BRITAIN AND
EUROPEAN UNITY,
1945–1992

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For my Wife
Brigette

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PREFACE

This book provides an historical survey of British policy towards the question of European unity from 1929 (when the issue first became significant) to 1992 (when a British general election coincided with measures to create a 'single market' in Europe). The main focus is on the development of policy at government level after 1945, but attention is also paid to pressure groups, the Press and public opinion. As with other books in the series, the purpose is to introduce readers not only to the principal events in British relations with the Europe unity movement, but also to the debates on this subject between historians and political scientists. However it is important to note at the outset that the nature of this debate changes as the book proceeds. This is mainly because European unity is a recent issue, mainly confined to the post-war period. For the years 1929–55 a considerable amount of work has now been done by historians, using government sources, the private papers of political figures and other archival material, so that an 'historical debate' can be said to exist. For the years 1955–61 government documents are available but they have not yet been digested and little genuine 'historical' research has been published. In this period therefore I have made use of my own primary research to supplement the few books which have been written. For the years 1957 to 1979 a number of very useful memoirs and diaries have been published. The best tend to be by Labour politicians – diaries by Richard Crossman, Barbara Castle, Tony Benn; memoirs by Roy Jenkins and David Owen – but in the early period there are several volumes of Harold Macmillan's memoirs. All provide interesting material which, again, can be used to supplement the generally-dated texts of political scientists on these years. After 1979 there is quite a lively debate among journalists and political

scientists about the European policies of Margaret Thatcher and the negotiations of the Maastricht agreement. Unfortunately the memoirs for this period by former Conservative ministers are generally uninformative.

Another point to make at the outset is that the terminology in the debate over European unity is often confusing. Words like ‘union’, ‘integration’ and even ‘federation’ are used with little attention to their precise meaning. I have used ‘federation’ to apply to a situation where States surrender political decision making to a central government institution. Such a European government may be the ultimate aim of some Euro-enthusiasts, but as yet the European Community is far removed from such a result. At the other extreme the term ‘inter-governmental co-operation’ is used to refer to a situation where States work together without surrendering any sovereignty to common institutions, though (as in the case of NATO) there may be an *implied* loss of independence. The terms ‘functional’ or ‘sectoral’ co-operation are used to refer to the coordination of policies in certain areas only – for example in the coal and steel industries, as in the 1950 Schuman Plan. ‘Functional’ co-operation need *not* lead to a diminution of sovereignty, though it did in the case of the Schuman Plan which created a ‘supra-national’ institution, that is one which took over responsibility from governments for a ‘sector’ of activity. The term ‘union’ is, according to some dictionary definitions, the same as ‘federation’, but in the European unity debate it is much vaguer. The terms ‘pooled sovereignty’ and ‘deeper integration’ refer to the type of co-operation seen in the European Community, often called the ‘Community method’ whereby the member States have gradually handed certain powers to the European Commission and created a ‘web’ of co-operation between themselves. This goes beyond traditional types of co-operation between States, and it would be very difficult – but not impossible – for any member to withdraw from the ‘web’; but, principal decision-making power still resides with the member governments meeting in the Council of Ministers and, at leaders’ level, in the European Council. The European Parliament possesses limited powers, and it is debatable how far the European Commission has independent ‘supranational’ power.

For the 1960s I have used the term European Economic

Community (EEC) to refer to the 'common market' created by the Treaty of Rome, but 'common market' was a more popular term in Britain, reflecting the country's obsession with trade issues. In the 1970s and 1980s 'European Community' became the usual way to refer to all the institutions created by the 1951 Treaty of Paris (Coal-Steel Community) and the 1957 Treaties of Rome (EEC and Atomic Energy Authority). All three institutions were in fact 'merged' in 1968. I have used the terms 'pro-' and 'anti-European' (now superseded by 'Euro-enthusiast' and 'Euro-sceptic') in a broad sense, but have tried to show that they are too crude to describe effectively the kind of debates which have occurred in Britain over the country's international role since 1945. Finally, I have sometimes bowed to the practice of referring to the EEC simply as 'Europe', because this is how it is referred to in many debates (thus, in the 1960s, there was considerable talk of 'going into Europe'). This is not the place to define the geographical, cultural or historical bounds of Europe but it is vital to say that the EEC includes less than half the countries and people of Europe. That 'Europe' has become coterminous with the EEC in many minds simply reflects the success of the Community idea in practical and propaganda terms.

Numerous people have talked to me over the years about Britain and Europe. In particular John Kent and John Barnes of the London School of Economics and Geoffrey Warner have influenced my thinking about the years 1945–61. It has also been useful to have one of my research students, Gillian Staerck, working on the Macmillan governments. But I must also thank Phil Taylor, David Dilks and Roy Bridge with whom I worked at Leeds University, Donald Watt, David Stevenson and Alan Sked, colleagues from the London School of Economics, Michael Goldsmith and Andrew Geddes of Salford University, and Geoffrey Berridge, Murray Forsyth and Stuart Ball, colleagues from Leicester University, as well as Mike and Saki Dockrill, and Sean Greenwood. Salford University research fund supported my work at the Public Record Office on the years 1955–61. My thanks also to Jeremy Black and the staff at Macmillan for help in bringing the project to fruition; to Janet Smith for typing up the manuscript with her customary care and attention; and to my wife Brigitte, who proof-read the text.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBQ	British Budgetary Question
BOT	Board of Trade
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal–Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Authority
FO	Foreign Office (Foreign and Commonwealth Office from 1965)
FTA	Free Trade Area
GITA	Go-it-alone option
IGC	Inter-Governmental Conference
NAFTA	North Atlantic Free Trade Area
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NEC	National Executive Committee of the Labour Party
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEC	Organisation for European Economic Co-operation
PR	Proportional Representation
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SEA	Single European Act
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VAT	Value-added Tax
WEU	Western European Union