

INFORMATION

E D U C A T I O N - Y O U T H

EUROPEAN UNION AND PUBLIC OPINION
THE YOUTH ATTITUDE

37/73

At the time of the Summit meeting, the heads of State, or government, of the "Nine" Common Market countries were seeking to give Europe an image which went beyond the purely mercantile. In doing this they were acknowledging, somewhat tardily perhaps, the fundamental fact that the European Community will not become an active reality without the participation, the support and indeed, the faith of those who live in it, and for whose sake in the last resort the adventure began. They did not, however, push this to its full conclusions.

In February-March 1970, the European Commission carried out a sample investigation under the heading "The Europeans, and the unification of Europe". One of its comments was: "the most important obstacle to the formation of pro-European attitudes seems to be the image the general public is forming of the achievements actually recorded — i.e. of Common Market Europe".

The commentators on the results of this sampling (1): "This image is of a technical, or even a technical-bureaucratic character, which is attractive enough to the reasoned approach, but makes no appeal to sentiment, and seems to reflect the administration of things rather than the government of human beings."

(1) The enquiry was carried out over a sample of 8,752 people in Germany (Institut für Demoskopie), Belgium and Luxembourg (International Research Associates), France (Institut Français d'opinion publique), Italy (Istituto per le ricerche statistiche e l'analisi dell'opinione pubblica), and the Netherlands (Nederland Instituut voor de publieke opinie).

Order of importance assigned to various social-political objectives

| | EEC | G | B | F | I | L | N |
|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Adequate guaranteed pension for all old people. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Assured work for young people | 2 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Cease making atom bombs | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 |
| Greater security of employment | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Keeping order in the country | 5 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Guaranteed freedom of expression | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Make society more humane | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 7 |
| Reform of education | 8 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Higher wages | 9 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 13 |
| Aid for under-developed countries | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 9 |
| Workers' participation in company management | 11 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 11 |
| Encourage private initiative in economic activity | 12 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| Fight communism | 13 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| Eliminate capitalism | 14 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 14 |

The priorities emerging from this, show the importance of the line taken in point 6 of the final act of the Summit conference. In this the heads of State or governments, emphasised that "vigorous action in the social field is as important to them as the achievement of the economic and monetary union"; and they laid down a working programme for the ministers covering five of the targets emerging from the sample investigation.

The Summit, however, went still further for it laid down "as a major objective, before the end of the present decade, and in full respect for treaties already signed, to transform the relations between the member countries into a European Union". The objective is admittedly vague, and the wording indefinite; but the governments of the "nine" were also responding to expectations which came clearly to the surface in the 1970 enquiry. "Pro-european attitudes, though they are widely held and undoubtedly firmly rooted among a considerable minority of about 30 % of the European public in the best educated, best informed and most politically minded circles, are nevertheless quite superficial among the wider public. For

most people ... economic unification is quite a good thing in itself, but it is a matter for specialists and not for ordinary people ..." The enquiry shows "that the unification of Europe has reached a point at which, if its sponsors look for further progress, they must take the risk of bringing it into the political arena".

DEVELOPMENT FROM COMMON MARKET
TOWARDS THE POLITICAL UNITED STATES OF EUROPE
(percentage of people aged 16 and over interrogated)

| | EEC | G | B | F | I | L | N |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| In favour | 70 | 69 | 62 | 63 | 77 | 77 | 75 |
| Against | 10 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 6 | 5 | 14 |
| Don't know or give no reply | 20 | 21 | 28 | 24 | 17 | 18 | 11 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number interrogated | 8752 | 2021 | 1298 | 2046 | 1822 | 335 | 1230 |

ELECTION OF A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BY DIRECT UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE
(percent of people aged 16 and over interrogated)

| | EEC | G | B | F | I | L | N |
|-------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| In favour | 64 | 63 | 56 | 59 | 71 | 70 | 60 |
| Against | 12 | 11 | 12 | 16 | 8 | 11 | 21 |
| Don't know, or give no reply | 24 | 26 | 32 | 25 | 21 | 19 | 19 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number of people interrogated | 8752 | 2022 | 1298 | 2046 | 1822 | 335 | 1230 |

FORMATION OF A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT

(percentage of people aged 16 and over interrogated)

| | EEC | G | B | F | I | L | N |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| In favour | 58 | 56 | 52 | 53 | 67 | 47 | 49 |
| Against | 23 | 23 | 19 | 28 | 16 | 36 | 37 |
| Don't know or give no reply | 19 | 21 | 29 | 19 | 17 | 17 | 14 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number interrogated | 8752 | 2021 | 1298 | 2046 | 1822 | 335 | 1230 |

DEGREE OF INTEGRATION DESIRED IN UNITED EUROPE

(percent of people aged 16 and over interrogated)

| | EEC | G | B | F | I | L | N |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| A. No government at european level, but national governments to meet regularly to decide on common policy. | 16 | 16 | 14 | 18 | 13 | 19 | 18 |
| B. A european government dealing with the more important questions, but each country retains its own government to deal with its own problems. | 56 | 52 | 51 | 62 | 57 | 63 | 58 |
| C. A european government dealing with all questions and member countries with no national governments. | 11 | 15 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 5 | 13 |
| D. None of these formulae | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| E. Don't know, or give no reply. | 13 | 13 | 20 | 10 | 16 | 12 | 8 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number interrogated | 8752 | 2021 | 1298 | 2046 | 1822 | 335 | 1230 |

"This political development should find both its means of expression and its activity centre in the existence of an assembly elected by direct universal suffrage, that is to say, by all citizens of voting age". In this the Summit did not respond to the wishes expressed by public opinion as emerging from the enquiry, limiting its proposals to the prospect of strengthening the powers of the existing parliamentary assembly.

The giving of a political content to european integration, which was rather diffidently initiated by the Paris Summit, would doubtless be a method of correcting some of the surface reactions of european public opinion.

For example, half the europeans state that they are unwilling (barely willing or definitely unwilling) "to make personal sacrifices, such as financial sacrifices for the sake of european unification".

WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT VARIOUS PERSONAL SACRIFICES FOR
THE SAKE OF EUROPEAN UNIFICATION
(percent of persons aged 16 and over interrogated)

| | EEC | G | B | F | I | L | N |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| Fully willing | 8 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| Fairly willing | 27 | 29 | 18 | 22 | 29 | 31 | 34 |
| Scarcely willing | 22 | 24 | 19 | 22 | 20 | 21 | 19 |
| Unwilling | 34 | 27 | 47 | 41 | 34 | 29 | 32 |
| Don't know, or give no answer. | 9 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Number interrogated | 8752 | 2021 | 1298 | 2046 | 1822 | 335 | 1230 |

Another example is, that though half the europeans are ready to abandon the franc, the lire or the mark in favour of a Community currency, nearly half of them are opposed to setting up a single joint olympic team.

No emphasis can overstate the fact that one of the essential conditions of european union is the receptivity of the younger generation. A few lines were

devoted to this subject by the Summit at the Hague (1969); but it is impossible not to notice that the Paris Summit made no mention of it at all, just as there is no reference in the communiqué to university and student questions. "It would be a mistake", the sampling enquiry emphasises, "to count unduly on the active support of young people for the efforts directed to political unification, and more especially for the setting up of an elected assembly. The pro european attitude of the younger generation is much rather to be attributed to the absence of the traditional resistances — the nationalistic, the ethnocentric and to some extent, conservatism — than to the attraction of european and democratic ideas". This is another way of saying, that the soil is alright, but the seed has still to be sown. It is not a case for new techno-bureaucratic advances, but for political ambitions, objectives within the reach of the ordinary man and of direct interest to him.

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The enquiry carried out at the request of the European Commission, foreshadowed that, even though the economic unification of Europe "has been conducted up to the present in comparative calm and even against a background of some indifference"..... political unification " though it seems to be generally accepted, will not necessarily be achieved in an equally serene atmosphere". The analysts concluded : "In so far as precise decisions have to be taken, a certain opposition may arise; but though the resultant of these different forces cannot be confidently forecast, it seems probable that the favourable attitudes will prevail".

The europeans stand in need of major political objectives, and also of immediate objectives on more familiar lines. The risks of the undertaking are clear enough. It was into these risks that "the nine" in their summit meeting at Paris were not willing to take the plunge.

Nevertheless, definite action was foreshadowed in a number of fields. A timetable was laid down and specific action, especially in the social field, is likely to be taken very shortly. "The nine" have set up a framework which, however, will have to be filled in if Europe is to be brought closer to the citizen.