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John Pinder - life dedicated to a long term goal

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Roy Jenkins, speaking at the 50th Anniversary dinner of Federal Union in 1989, said that:

'It is a great deal easier to found a pressure group for an ideological cause – or indeed to found a political party – than it is to keep it going for half a century. The explanation, it seems to me, is that while Federal Union has had firm sinews of belief, it has never got itself into an intolerable or exclusive group which would have made it narrowly sectarian. It believed firmly in federalism but it has always been willing to work closely with those that were prepared to sign for part of the journey and it has not pressed them too far about their ultimate views'.

'Equally, it has never made them feel like second class passengers. As a result, many that have worked closely with Federal Union and the Federal Trust, who began by carrying light ideological baggage, became spontaneously more and more involved in the federalist cause. It has been a remarkably successful recipe for proselytising and advancing the cause of Federal Union'.

A great deal of the credit for this state of affairs is due to John Pinder. A man of great commitment to federalism, he is intellectually rigorous in his considerable writings with a mental clarity and precision that was the opposite extreme to the 'foggy and contorted ideological federalism', as the leading Italian federalist, Altiero Spinelli put it, of some continental Europeans. His idealism is tempered with a shrewd appreciation of what is possible and practical in the short-term, without losing sight of the longer-term goals. He is a man of great modesty, a characteristic which has without doubt appealed to 'the good and the great' who have lent their name to the many proposals and reports John has drafted in the last fifty years.

John has a strong sense of commitment and tenacity which he may well have inherited from his parents. His father was a professional soldier serving in the British Army in East Africa where he became commander of the Somaliland Camel Corps, then in the West Indies, India and latterly as a Brigadier in various places in World War Two. His mother Lilian Murray was the daughter of Perthshire gentry with a profoundly individualistic Scottish character. They were very kindly parents who believed in a sense of duty and moderation which they inculcated by the example of their own lives. His father had to spend long periods abroad and sometimes his mother would join him for a time. John was indeed conceived when his mother went to Somaliland for a few months.

With his parents abroad, John went as a boarder to Marlborough College which he enjoyed and where he was given a rounded education that encouraged his love of music and where he learnt to appreciate Johann Sebastian Bach. He still has a spinet in his drawing room. After school he went to King's College, Cambridge, to read mathematics, but his studies were interrupted by military service from 1943-47, during which he became an officer in the Royal Artillery and latterly in the West African Artillery.

He survived the war unscathed but several of his school and university contemporaries were killed or severely wounded which greatly affected his outlook on life. When he returned to Cambridge, he took his degree in economics with Richard Kahn, who had worked closely with Maynard Keynes. His supervisor Kahn asked him if he would like to stay at King's, but he was attracted by something less conventional and accepted a post as lecturer in economics at the new university in Accra. But first he had to have a medical where they detected tuberculosis. So instead of going to West Africa he went for several months to a sanatorium in South-West Scotland.

These quiet months gave John a great deal of time for thought. He wondered what was going to happen to the world in the aftermath of Hiroshima unless there was an end to global conflict. It was on a visit to Dumfries County Library that he found a book by William Beveridge called 'The Price of Peace'. The message which struck a chord with John was that the price of peace was national sovereignty. Unless sovereignty was pooled, nations would continue to go to war with each other.

When he had recovered sufficiently John went to London and called in to the Citizens' Advice Bureau and asked which organisations were working towards world peace. The answer included the National Peace Council, The Crusade for World Government and Federal Union. The first was rejected as too close to pacifism, the second sounded impractical but the third seemed interesting. John became the Press Officer at Federal Union from 1950-52 at the same time as the birth of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Jean Monnet in his inaugural speech as the first president emphasised its federal character as 'the first European Community which merges a part of national sovereignties and submits them to the common interest.' The High Authority was to be independent of the member states, its acts could be challenged before a European Court of Justice and it was responsible not to the member states but to a European Assembly.

Jean Monnet's step-by step approach to closer integration appealed to the politicians and the public of the Six countries which founded the ECSC. They had experienced the terrible devastation of the Second World War and recognised that the ECSC would, by internationalising their coal and steel industries, including those of the Ruhr, make another war between France and Germany virtually impossible. Monnet saw the Schuman Plan as the first step in a long march towards a European Union. John Pinder was very attracted by the Monnet approach but he remained in London and worked towards British membership of any future European federation. In 1952 he joined the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the consultancy arm of the The Economist newspaper, becoming its International Director from 1957-64. When the Rome Treaty was signed in 1957, John Pinder and others in Federal Union helped raise £14,000 from a hundred contributors towards a detailed sector-by-sector study of the effects of European free trade on British industry. The study was carried out by the EIU and was a great success, selling 8,000 copies in six weeks as well as being serialised in *The Observer* over a period of three months.

The Messina declaration which 'relaunched Europe' at the foreign ministers meeting in June 1955 contained an invitation to the UK to participate in the ensuing talks. But the British government merely sent a civil servant to the talks and after a few weeks withdrew him when it transpired that the Six countries were considering a customs union with Monnet-inspired supranational institutions. After the collapse

of the European Defence Community proposal, the British Foreign Office and Treasury took the view that the Six would probably not be able to carry through this ambitious project. Miriam Camps, a shrewd observer of Europe, pointed out that:

‘There has never been much real understanding in the United Kingdom of the depth and drive towards real unity, as distinct from inter-governmental co-operation, on the Continent. Except for a handful of people, no one really accepted or believed in the feasibility or in the desirability of the ‘Monnet approach’ to a United Europe.’

This handful of people or ‘band of brothers’ was centred in Federal Union and the Federal Trust. They were well described by Uwe Kitzinger after their efforts had been crowned by the successful British entry in 1973:

‘What mattered was that most of them, while pursuing their own chosen careers in different fields in which they could remain useful to the cause, had remained in close touch with several others of the larger inter-connected ‘mafia’, that their political thinking had remained along broadly parallel lines, and that underlying often sharply tactical disagreement there were common reflexes as to aims and strategy – very much as had been the case of the older ‘Establishment generation’ against whose mismanagement of international affairs they were in clear revolt.’

The battle was now on with the ‘older establishment’ who refused to accept that Britain was no longer a great power that did not need to pool its sovereignty with the ‘defeated nations’ of continental Europe. Several of the ‘federalist mafia’ were in positions that allowed them to influence events. Christopher Layton was on the staff of *The Economist* and a month after De Gaulle cut off the Free Trade Area negotiations he wrote an article advocating British membership of the Community which in due course became the paper’s policy. David Webster at the BBC was a Panorama producer at a time when the programme was in its heyday with a remarkable set of reporters that included Robin Day and Ludovic Kennedy, who were sympathetic to European integration. Political & Economic Planning (PEP), one of the first ‘think tanks’, had attracted a large grant from the Ford Foundation to study Britain and the Common Market. As their Senior Research Officer on that project I was well placed to draw conclusions from a detailed study of ‘Tariffs & Trade in Western Europe’ that the UK’s tariff was closer to the Six’s common tariff than that of any member state. Around this time John persuaded me to become editor of the Federal Union journal ‘World Affairs’ where European integration had previously not been given as much prominence as steps in the direction of world government. John had drafted several documents on

world issues in the 1950s such as a policy statement on ‘World Prosperity’ and a ‘World Investment Code’, where both documents saw economic integration as a step towards encouraging joint institutions. Increasingly, he was focusing on European unity and ensuring that Britain became part of it. With his help, we were able to steer ‘World Affairs’ in that direction while keeping alive the debate between ‘regionalism’ and ‘world development’.

In many ways John Pinder has been the ‘primus inter pares’ of the federalist network. Firstly he is dedicated to the advancement of federalist ideas but he tempers his idealism with a sense of self effacement and moderation which makes him acceptable both to his colleagues and to interested politicians who want to find out about European unity. He has also an ability to draft reports and documents which are readable, logical and take account of various points of view. I remember a large federalist conference at Wiesbaden in 1959 attended by over 500 delegates including Robert Schuman, Walter Hallstein and Heinrich von Brentano, later the German foreign minister. The Federal Union delegation was led by Earl Attlee and included eleven MPs including three future ministers, Roy Jenkins, Niall MacDermot and Geoffrey Rippon. Attlee gave lustre to the British delegation but astounded the Continentals by speaking for only five minutes in which he described Britain’s relationship with Europe as being like ‘a semi-detached house, partly in Europe and partly outside.’

John remembers Roy Jenkins chatting with the socialist leader Guy Mollet, who as Prime Minister had led France into accepting the Treaty of Rome, in a café outside the conference hall. Roy said later that he had been very impressed by the strength of European federalism on that occasion, and during the next five years he came to be a strong supporter of Federal Union, becoming vice-chairman of its Council before entering the Labour government in 1964.

The Federal Trust got a new lease of life around 1957 following the signing of the Rome Treaties. At the same time John became a member of its Council. John Bowyer, a young barrister, was part-time secretary of the Trust and he and John recognised the growing need for business to find out about the new common market that was being created on the other side of the Channel. The Trust set up a series of conferences devoted to different aspects of the European Economic Community’s

(EEC) activities such as agriculture, finance and investment, transport, law and tax. They were so successful that they became monthly affairs. John Pinder, as international director of the EIU, was a frequent performer. Following the success of 'Britain and Europe' the EIU published a companion volume in 1959 on 'The Commonwealth and Europe'. As the interest and the audiences grew, so did the prestige of the speakers, who included two future prime ministers, Raymond Barre and Edward Heath, two future Presidents of the Commission, Roy Jenkins and Jean Rey and the future French President Valerie Giscard d'Estaing. At one very crowded conference the Governor of the Bank of England was observed sitting on a stool in the corner.

John is a keen walker. Around 1960-61 we were living in the same house in Argyll Road off Kensington High Street and John suggested we should walk to work across Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park and Green Park, in John's case to the EIU and in my case through St. James's Park to PEP in Queen Anne's Gate. On one occasion he was explaining Proudhon's federalist philosophy which had influenced his thinking, in particular the concept of how society should be based on a balance between the two poles of Liberty and Authority, and how in an ideal federal state power should reside with the people at the grassroots rather than being devolved from on high. It was a beautiful spring morning and as I was listening I caught sight of an attractive young lady walking briskly ahead of us who appeared to be removing her clothes as she walked through the trees. Fascinated by this vision, I increased my pace without wanting to interrupt John's discourse. When we reached the Serpentine, the young lady who had divested herself of her garments plunged (in her swimsuit) into the water! John seemed to be too busy thinking about Proudhon to notice this.

Actually John has a dry wit and always seems able to find a 'bon mot' for the right occasion. He was my best man when I got married to Noeline Pritchard, a New Zealander in London who compered a weekly television programme called 'This Week in Britain.' At our wedding reception John said that Harry has married a New Zealander because being a Kiwi she wouldn't be able to fly away! He has remained a great walker going annually for two or three weeks for walking tours across the French or Italian countryside earlier with his wife Pauline, and his friend Ralph Clark who, following service as a Royal Marine Commando came to King's

College in 1947, and who has recently been chairman of the Somerset County Council. John met Pauline at the EIU and they got married in 1964. They share a love of music. Pauline has introduced John to the operatic repertoire and they frequently go to Covent Garden and the ENO. She has a formidable intellect having been editor of the EIU's Quarterly Reviews of almost all the countries of the world, and a heart of gold, giving generously to a variety of charities.

Around the time of his marriage, John left the EIU to become director of Political & Economic Planning (PEP), which was started in the 1930s by some far-sighted individuals who realised that longer-term research was required into both domestic and international issues. John's ability to organise research resulted in PEP flourishing under his direction. Amongst other projects he and the Director of Chatham House, Andrew Shonfield, with whom he became a close friend, established a series of joint PEP/Chatham House studies on different aspects of the development of the European Economic Community and its impact on the UK. The series also published the proceedings of Monnet's Action Committee for the United States of Europe.

John's secret as a successful organiser of research was to build up staff loyalty by taking a fatherly interest in the researchers, reading their drafts and making constructive criticisms. PEP continued to flourish but by the late 1970s there were officially supported moves to establish the British equivalent of the US Brookings Institution. The more grandiose scheme fell through but a solution was found in a merger of PEP and the Centre for Studies in Social Policy. John became the director of the new organisation called the Policy Studies Institute (PSI), which attracted substantial funding from the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, which helped the institute to expand to around 50 researchers and 25 support staff.

Meanwhile John, in a private capacity, was writing a series of books on the theme of Britain and Europe. In 1961 he published 'Britain and the Common Market', which explained the nature of the European Community that Britain was seeking to join and foresaw that there would be a need for more majority voting and democratic control of Community institutions over the taking of common decisions. The second book, 'Europe against de Gaulle' was published only a few months after the negotiations for British membership were broken off by the veto of the then French President. John contrasted the co-operative community approach inspired by Monnet with de

Gaullé's chauvinistic view. He affirmed that if Britain was determined to join the Community and accepted the need to widen its scope, both British membership and the improvement of the Community would sooner or later come about.

Between 1966-70 the Federal Trust held a dozen weekend conferences at pleasant locations such as the Foreign Office conference centre at Wiston House or the St. George's conference centre at Windsor Castle. Among the politicians taking part were former and future ministers such as Christopher Soames and Shirley Williams. At one of these seminars John wrote a paper exploring the possibility of a new initiative for the creation of a European Political Community as a means of breaking the log-jam created by de Gaulle's veto. The paper's scope included subjects not covered by the existing treaties, namely foreign and security policy, defence procurement and monetary policy. Ernest Wistrich secured the interest of George Brown, who had just stepped down as foreign secretary. The idea was also taken up by Altiero Spinelli, who persuaded Pietro Nenni, the Italian Foreign Minister, to support it. John and George Brown went to see Monnet to get his blessing and also visited Rome where Brown and Nenni planned the inclusion of the new initiative in an Anglo-Italian Declaration to be promulgated during the Italian President Saragat's state visit to London in April 1969. Foreign Minister Michael Stewart was supportive, but while the final declaration was being agreed during the visit, the word came through that de Gaulle had resigned leaving the way open for a new negotiation, this time for British entry. All that remained of the idea in the declaration was the Labour government's commitment to direct elections to the European Parliament, which did in fact take place a decade later. Otherwise John was over twenty years ahead of his time, but the seeds had been sown.

The prospects of British membership now looked good. In the event John Pinder and Roy Pryce had been working together on a Penguin Special about the future of Europe and Britain's place in it. In the new situation the title became 'Europe after de Gaulle', which was published in 1969, foreseeing British membership of the Community, and sold some 15,000 copies. The time was now right for the policies generated and the relationships, forged in the years of waiting, to bear fruit. The negotiations for British entry had just begun when Edward Heath came to 10 Downing Street, the first British Prime Minister unequivocally committed to joining

the European Community. The negotiations lasted about a year and during this period the Federal Trust organised five study groups and twenty one-day conferences.

In the spring of 1971 Andrew Shonfield at Chatham House had detected signs of a loss of nerve by some permanent secretaries in Whitehall concerning the negotiations, which were likely to be completed around the middle of the year. He asked John Pinder what could be done and the result was a two-day conference at Wiston House chaired by Sir Alex Cairncross, until recently economic advisor to the Treasury. The papers were based on half-a-dozen studies by economists known to the Federal Trust and added up to a resounding endorsement for the economic case for joining. Samuel Brittan, the influential economics editor of the Financial Times, was at the seminar along with fifty leading academics, business and government economists. Up till then he had been sitting on the fence but in the next week's article he came down firmly on the side of entry. John Pinder edited the conference papers into a book which was published three months later under the title 'The Economics of Europe', some weeks before the decisive vote in the House of Commons.

John lists foreign languages and literature among his recreations in Who's Who. His ability to read and speak several languages became increasingly useful in the next phase of the Federal Trust. He had learnt French and German at school and after university he spent three months in each country. He is fluent in French, German, Italian and Russian. It is a credit to his persistence and dedication to the European idea that he has persevered at learning other nations' languages in order to be better able to understand their way of thinking, which doubtless helped when the Federal Trust took a leading part in setting up the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA). Jacques Vandamme, a Belgium former senior official at the Commission, and Altiero Spinelli, who was then a Commissioner, together with their national institutes played an important role as founding members. TEPSA now includes partner organisations from almost all the member countries. John has taken part in many TEPSA projects including the regular pre-presidential conferences held in the capital of each member state shortly before it takes over the presidency of the Council. The first was held near Dublin in 1975 before Ireland's first presidency of the Council and an old associate of John's when he had been the EIU's international

director, invited the TEPSA institutes to advise him on the issues with which he would have to deal. He declared afterwards that it was very helpful to get a trans-European perspective on future possibilities for the Community. In May 1992 he spoke again, this time as the Irish Prime Minister, at a British pre-presidency conference organized by the Federal Trust at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

John retired as director of the Policy Studies Institute in 1985 at the peak of its activities as the largest independent social science research institute in the UK and in the same year he became chairman of the Federal Trust. His advice was increasingly sought by other organisations. He was a member of the Council of the Overseas Development Institute (1977-99), the Hansard Society (1973-99) and the Royal Institute of International Affairs (1985-91). He was President of the Union of European Federalists (1984-90), a Vice-President of the International European Movement (1990-2000) and Vice-Chairman, and then Deputy Chairman of the European Movement, UK (1975-98). He was also a Professor at the College of Europe in Bruges from 1970-99 where he gave influential lectures and as a result his courses were among the most popular at this unique trans European post-graduate college where many of the alumni find posts in the Brussels institutions. In the journeys to Bruges and back John would engage in his other listed recreation, namely literature, by reading numerous Dutch and Flemish novels in the original language.

John became chairman of the Federal Trust around the time that Margaret Thatcher was beginning to rail against the dangers of a European super-state and the F-word, which made it increasingly difficult to get research funding from some corporate donors. In fact Mrs. Thatcher had just signed the Single European Act in 1985 that led to the largest transfer of power to majority voting in the Community's history. Interestingly, Lady Thatcher has since claimed that her advisors failed to inform her of the degree of supranationality involved in the institutional arrangements of the Single Market. Lord Cockfield, the Commissioner in charge of the formulation and implementation of the Single Market and now a Patron of the Federal Trust, in conversation and in his *Memoirs* takes the view that Lady Thatcher knew very well what was involved although she may have tried to excuse it on the grounds that Europe was following the British example through enforcing de-regulation and more

competition.

There were occasions when some consideration was given to changing the name of the Federal Trust to get round the F-word, but John Pinder always insisted that it would be a mistake. Instead John Pinder with co-authors Richard Mayne and John Roberts embarked on a comprehensive history of the ideas and actions of the British federalists since 1939 published by Macmillan in 1990 under the title 'Federal Union: The Pioneers'. Funding was tight at the end of the 1980s and the Federal Trust's three staff, including the director Roy Pryce, were all part-time. The Delors report of 1989 saw the rebirth of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and it could not have come at a better time for the Federal Trust. The Trust had already done some pioneering work on the concept in the UK in the 1970s when, following the collapse of the first attempt to create a single currency, John and Christopher Layton ensured the successful working of a talented international group set up by the Trust that proposed a parallel currency, the Europa, which would have brought about some of the benefits of integration while still allowing member states to adjust their exchange rates. A report, 'European Monetary Integration', was launched at a conference jointly sponsored by the Federal Trust, the Financial Times and the Investors Chronicle with speakers who included the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Banca d'Italia. Two further reports were published in the 1980s by groups chaired by David Howell MP calling for Britain to join the European Monetary System. In 1990 a successful conference at the head office of the Midland Bank in the considerable grandeur designed by Sir Edward Lutyens brought together an impressive list of speakers including Sir Leon Brittan, Peter Lilley (then Financial Secretary to the Treasury) and Professor Norbert Walter of the Deutsche Bank. Almost 200 delegates attended which considerably improved the Trust's bank balance.

The EMU theme was followed up by series of annual conferences throughout the 1990s held at Salomon Brothers International conference theatre through the good offices of Graham Bishop, then their European advisor. The conferences were accompanied by a series of study groups on the financial aspects of European integration. These brought together under distinguished chairmen, such as Sir Brian Corby, chairman of the Prudential Corporation, some of the best experts, continental

and British, on major problems facing the EU such as corporation tax, regulation of capital markets, pensions and public-private financing of the Trans-European Networks. As well as establishing the Federal Trust's reputation in the City, they brought in funding for further research and culminated in conferences which were well attended and financially viable. John and myself gathered together some of these themes in 'A Recovery Strategy for Europe' launched at a seminar in the House of Commons and followed up by us giving evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities.

At the same time John and Andrew Duff, the new Director, were instrumental in obtaining a substantial grant from the Gatsby Charitable Foundation towards an educational project designed to inform sixth forms in schools across the UK about the EU, culminating in mock parliamentary elections at the same time as the European Parliament elections in 1994. Frances Morrell, the former Head of the Inner London Education Authority, organised the programme which went on to design and trial new curriculum materials on the theme of 'European Citizenship'.

John has expressed regret that the Trust cannot claim to have made the federal idea, or at least the word federal, more popular in Britain. But as Roy Jenkins pointed out in the opening quotation, many of the important politicians, not to

mention several permanent heads of the UK delegation in Brussels who began carrying light ideological baggage and who became more and more engaged in the federalist cause, would never have started on the journey, if the Federal Trust had been a narrow sectarian sect. John's guidance, moreover, has been directed predominantly towards the study of particular steps of co-operation or integration rather than a complete federation. He has always envisaged, however, that a big step forward can be taken when the time is right. As we have seen he had the vision of a 'Political Community' as early as 1968. Indeed, in that same year he wrote a seminal article in the Chatham House journal 'The World Today' titled 'Positive Integration and Negative Integration'. By the latter he meant the removal of barriers such as tariffs and quotas. He argued that common policies going beyond this, which he called positive integration, were needed to solve member countries' balance of payments problems once their national economic defences have been removed, as well as to deal with a wide range of problems through, for example, regional, social, monetary and fiscal policies. At the time this was new thinking and it is little wonder that the term 'positive and negative integration' has passed into the common parlance of this field of study.

Another seminal article was also published by Chatham House, this time in 'International Affairs' in 1986, setting out the case for a theory of 'incremental federalism'. He criticised the existing 'realist' and 'regime' theories as 'too reductionist about the possibilities of movement in the direction of federal institutions with substantial competences' and the neo-functionalists as taking 'too facile a view of such possibilities, without clarity about the conditions in which integrative steps would be possible and without appreciating the strength of the nation state'. Whereas most federalists had supported 'the Community step-by-step development', they 'had not thought deeply enough about the concept of constitution-building as not just a single act but also as an evolutionary development'. He pointed out the need for a more systematic analysis of the increments of federal competences and institutions that had already been adopted; for example the recently agreed single market programme and majority voting of the Council; of those steps that could contribute further towards a federal system, such as monetary union, more majority voting and co-decision for the European Parliament, which were in fact taken

subsequently; and of the conditions that made such steps possible, including political leadership from within the member states. He regretted that 'the tendency to identify federalism with a great leap to a federation with military and coercive power inhibits practical thought about the prospects for taking further steps in a federal direction'.

The evolutionary development of federal structures in the European Union has been the focus of much of his work before and since. Most of the journal articles and chapters of multi-author books that he has written, about a hundred of each, have related in one way or another to that theme, as have his earlier books and most recent ones such as 'The Building of the European Union', 'The European Community and Eastern Europe', 'Altiero Spinelli and the British Federalists' and 'The European Union: A Very Short Introduction'. His aim has been to make a significant contribution to that process and to the ideas by which it can be usefully carried forward. Perhaps, the last word should be left to the late Hugo Young who in the acknowledgements to his classic volume 'This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair' paid 'a particular personal debt to John Pinder, one of the great scholars of contemporary Euro-British history'.