the highest political importance for the Community as a whole. Altiero Spinelli made it his life's work to express these fundamental aspirations.

He did so in a manner which was a model of cooperation in a parliamentary democracy, with his flexibility and sense of compromise that went beyond national or political vested interests. In the key stages of the institutional debate, our Parliament achieved a broad degree of unity, becoming as it were a unionist Parliament in favour of a European Union.

This was possible only as a result of determination based on an unshakeable conviction, a never-failing strength of purpose and perseverance on the essentials, but coupled with an understanding of special cases and differing views. Even those who, in the final analysis, found they could not agree with Altiero Spinelli looked on him with the respect, and even affection, that is due to those who devote themselves honourably and wholeheartedly to a cause in which they believe absolutely.

The draft Treaty on European Union was the collective achievement of a large majority of the Committee on Institutional Affairs and subsequently won the support of Parliament as a whole. This allowed Parliament's institutional initiative to be extended to the national parliaments and governments throughout the Community. Thanks to this broad-based, substantial parliamentary consensus, Altiero Spinelli and President Pflimlin were able to participate with authority in negotiations with the representatives of the governments of the Member States in the Dooge Committee and later at the Intergovernmental Conference on the reform of the European Treaties.

The results were not what Altiero Spinelli, and with him the European Parliament, had hoped for: he was beaten, but it was a glorious defeat, as Mrs Iotti said. For without his initiative there would not have been even that 'ridiculous mouse' as he called it: the Single European Act.

In Strasbourg Mr Delors said:

'Even if this may shock some of you, without the draft Treaty on European Union, there would have been no Single European Act. No doubt some of you think it might have been better if there hadn't been a

Single Act; however, those who have perhaps a less idealistic but more pragmatic view of what can be achieved in the Europe of the possible will pay tribute to Altiero Spinelli and to Parliament in general for having been perfectly realistic and having brought about something that would not have been feasible without the impetus given by Parliament.'

He was echoed by Mr Croux:

'It is certain that the reform of the Treaties would not have come about without Parliament's initiative and the work of Altiero Spinelli.

However, the results — so far — have not come up to our expectations.

All of us shared his disappointment at the reluctance of a number of governments to recognize the directly-elected Parliament as a fully-fledged negotiating partner and at the extremely limited scope of the European Act.'

The 'glorious defeat' did not mean an end to the struggle: Spinelli demanded for the European Parliament a constituent mandate supported by referendums. Mr Croux recalled:

'After the governments had adopted the European Act, Altiero Spinelli did not give up his campaign; on the contrary, the resolution of 16 January 1986 sounded the call for Parliament's return to the battle. Only a few weeks later, in the Committee on Institutional Affairs, he outlined his ideas on Parliament's future strategy for European Union.

Sadly we will now have to continue this vital aspect of Parliament's work without the personal contribution of Altiero Spinelli. We regret also that our discussions will no longer be enriched by his great personal and human qualities, his knowledge and experience, his wide political and historical culture, his understanding and humanity. But we shall not forget his major contribution to the European debate or his high conception of our role as Members of the European Parliament.'

Mrs Iotti in Rome also recalled the sequel:

'Despite the glorious defeat of his great plan, Altiero Spinelli was within a hair's breadth of success; if President Mitterrand had kept to

the policy which he presented in his great speech to the European Parliament, we should today be constructing the Union. But Altiero did not give up. Already suffering from the illness that was to carry him away, to wrest him from our midst, he began to weave the strands of a campaign, he took up again the battle in the European Parliament, he was sketching out a plan . . . It was a plan of mobilization. And we should all of us here, we — the representatives of the federalist movements, of the forces of democracy — make a solemn oath that we *shall* mobilize the peoples of Europe: mobilize them by any means available, by referendums, in whatever way — in order to ensure that the next European elections become elections for a Parliament possessed of a constituent mandate.’

Ulysses wanted to carry on his fight to the end. The fight was for Europe. Mr Albertini said in Rome:

‘His was a great political and moral victory and we all know how bitter Spinelli felt at the outcome of the Intergovernmental Conference called to revise the Treaties of Rome which reduced it to a disappointing skeleton. But we also know that after that disappointment, Spinelli, as he had done throughout his life, went into action again: organizing the elements of a new initiative based on the conviction that the progress of European construction could not be entrusted to the governments, that the democratic road to European Union was founded on the European Parliament’s constituent role and on the creation of a strong current of public opinion. The Europe of which he dreamt is one that is to be constructed from what is most valuable in its history and civilization, a forward-looking Europe reaching towards new frontiers of development and knowledge. It was no accident that Spinelli assumed the name of Ulysses, that he identified with a man animated by a thirst for discovery and change, by a spirit of adventure and courage, a willingness to face risk and the challenges of the future.’

Altiero Spinelli’s bequest to us is the commitment to the continuation of his struggle. Mrs Iotti emphasized this in Rome:

‘Reason, that reason which was his already in 1941, told him this: that, as Kant said, men ought to do today what reason would have counselled them to do from the beginning. Clearly, Europe could only be built if there was a European political authority. Clearly, experience had proved it so. Clearly, we should not be able to have either a common currency, nor genuinely common policies, nor a common

European defence system unless there was a European authority. The moment of truth, that is, the moment of reason, has come. We, who are left despairing because Altiero is no longer here to show us the way of action, must now give this solemn undertaking: we shall mobilize for action on the Spinelli plan, we shall mobilize for the constituent mandate for the European Parliament; we must call on the political leaders, and in the first place on the Italian political leaders here present who have backed the Spinelli plan (Prime Minister Craxi, Foreign Minister Andreotti who supported the Spinelli plan in the European Council) — we must call on them to join battle: this democratic battle, this great battle for the rebirth of Europe, this great battle for Europe's contribution to peace in the world. Farewell, Altiero.'

In Strasbourg Mr Delors made a commitment in similar terms:

'To conclude, I should like to say that I often disagreed with him, not as to the objectives, but as to the approach; like many others I was subjected to his criticisms and sometimes even his sarcasm but the only memory which stays with me now is of the coffin carried by eight people, eight young people including two Commission officials. At that moment I was moved to tears by the thought that the visionary, Altiero Spinelli, would not be like so many other men who make a fleeting impression in their own time, but that others born in a quite different Europe will carry on his campaign and that all of us, whatever our misgivings and views as to the best approach, and however much we are aware of our own limitations, we will remain faithful in our hearts to the message he wanted to pass on, and we shall bear in mind the thought that motivated him; that whenever Europe is divided within its own ranks, when it is plunged in civil war, then Europe ceases to exist. At such times Europe has no world vocation, no humanism and no prosperity. Let us be faithful to the message. Thank you.'

The Chairman of the Communist and Allies Group, Mr Cervetti also pledged loyalty to Altiero Spinelli's ideals and his inspiration:

'Rooted in Spinelli was the conviction expressed in the closing words of the Ventotene manifesto: "The road we have to travel is neither easy nor safe but travel it we must and we shall." If I may complete the sentence without betraying its meaning, I would add: "We shall do so with the backing of all the truly popular and democratic forces."

We shall keep faith with his inspiration, his message and his aspirations. We shall move forward with determination and in a spirit of cooperation; we do not seek to be alone or isolated. We shall work with others, we have but one ambition, to be true to the legacy of Spinelli, to his European and democratic achievements, both philosophical and political. In doing so we shall try to be among the most consistent and logical in our approach.'

And finally' Mr Croux reminded the Members of the European Parliament of the significance of their commitment. He quoted from a speech which Altiero Spinelli made on 13 September 1983:

“Of course, you will be told, and will have been told time and again over the years, that you really count for very little, but I say to you that if you acquiesce in this scornful denigration of the European elections and your own status, if you settle for seeking only those things which tally with your governments' current wishes, then in that case, ladies and gentlemen, you really will be politically weak . . .

But if you are conscious of the dignity invested in you as Members of the European Parliament and are aware of the political responsibility that you carry as representatives of Europe's citizens, you will find the courage for the effort needed to make your parties, your national parliaments, your governments heed this shared European will as expressed by you.”

It is in this spirit that all of us in the European Parliament should and must continue our efforts to make the European Community a real European Union. In doing so, the political significance and legacy of Altiero Spinelli will not go to waste but will be kept alive in this Parliament.'

European Communities — European Parliament

Battling for the Union — Altiero Spinelli

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