

John Pinder 1924-2015

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John Pinder, who died recently at the age of 90, was widely respected as one of the most influential and intellectually rigorous British advocates of European integration. His longtime colleague, Andrew Duff, described him as ‘smart, upright, patriotic and moustachioed’ – in many ways like Jean Monnet who he greatly admired, describing him as ‘infinitely persistent and persuasive.’

A Cambridge economics graduate and wartime junior officer in the Royal Artillery, John Pinder worked in the Economist Intelligence Unit and then, between 1964 and 1985, was Director of the London think-tank Political and Economic Planning (PEP). From 1985 to 2008 he was Chairman of the Federal Trust, an institute established in 1945 by William Beveridge, studying the interactions between regional, national, European and global levels of government, with a particular interest in the European Union and Britain’s place in it. And, in 1974, he was a central figure in the creation of the Trans European Policy Studies Association TEPSA which now brings together more than thirty think-tanks across the Member States of the EU, including the IIEA.

John Pinder was a writer of considerable skill. As early as 1961 he wrote ‘*Britain and the Common Market*’ as a positive response to the British application for EEC membership. His ‘*European Community: The Building of a Union*’ has appeared in a number of editions. A study of the links between the great Italian federalist Altiero Spinelli and British federalists such as William Beveridge and Lionel Robbins recalled a significant period in the evolution of thinking on Europe’s future direction. His last publication, in 2007, was the remarkable ‘*The European Union: A Very Short Introduction*’, described as compulsory reading for anyone seeking to understand what is happening in Europe. He was, for more than thirty years, a visiting professor at the College of Europe in Bruges.

In 1975, as Ireland prepared to take on the Presidency of the Council for the first time, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Garret FitzGerald, approached John Pinder as a close friend, asking him to organise a seminar in Dublin which could help him to prepare for his role as Council President. John, using his contacts in the Federal Trust, mobilised a range of national experts from the newly-established TEPSA network and a three-day seminar took place in the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire in January 1975. My diary recalls four sessions of discussions and roundtables, and a dinner, adding up to an event which Garret FitzGerald assessed as being “enormously useful.” John Pinder later concluded that “none of us imagined that our modest seminar in that hotel would lead on to the much more magnificent pre-Presidency conferences that TEPSA has organised since then.” TEPSA now holds two such conferences every year, as the Council Presidency rotates, and has returned to Dublin, most

recently in December 2012 prior to Ireland's 2013 Presidency with the event - organised in conjunction with the IIEA - taking place in the splendid surroundings of Dublin Castle.

From that early contact John Pinder became for me a regular figure in a variety of settings in which European issues were discussed and reviewed – TEPSA conferences, European Movement events, networks related to the European Convention and debates on a series of EU treaties and the related Irish referenda. He showed great interest in the formation of the Institute of European Affairs, not least because of the involvement of Dr. Garret FitzGerald, and introduced it to the TEPSA network within which it has participated with much benefit. A series of Federal Trust seminars in London on aspects of the work of the European Convention in which I worked as an advisor to the Oireachtas delegation were notable for John's insightful and incisive contributions and for flashes of his pointed but always kindly wit.

I treasure my copy of John's 1961 book - 'Britain and the Common Market' - – sourced in a London 'used' book shop and signed by him at a TEPSA Congress in Brussels in April 2001: "Tony, *avec homage europeen*, for many hours spent happily together in a good cause."

The first chapter of that slim book addressed the centerpiece of that good cause, arguing, in John's characteristically understated way, that "The words 'Common Market' do not sound as if they would make history. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines a market as a 'gathering of people for purchase and sale of provisions, livestock etc.' and the Common Market is, indeed, a gathering of European peoples to pursue these ends in common. That in itself is not enough to make passions run high when British entry to this market is proposed. There is more to it." Half a century later we are still finding out how much more there is to it, but sadly we face into that continuing debate without the courteous, thoughtful and determined presence of John Pinder.