

New Europe College Yearbook 2014-2015



OLGA BARTOSIEWICZ
OLGA BUDARAGINA
MARCO CASSIOLI
BEATA HUSZKA
BENJAMIN KEATINGE
ANGELO MITCHIEVICI
VIKTOR PÁL
CĂTĂLIN PAVEL
ANNA PIOTROWSKA
ALEXANDRA PRUNEA BRETONNET
BRIAN SHAEV
ALINA VAISFELD
CAMELIA DIANA YÜKSEL

Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

Copyright – New Europe College
ISSN 1584-0298

New Europe College
Str. Plantelor 21
023971 Bucharest
Romania

www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro
Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74



BRIAN SHAEV

Born in 1984, in the United States of America

Ph.D., Modern European History, University of Pittsburgh, 2014

Dissertation: *French Socialists, German Social Democrats, and the Origins of European Integration, 1948-1957*

Postdoctoral researcher, Centre for European Studies at the University of Gothenburg (CERGU)

Participation to conferences and workshops in Gothenburg, Berlin, Paris

Several papers published in scholarly journals

FLOWERS BUT NO BOUQUET: THE COMMON ASSEMBLY'S RELATIONS WITH THE HIGH AUTHORITY OF THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY UNDER PRESIDENTS JEAN MONNET AND RENÉ MAYER, 1952-1956

Abstract

In 1956, the Socialist faction in the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community put forth a wide-ranging and unprecedented critique of the High Authority, the Community's executive body. The faction's move elicited harsh rebukes from the assembly's Christian-Democratic and Liberal factions and was the first instance of overt and coordinated transnational partisanship. This article argues that this bitter exchange would have been unthinkable under the High Authority's previous president, Jean Monnet, who was widely admired by all factions. The Socialist critique encompassed a range of Community policies. Yet the personality of the new High Authority President, René Mayer, proved an important factor in this first exercise in transnational partisanship in the early history of European integration.

Keywords: European Coal & Steel Community (ECSC), European integration, European Parliament, Jean Monnet, Socialist, transnational history

1. Introduction

René Mayer was no Jean Monnet. So thought at least the Socialist deputies in the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first parliamentary body of a supranational Europe. And they let High Authority President Mayer know it. A new atmosphere took hold of the assembly in 1956. Mutual recriminations and reproaches

between deputies and members of the High Authority, and among deputies themselves, heralded a period of partisanship unthinkable during Monnet's tenure as President of the High Authority from 1952 to 1955.

Though there is a major historical work on the High Authority of the ECSC,¹ historians have neglected the politics of the ECSC's Common Assembly. Most literature to date focuses on the European Parliament in later decades, and is written by political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists rather than by historians. This article represents a first attempt at writing a history of supranational democracy and of its limitations during the inaugural phase of the European Communities. It analyzes in particular how the second figure to take the helm of the Community's executive gave impetus to a contentious form of politics between the three political groups of the Common Assembly: the Christian-Democratic, Liberal, and Socialist party groups. Utilizing the parliamentary records of the ECSC, we explore here how personality and policies blended into a mixture under Mayer's stewardship. The previously harmonious relationship among the political groups came to an end, at least for a while, as conflict broke out between the High Authority and the assembly's Socialist deputies.

A reading of the Common Assembly's protocols suggests that personality mattered a great deal in the transposition of partisanship to the supranational parliamentary level. Christian-Democratic and Liberal deputies regretted the attendant loss of decorum and spirit of mutual good will damaged by this first coordinated attack against the High Authority within the Common Assembly. The Socialist practitioners of this partisanship responded that their blunt appraisals and criticism were healthy for the Community. By refusing to offer the customary bouquet of rhetorical flowers to the High Authority President, they considered themselves to be at the *avant-garde* of efforts to supranationalize the exercise of parliamentary democracy.

2. Technocracy and Democracy: The Formation of the ECSC's High Authority and Common Assembly

When crafting what became known to the world as the Schuman Plan, Jean Monnet had not envisioned a European parliamentary body. He was faithful to what historians would later call "technocratic internationalism," a belief that technocrats, due to their common expertise, ethos, and

experience, could bypass the dirty world of politics and diplomacy and construct the world anew in their image.² At the same time, Monnet's plan for a European Coal and Steel Community would satisfy a number of pressing French economic and geopolitical problems. It would allow the French government to re-seize the international initiative after five years of back-peddling and confusion on the "German question," the question of how to integrate and tame the new state of West Germany within a Western bloc whose war with the Communist bloc seemed to be turning from cold to hot in 1948-50.

The French Socialist Party (SFIO), however, insisted on the inclusion of a European parliamentary body to oversee the actions of the High Authority executive and to thereby ensure that the first supranational community would be built on a democratic foundation, as incomplete as that foundation admittedly was. The French government had little domestic political room for maneuver. With a powerful Communist Party criticizing the regime from the "left" and a growing Gaullist movement from its "right," SFIO votes were essential for the passage of the Treaty of Paris, which established the supranational community charged with constructing a common market of coal, steel, and iron.

A Common Assembly was included in the Community's institutional framework. It rubbed shoulders with an executive High Authority, an advisory Consultative Committee representing producers, workers, and consumers, a European Court of Justice, and an intergovernmental Council of Ministers, which in practice shared executive powers uneasily with the High Authority. The Common Assembly did not rub shoulders with its sister institutions as an equal. A legal pigmy, the Common Assembly had the pretense but not the legal authority of a true parliamentary body. It did not have the right to propose Community directives, nor was the High Authority obliged to inform it in advance of making formal decisions for the Community. Its only real legal power was that it could force the resignation of the entire High Authority (not that of a single commissioner) with a two-thirds censure vote. It was unlikely that the assembly would ever take such a draconian step, at least not in the short term.

Belgian Socialist deputy Fernand Dehousse described the ECSC Common Assembly's limited powers in these terms:

We are not a real parliament for three reasons that stand out in my eyes. We do not have positive powers, we do not vote for laws. Even within the area of competence...of the Coal-Steel Community, we do not have

this right. We do not have a budget either. ...Finally and above all, may I say that we are not a parliament because we are not elected? ...What are we? A sort of information meeting. The High Authority communicates its information to our committees before our sessions meet. Then our committees report on this information and we discuss it...³

Yet the Socialist deputies of the Common Assembly had the ambition of converting it into a real parliamentary body and of effectively exercising supervision over the executive High Authority. In the same speech, Dehousse gave the following “homage” to the Community’s executive and, in doing so, provided an implicit rebuke of ideas especially popular among Gaullist deputies in France:

The High Authority has often been object, in certain circles, of criticism that it tends to represent a technocratic institution, that is the formulation currently in style. I am pleased to say that the High Authority has behaved as true democrats [sic] in its conception and in its practice in its relations with the Common Assembly.

Jean Monnet, used to a career operating behind the scenes, sympathized with the deputies’ ambitions. He saw the Assembly as an ally in his struggle to secure independence for the supranational community against the irksome intergovernmental Council of Ministers. This tacit alliance, begun almost as soon as the Community opened, set a precedent for a defining feature of the relationship between the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, and the executive European Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC) and, later, of the European Union (EU). In a long series of steps from the late 1970s up to the recent Treaty of Lisbon, the powers of what was first known as the European Parliamentary Assembly of the EEC and then as the European Parliament, grew to match many of the ambitions of their predecessors from the 1950s. It is worth examining these early years of the Community to uncover how this dynamic striving toward democratic control at the European level began.

3. A Love Affair: Jean Monnet’s Common Assembly

Although the Common Assembly was not part of Monnet’s original institutional design for the Community, he embraced it from its inception

as an open forum in his crusade for European union. Monnet already had excellent relations with French governing elites due to his tenure as head of France's postwar planning commission for reconstruction and economic modernization. Despite his tenacious stances in negotiations for the Treaty of Paris in 1950-51 in defense of many French interests, he earned the respect, admiration, and even friendship of many of his negotiating partners.

Monnet's network of contacts, supporters, and friends grew impressively as a result of his interaction with deputies representing six nations in the Common Assembly. A flirtatious anecdote during a discussion of an assembly resolution on its relations with the High Authority represents well the atmosphere prevailing in the infant Common Assembly. The Belgian socialists Fernand Dehousse, Paul-Henri Spaak, the latter of whom was the assembly's president, and Belgian Christian-Democrat Pierre Louis Wigny discussed the wording of the resolution with the German liberal Viktor-Emanuel Preusker and with Monnet. The protocol reads:

[Spaak]: Mr. Wigny, eliminating the word "working" concerning the relations between the High Authority and the Assembly seems difficult to me.

Mr. Dehousse: If we eliminate the word "working," the term "relations" becomes extremely large and may exceed the intentions of the authors of the text. ...

[Spaak]: I wonder what relations we might have with the High Authority that would not be working relations. (Smiles in the Assembly). It is a worry that occurs to me.

M. Wigny: There are political relations.

[Spaak]: Mr. President of the High Authority, would you like to have relations with us that are not working [relations]?

Mr. Jean Monnet...: We have often had very happy relations with you outside of the context of work.

[Spaak]: I accept then that the word "working" is not essential.⁴

Shortly thereafter, the Common Assembly approved Wigny's amendment.

Praise for Monnet was a constant feature of the Common Assembly in its opening years. The French Liberal, Roger de Saivre, expressed a collective view when he thanked Monnet for his "clearness and loyal precision" in

laying out the situation of the Community in 1954.⁵ Belgian Socialist Max Buset declared that, "As I see it, during the negotiations and the work that made possible the opening of the common market, the High Authority has used a method of remarkable subtlety that is, in my view, one of the fundamental reasons for the success it has found."⁶ In the Assembly's second session, Preusker said, "permit me first to express my thanks to the President of the High Authority, Mr. Monnet for the spirit of decision and for the courage with which he has attacked the difficult problem of creating a common market for coal and steel."⁷ A few months later, the Italian Christian Democrat Armando Sabatini "congratulate[d] the High Authority for the work it has accomplished during the first phase of its activity and above all for the spirit with which it carried out its task."⁸

A quasi-mystical aura of purpose and meaning permeated the early community. The otherwise rather mundane tasks of regulating coal and steel prices, and resolving disputes over transport costs and scrap metal were imbued with a sense of mission by the High Authority and the Common Assembly's deputies alike. Kiran Klaus Patel has argued that this aura of meaning was what actually distinguished the supranational community, whose powers in practice were far more limited than they were legally, from its intergovernmental counterparts such as the Council of Europe and the Organization of European Economic Cooperation. This sense of purpose comes out in Wigny's January 1953 comment that, "I had a great pleasure in reading [the High Authority's report] because the High Authority has demonstrated a truly European spirit. We have made a revolution in the texts, you are now in the process of realizing it by [your] acts."⁹

Assembly deputies praised Monnet for representing the ideals and spirit of the Community. By this they meant that Monnet, and by extension the High Authority, put into practice a supranational ethos by shedding national loyalties in favor of a loyalty to the well-being of the six member-state nations conceived as a whole. Preusker, in delivering the report of the Assembly's common market committee, said that, "the committee has gained the conviction that the High Authority is making a real effort to become in effect a European supranational organ."¹⁰ Wigny waxed praise on the High Authority in the same session: "You have succeeded in giving the impression, from the debut, that the High Authority is neither French, nor German, nor Dutch...nor Italian, but is rather truly European."¹¹

That there was near unanimity in this impression of the High Authority emerges from comments of deputies who had either opposed or been suspicious of the creation of the Community within their domestic politics. Satisfaction that their previous fears of the executive High Authority were not coming to fruition are evident in the comments of Günther Henle and Joachim Schöne, on opposite ends of the West German political spectrum. The Christian Democratic Party (CDU) that emerged from the Second World War had a powerful Christian labor wing, spearheaded by the Minister-President of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Karl Arnold. This labor wing favored alliances with the Social-Democratic Party (SPD) on the model of the 1946-50 CDU-SPD government in NRW. It was open to supporting socialization and had a lot of common ground with the SPD on methods of organizing industrial relations.

Henle of the Klöckner firm, on the other hand, represented a growing influence of Ruhr industrialists, rather than workers, within the national Christian-Democratic party. Industrialists funded the CDU and the party quietly abandoned its 1947 socialist-leaning *Ahlener Programm* in favor of the “social market economy” concept of Ludwig Erhard, the liberal Economics minister under CDU Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s government. Ruhr industrialists like Henle distrusted Monnet’s application of technocratic internationalism to heavy industry, as they considered it an unwarranted, and certainly unwanted, intervention into what had historically been their sphere of affairs.¹² The industrialists would have preferred to re-create the private international cartels of the interwar period, cartels German companies had dominated. The Schuman Plan was in part a French endeavor to prevent the recreation of such cartels, which, in their view, would reproduce the subordinate interwar status of French heavy industry in postwar industrial Europe. Before the Common Market had even opened, though, Henle was already praising the High Authority with an enthusiasm one would have thought unlikely given his opinion of just a few years before. It is worth quoting his January 1953 comments at length, as they encapsulate well the accommodation industrial circles achieved with the High Authority executive:

Before, when the Schuman Plan had not yet reached the negotiations stage, certain milieu: the management of industrial and economic enterprises, felt some worry in thinking that the future Community and High Authority might become a vast bureaucratic system that, above its prerogatives and without real contact with the living economy of our countries, would

attempt to impose on this economy an orientation inspired by purely doctrinal considerations. I admit that I myself was not exempt from such apprehensions.

But, today, five months after the coming together of the High Authority, I have the pleasure to note in light of the report that has been presented to us that we feel much more at ease and such is without doubt the present spirit of a number of representatives of economic branches...

I believe it to be my duty, as a participant in the first tasks, to congratulate the President of the High Authority for the circumspection with which he has created this organization, succeeding in this way in creating the atmosphere necessary for a European collaboration.

It is necessary to add that in the matter of organization—and I believe that everybody will agree in recognizing that it is so—the High Authority has made a particular effort to maintain the dimensions of its official apparatus within rational limits. So, these two factors, the immediate coming into contact with the living economy and an unmistakable effort to maintain the administrative services within fair proportions, are signs revelatory of the spirit that has reigned during this European honey moon.¹³

Six months later Henle applauded the High Authority again for its “courage and resolution.”¹⁴

Schöne, a SPD representative from the Ruhr territory, was a vigorous opponent of Henle within German domestic politics. If he and his party had had their way, Henle and his industrial friends would have been expropriated and Ruhr coal and steel would have come under socialized management. His party had opposed the creation of the ECSC. During its 1951 campaign to defeat the Treaty, SPD leaders argued that the High Authority executive was a dictatorship in the making and that Monnet and representatives of other states would not rise above national interests. Rather, the party argued that Monnet would use executive powers to systematically discriminate against German industry, and to undermine the position of workers in the Ruhr.¹⁵

SPD deputies initially made this same critique in the Common Assembly.¹⁶ But, even as Schöne argued in January 1953 that the High Authority was discriminating against German businesses, he remarked that, “I am far from thinking that it is intentional.” Though his party retained its critical attitude, Schöne said that,

I must say that...in general the High Authority has accomplished its task well. It had to, in many cases, conciliate complex statistics that are difficult to compare, to make holistic evaluations and to develop a common line of action. I am happy to be able to note that, in my view, the High Authority has completely succeeded.¹⁷

In 1954, Schöne's German counterpart Hermann Pünder, a Christian Democrat, spoke second-hand of Schöne's acclaim for the High Authority:

All things considered, I rally without reservation, as it concerns the loan [that the High Authority negotiated with the U.S. government], to the words of recognition and gratitude that my colleague from the German Parliament, Mr. Schöne, current President of our Investment Committee, addressed to you, Mr. President Monnet, fifteen days ago, in Luxembourg, when he was still vice-president of this committee. He spoke then of the great political success that has contributed in a large manner to consolidate the prestige of the European Coal and Steel Community as a whole and more particularly that of the High Authority, adding that it was particularly significant that America has shown its confidence in a precise way in this first European supranational organization.¹⁸

This positive tone towards the executive prevailed even when deputies criticized Monnet's High Authority. Schöne and the French Christian Democrat François de Menthon complained about repeated delays in responses to assembly requests that the High Authority develop reports and submit information to the Common Assembly.¹⁹ Nevertheless they showed an appreciation for the challenges facing the newly constituted executive in fulfilling such tasks. Reflecting his party's broader negative attitude, Gerhard Kreyssig of the SPD made a far-ranging critique of the new common market as it opened in June 1953. He said that, "this opening of the common market, above all of steel, has generated more unhappiness than satisfaction."²⁰ Kreyssig was responding to a downturn in the German steel sector and a rise in Community prices, the latter of which contradicted the stated intention of the common market.

Kreyssig then stated that certain claims by the High Authority were "contradicted by reality." Nonetheless, Kreyssig softened his critique by saying that, "We all know how vast and important the task of the High Authority is." He urged "the President and members of the High Authority to not interpret [his] reflections as a crushing critique of their activity." He even encouraged the High Authority to be proactive in stemming potential

criticism of their actions by publishing reports that would precisely distinguish between negative trends in the European market that *were* and *were not* results of the Community's activities, so that it could "defend itself against such reproaches." Considering that his party had spared no effort in denouncing the ECSC's creation, Kreyssig's comments demonstrate the constructive approach adopted by the SPD deputies within the assembly.

Several ECSC deputies objected when the High Authority published decisions before consulting the Common Assembly, presenting the deputies with, in their view, *faits accomplis*. Yet the deputies generally viewed Monnet's executive as an ally in their efforts to gain effective parliamentary powers to supervise the High Authority and to influence the decisions of the Council of Ministers. Dehousse, who lamented the assembly's paucity of powers as quoted above, said that, "we have considerably ameliorated in practice the theoretical rules [about the assembly's powers] of the Treaty." He "rendered homage" to the High Authority because "we owe this evolution also to the great comprehension with which the High Authority has shown proof in regard to the Common Assembly."²¹

Wigny said that, "I was particularly struck...[when] the President of the High Authority spoke of the sovereign supervision of our assembly."²² Further, Schöne told the assembly in May 1955 that, "we are also a bit bothered by the Treaty" because "the attributions of the assembly are not as precise and wide as would be desired."²³ Nonetheless, he blamed not the High Authority, but the Council of Ministers, for the strictures placed upon them. He and his SPD colleague Heinrich Deist supported an expansion of the High Authority's powers so that the "High Authority can oppose the dynamic of economic expansion, which we all respect, with its own dynamic."²⁴

4. A New, for Some, Unwanted Partner: René Mayer Takes the Reins of the High Authority

The French government, though, formally opposed any expansion in the power of the supranational High Authority or of the Common Assembly. The supranational nature of the Community was a French invention but a shift of politics occurred in France when liberals and Gaullists ascended to government. The pro-supranational French Socialist and Christian-Democratic parties were retreating electorally, and the

Radical party was split between pro-integration deputies like Maurice Schumann and more skeptical leaders such as Pierre Mendès-France. French ministers were annoyed that Monnet treated their representatives in the Council of Ministers in a “cavalier fashion” and even “hint[ed] at the Ministers’ lack of importance.”²⁵ The bitter fight over proposals for a supranational European Defense Community and its defeat by the French National Assembly in August 1954 further dampened enthusiasm in governing circles for Monnet’s brand of supranational governance.

Angry that his vision of European integration was defeated in the French Assembly, Monnet announced his resignation in late 1954 from the presidency of the High Authority so that he could openly agitate for European unity. Adenauer “was both moved and shaken by the decision” and urged Monnet not to resign.²⁶ The Common Assembly shared Adenauer’s distress. In a December resolution, it “expresse[d] to the President of the High Authority its gratitude for the work he accomplished, thank[ed] him specially for contributing to the assurance of a constant collaboration between the Assembly and the High Authority and to the efficiency of parliamentary control.” Moreover, it “makes its own the homage and regret expressed to the President of the High Authority by the President of the Assembly...and wishes as well that it may be possible that Mr. Monnet modify his decision.”²⁷ French Socialist leader Guy Mollet spoke of a “debt of recognition for Jean Monnet, whose precise intelligence, firmness, and personal rigor have marked our work and greatly helped our assembly, like the other institutions of the Community, to affirm its supranational character.”²⁸

The deputies differed in their views of the consequences of Monnet’s departure for “this great heritage” left by Monnet and his collaborators, in the words of a left-republican Italian deputy, Ugo La Malfa. The French liberal Alfred Chupin praised Monnet for his “disinterest” and evoked Monnet’s contention that the ECSC institutions were not just “a personal work” of one man. Though he expressed his “regrets,” he struck a hopeful note:

...will this compromise the future? I think not. The message that Mr. Monnet gives to us in leaving is a message of faith in our institutions.²⁹

Though a few months later he attempted to renege on his resignation, the French government seized on Monnet’s misstep to replace him with a figure more to its liking. In May 1955 French Premier Edgar Faure

nominated René Mayer, a liberal politician representing French Algeria and formerly a deputy within the ECSC Common Assembly. In spring 1955 Mayer took the reins of the High Authority. Later that year, many ECSC deputies, including German Social Democrats, joined Mollet's new non-governmental organization, the Action Committee for the United States of Europe, dedicated to pressuring national governments to establish a European atomic energy community.

After Mayer's nomination, Dehousse struck a pessimistic and prophetic counter-note to Chupin's optimism. He lamented that, "For me, for many democrats, for many Socialists, Mr. Monnet is, among other things, what made all of the difference within the European Coal and Steel Community between a democratic government and a capitalist cartel."³⁰ His remark reflects at once the devotion of the Socialist party group to the figure of Jean Monnet, and its worry about the future of the Community in the hands of a less able, or less amenable, President.

All speakers welcomed Mayer and praised his first speech to the assembly. The transnational party groups of the supranational assembly co-existed harmoniously with each other in 1952-55, unlike what was often the case between parties in national domestic politics. Consensus was still the *modus operandi* of the Common Assembly. Enrico Carboni gave a warm but not particularly enthusiastic speech for the Christian Democrats. For its part, the French Socialist Party disliked Mayer within French national politics, and voted against his investiture as Prime Minister in 1949, though it later did vote for him in 1951.³¹ The protocol of the Socialist parliamentary group's 1949 meeting with Mayer shows that a large swath of the party personally detested him, even though they actually supported much of his proposed platform.

The Socialists' rhetorical welcome of President Mayer was cautious from the start. Mollet told Mayer that,

The course of French affairs has at times led us to cooperate within the same governmental majority, and often to oppose each other as well. In what concerns European policy, however, we have always been in accord on the objectives as well as the methods. ...the Socialist group is happy about the general tone of your declaration. ...It is therefore with a favorable prejudice that we wait to observe the High Authority begin work with its new President.³²

Mayer responded,

Turning now to Mr. Guy Mollet, I want to give him my thanks for the welcome that he and the members of his group have expressed for the European who has become President of the High Authority...

I was touched by the words of his welcoming speech. I also understand the conditions to which remain, of course, subordinated the confidence of the Socialist group for the High Authority and for its new President. My previous career has given me in these matters an extremely fine ear (laughter) and I do not need recourse to the gadgets that are placed here on the tables nor of a translator to understand well what some of these words meant.

But something at least has given me joy, and that is that my hope is the same as that expressed by Mr. Guy Mollet, that is to say that I may conserve for a long time and if possible until the end the confidence of Mr. Guy Mollet and of his friends.³³

As it turned out, Mayer's honeymoon with the assembly would last less than a year.

5. The Honey Moon is Over: Supranational Partisanship in Mayer's Common Assembly

On 21 June 1956, High Authority Commissioner Paul Finet rose to defend the executive against a coordinated Socialist attack outlined in a scathing report written by French Socialist Émile Vanrullen. Finet told the assembly,

I admit that at first I was overjoyed. At the beginning of his oral report Mr. Vanrullen sent some flowers to the High Authority for its action in the field of social policy and I thought to myself that we were going to receive, at the end of the oral report, a beautiful bouquet. Unfortunately the few flowers never came together into a bouquet and the end of the speech was more a severe arraignment that caused me and my colleagues to ask ourselves...whether we earned these reproaches...³⁴

This session of the Common Assembly was the first in which a real, sustained conflict between the party groups, and between a party group and the High Authority, broke out. The Belgian Socialist Roger Gailly responded to Finet's metaphor the next day by saying that, "It is time

to end this overly facile game that consists of permanently exchanging flowers and not having at times the courage to say what one truly feels."³⁵

The previous month, the Dutch Labor deputy Gerard Marinus Nederhorst complained that in his speech to the assembly Mayer "did not pronounce a single word in response to the grave criticism of my friend Mr. Schöne." The President's responses "gave the impression as if we had thrown nothing but flowers on the path of the High Authority." The Christian-Democratic speaker, he said, "played perfectly well this role," but the Socialist group would do this no longer. While Emja Sassen for the Christian Democrats praised the "realism" of Mayer's speech, Nederhorst considered it "the argumentation of an excellent technocrat." He asked of Mayer, whose speech was loaded with statistics and figures, "is this really the essence of the common market?" He announced that, "It is very consciously that my political friends and I want to trouble this atmosphere of political weddings."³⁶

The Socialist group accused Mayer's executive of abandoning the spirit of the Community and of breaking the tacit alliance between the Common Assembly and the High Authority. In this speech, Nederhorst denounced Mayer in particular for his absence from the debate and for letting the executive be represented by civil servants, which "no national parliament would have allowed." He considered Mayer's absence to be indicative of Mayer's entire approach to interacting with the assembly:

His predecessor, Mr. Jean Monnet, had the commendable habit of attending the committee meetings each time that the agenda contained points of some importance. I regret to note that we have never been able to meet Mr. René Mayer in committee, not when we discussed the important question of cartels, nor when we examined the important question of coal policy, nor during the exchange of views with the High Authority on the important question of [the] re-training [of displaced workers].

Nederhorst accused Mayer of neglecting the supervising function of the Common Assembly, of keeping it in the dark on issues essential to the Community's success, and of refusing its help in applying the treaty.³⁷ He and other Socialists argued that Mayer was overseeing the "disintegration of [the executive's powers], a transfer of powers to national governments and to producers, when [the High Authority] should be conserving and exercising them itself."³⁸ The Socialist faction went on to make a series of criticisms of specific policies enacted by Mayer's High Authority, in

particular of issues related to prices, cartels, and social policy. Mayer's policies, in the view of French Socialist Jean Charlot was guided by "a strange will to be liberal in spite of everything."³⁹

Liberal and Christian-Democratic deputies were also at times critical of Mayer and the High Authority. The Belgian Christian Democrat Alfred Bertrand, for instance, expressed concern that, "in the last months, a certain stagnation, a certain indecision appears in the action of the High Authority as concerns the ultimate evolution in the social field..."⁴⁰ Nonetheless, his speech and those of other non-Socialist deputies sprinkled together praise and criticism. Most notably, their tone in addressing High Authority Commissioners remained deferential, appreciative, and sympathetic.

Not so with the Socialists. In June 1956, they decided to turn their displeasure with Mayer into a broad-side attack on the executive. They introduced partisanship and acidity for the first time into the assembly's debate. In doing so, they provoked the contempt of their surprised Liberal and Christian-Democratic counterparts. A tempestuous row between speakers then led to a momentary breakdown of inter-group civility.

The Socialists' attack was foreshadowed by speeches in May 1956. At that time, Nederhorst warned that the Socialist group did not accept the Christian Democrats' view that a censure motion against the High Authority would be "inopportune and even completely impossible in the present circumstances":

Our group, Mr. President, does not share this view, which is not to say that we have decided to submit a censure motion on the policies of the High Authority. I must nevertheless tell you that this idea appears to us, alas, much more seductive than [it did] last year.⁴¹

The next month, the Socialist group went a step further. At the end of the session, after the Community had approved a series of resolutions, some of which Socialists voted for and others against, Kreyszig took to the floor to make a declaration in the name of his group. He enumerated a series of points on which his group "regret[ted]" the High Authority's attitude and position. According to him, the High Authority "has persisted in its passive attitude [by] delay[ing] social progress," it "has weakened... the supranational character [of the Community] by not making use of some of its powers, thereby permitting national governments and groups of producers to exercise powers that belong to the High Authority," and "the attitude of the High Authority has not always had as a result the

facilitating of the exercise of parliamentary control.” He concluded that, “the Socialist group expresses in a most formal manner the concern that the development of the High Authority’s political direction causes it.”⁴²

Stung, Mayer asked Kreyszig whether the Socialists were making a declaration or proposing a resolution. The Belgian Christian Democrat Paul Struye said that, “this is a camouflaged censure motion.” His colleague Werner Dollinger thought that, “this declaration is a mixture of massive attacks and censure motion.” The Christian-Democratic spokesperson was clearly angered by the Socialist group’s maneuver. He said he was “shocked” and declared that if this was the attitude of the group, “it is its duty to draw the logical conclusion (*tirer les conséquences*) and submit a censure motion.” He went on to say that of course “there is not a shadow of chance that such a censure motion would be adopted by the Assembly,” since a censure motion required a two-thirds majority. The Christian-Democratic and Liberal groups would certainly not vote with the Socialists against Mayer.

Struye was angry as well. He denounced the, “in my view, deplorable procedure adopted” by the Socialists. It placed the other groups in an ignoble position because they could only “formulate improvised responses” to “a declaration [that was] very clearly and carefully prepared.” He urged Mayer not to proceed with his suggestion that the assembly adjourn so that the presidents of the groups could discuss the declaration with him. “To do so,” Struye thought, “is to grant too much honor to this declaration.”

These statements by Christian-Democratic deputies infuriated the Socialists, if Gailly’s reply is representative of the group as a whole:

We told you that this was a declaration...The Socialist group is not satisfied. It has the right and the duty to say so, without asking anybody’s permission.

You spoke, Mr. Struye, of a lack of courage. I heard behind me one of your colleagues employ the word “disgusting” [*dégoutant*]. We do not accept your lessons about courage, nor your lessons about propriety...

You spoke of a censure motion. If it had pleased the Socialist group to submit a censure motion, it would not have asked your permission. It did not believe it necessary to go that far. I believed that a warning [was sufficient] [and] later inquiries could be addressed to what I consider to be a government [the High Authority]...

We wanted to ask it, to use a sports formulation, “to do better next time...”

A censure motion, Mr. Struye? We will see at the proper time and, I repeat, without asking your permission, whether it is proper or not to submit one.

As for me, I am perfectly indifferent as to whether the session is to be suspended. *Voilà* the only response that I have for you.

The session then suspended so that the group presidents could meet with Mayer. When it returned, Liberal and Christian-Democratic spokespersons made curt, terse declarations affirming their support for the High Authority. And then the June 1956 session of the ECSC Common Assembly, the most dramatic and temperamental to date, adjourned.

6. Conclusion

The role of political parties (in both their domestic and supranational forms) in the European integration process is an understudied field given their evident importance for European politics in general.⁴³ In the European Parliamentary Assembly and then European Parliament of the 1970s-early 2000s, the relations between the Christian-Democratic and Socialist party groups oscillated between periods of supranational consensus and partisanship.⁴⁴ There is vigorous disagreement among political scientists about whether the “Europarties” have now or in the past gained ideological coherence and whether they operate mainly on transnational, or on national lines.⁴⁵ There is also no consensus as to whether deputies sent to Strasbourg tend to internalize “European” values or not, and whether processes of transfer and learning among European deputies have a concrete impact on individual deputies’ self-conception and, perhaps, on their patterns of voting.⁴⁶

In addition, most of the literature on the European parliamentary bodies is written by political scientists. These works do not use historical archives, in part because they almost always write about the recent past. There are currently no historical studies of the Common Assembly of the ECSC, nor of the European Parliament of the EEC and EU, besides an edited series that focuses in part on the Christian-Democratic group.⁴⁷ This lack of attention may in part be the result of a presumption that, a) the Common Assembly and European Parliament did not matter in terms of their impact on the European integration process as a whole, and b) the Euro-deputies brought their domestic politics with them to Strasbourg and no real supranational parliamentary spirit developed in the early European

institutions. However, such views, though often repeated, have not been demonstrated using the methods offered by vigorous historical research.

The findings of this article about the exercise of partisanship in the first parliament of a supranational European community should give scholars pause before making such claims, in particular as concerns point b. The Socialist group did not submit a censure motion in 1956, but it came awfully close. Here I have argued that personality mattered in the attitude of the Common Assembly towards the High Authority. Of course one could argue that the Community had already been established in 1956, and therefore the deputies could reasonably have higher expectations of the executive than they had in 1952-55, which was indeed the case. Nonetheless, I argue that such a sweeping attack, and the bitterness of the debate that ensued, would have been unthinkable under President Jean Monnet.

The faith and trust that an overwhelming majority of deputies had in Monnet evaporated under President René Mayer. Despite the flowers thrown in Mayer's direction, he would never receive the unanimous bouquet representative of Monnet's relations with the assembly. Personality mattered indeed. It is not the contention here, though, that only personality mattered. Community policies on pricing, cartels, the migration of Community workers, and competition and social policy, and the general fortunes of national coal, steel, and iron industries vis-à-vis one another and of the Community's industries vis-à-vis the outside world, were subject to constant discussion and debate in the assembly and in its committees. The deputies sought to influence negotiations between the member-state governments, as well as those between the Commission and the Council of Ministers. How they did so, whether these areas were subject to trans-party group consensus or conflict, and their successes and failures in influencing developments in European integration, is a field now wide open for historical inquiry, research, and revision.

NOTES

- ¹ Dirk Spierenburg and Raymond Poidevin, *The History of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community: Supranationality in Operation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994). Ernst Haas devotes a chapter of his seminal work to the “supranational political parties.” Ernst B. Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces: 1950-1957* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968, 1958).
- ² Johan Schot and Vincent Legendijk, “Technocratic internationalism in the interwar years: building Europe on motorways and electricity networks,” *Journal of Modern European History* 6, 2 (2008); Johan Schot and Wolfram Kaiser, *Writing the rules for Europe: experts, cartels, and international organizations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
- ³ Journal Officiel de la Communauté Européen du Charbon et de l’Acier. Débats de l’Assemblée Commune. Compte Rendu in Extensio des séances (JO CECA DAC), 14 May 1954, Archive of European Integration (AEI), University of Pittsburgh.
- ⁴ JO CECA DAC, 23 June 1953, AEI.
- ⁵ JO CECA DAC, 15 May 1954, AEI.
- ⁶ JO CECA DAC, 20 June 1953, AEI.
- ⁷ JO CECA DAC, 12 January 1953, AEI.
- ⁸ JO CECA DAC, 20 June 1953, AEI.
- ⁹ JO CECA DAC, 13 January 1953, AEI.
- ¹⁰ JO CECA DAC, 19 June 1953, AEI.
- ¹¹ JO CECA DAC, 20 June 1953, AEI.
- ¹² For Günther Henle’s role in industry and West German politics before entering the ECSC Common Assembly, see S. Jonathan Wiesen, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-1955* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 54-5; Werner Bühner, *Ruhrstahl und Europa: Die Wirtschaftsvereinigung Eisen- und Stahlindustrie und die Anfänge der europäischen Integration, 1945-1952* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1986), 35-45, 126-35; and Ursula Rombeck-Jaschinski, *Nordrhein-Westfalen, die Ruhr und Europa: Föderalismus und Europapolitik, 1945-1955* (Essen: Klartext, 1990), 45.
- ¹³ JO CECA DAC, 13 January 1953, AEI.
- ¹⁴ JO CECA DAC, 19 June 1953, AEI.
- ¹⁵ Brian Shaev, “Estrangement and Reconciliation: French Socialists, German Social Democrats, and the Origins of European Integration,” dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2014.
- ¹⁶ Brian Shaev, “The French Socialist and German Social Democratic Parties and the Future of the Working Class in the European Coal & Steel Community, 1948-1954,” *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* 9, 1 (2012).

- 17 JO CECA DAC, 12 January 1953, AEI.
18 JO CECA DAC, 13 May 1954, AEI.
19 JO CECA DAC, 12 January 1953; JO CECA DAC, 15 January 1954, AEI.
20 JO CECA DAC, 20 June 1953, AEI.
21 JO CECA DAC, 14 May 1954, AEI.
22 JO CECA DAC, 23 June 1953, AEI.
23 JO CECA DAC, 10 May 1955, AEI.
24 JO CECA DAC, 16 January 1954.
25 Spierenburg and Poidevin, p. 60.
26 Spierenburg and Poidevin, p. 229-236.
27 JO CECA DAC, 1 December 1954, AEI.
28 JO CECA DAC, 22 June 1955, AEI.
29 JO CECA DAC, 1 December 1954, AEI.
30 JO CECA DAC, 14 May 1955, AEI.
31 Groupe Parlementaire Socialiste, 20 October and 22 October 1949, 20 July and 24 July, 1951, Archiv de l'Histoire Contemporaine, Sciences-Po.
32 JO CECA DAC, 22 June 1955, AEI.
33 JO CECA DAC, 24 June 1955, AEI.
34 JO CECA DAC, 21 June 1956, AEI.
35 JO CECA DAC, 22 June 1956, AEI.
36 JO CECA DAC, 9 May 1956, AEI.
37 JO CECA DAC, 21 June 1956, AEI.
38 JO CECA DAC, 19 June 1956, AEI.
39 JO CECA DAC, 28 November 1956, AEI.
40 JO CECA DAC, 21 June 1956, AEI.
41 JO CECA DAC, 9 May 1956, AEI.
42 JO CECA DAC, 22 June 1956, AEI.
43 John Gaffney, "Introduction: political parties and the European Union," in John Gaffney, ed., *Political Parties and the European Union* (Routledge: London, 1996), 1; Elisabeth Carter, Kurt Richard Luther and Thomas Pogunke, "European Integration and Internal Party Dynamics," in Thomas Pogunke et al., *The Europeanization of National Political Parties: Power and Organizational Adaptation* (Routledge: London, 2007).
44 Geoffrey Pridham and Pippa Pridham, *Transnational Party Co-operation and European Integration: The process towards direct elections* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 1-2; Amie Kreppel, *The European Parliament and Supranational Party System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 151.
45 Simon Hix, Abdul G. Noury, and Gérard Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6; Marc Abélès, *La vie quotidienne au Parlement Européen* (Paris: Hachette, 1992), 153; Pridham and Pridham, 285-86; Simon Hix, "The Transnational

Party Federations," and Robert Ladrech, "Political Parties in the European Union," in Gaffney, ed., 208, 311, 323; Kreppel, 10, 172; Simon Lightfoot, *Europeanizing Social Democracy? The rise of the Party of European Socialists* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁴⁶ Ladrech in Gaffney, ed., 293; Roger Scully, *Becoming European? Attitudes, Behaviour, and Socialization in the European Parliament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Guy van Oudenhove, *The Political Parties in the European Parliament* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1965), 117-119; Pridham and Pridham, 282.

⁴⁷ Jean-Dominique Durand, *Christian Democrat Internationalism: its action in Europe and worldwide from post World War II until the 1990s. 3, The European People's Party: continental and social cooperation* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2014).

Bibliography

- Abélès, Marc, *La vie quotidienne au Parlement Européen*, Paris: Hachette, 1992.
- Bührer, Werner, *Ruhrstahl und Europa: Die Wirtschaftsvereinigung Eisen- und Stahlindustrie und die Anfänge der europäischen Integration, 1945-1952*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 1986.
- Carter, Elisabeth, Kurt Richard Luther and Thomas Pogunkte, "European Integration and Internal Party Dynamics," in Thomas Pogunkte et al., *The Europeanization of National Political Parties: Power and Organizational Adaptation*, Routledge: London, 2007.
- Durand, Jean-Dominique, *Christian Democrat Internationalism: its action in Europe and worldwide from post World War II until the 1990s. 3, The European People's Party: continental and social cooperation*, Brussels: Peter Lang, 2014.
- Gaffney, John, "Introduction: political parties and the European Union," in John Gaffney, ed., *Political Parties and the European Union*, Routledge: London, 1996.
- Haas, Ernst B., *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces: 1950-1957*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968, 1958.
- Hix, Simon, "The Transnational Party Federations," in Gaffney, ed.
- Hix, Simon, Abdul G. Noury, and Gérard Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kreppel, Amie, *The European Parliament and Supranational Party System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Ladrech, Robert, "Political Parties in the European Union," in Gaffney, ed
- Lightfoot, Simon, *Europeanizing Social Democracy? The rise of the Party of European Socialists*, London: Routledge, 2005.
- Oudenhove, Guy van, *The Political Parties in the European Parliament*, Leyden: Sijthoff, 1965.
- Geoffrey Pridham and Pippa Pridham, *Transnational Party Co-operation and European Integration: The process towards direct elections* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981)
- Rombeck-Jaschinski, Ursula, *Nordrhein-Westfalen, die Ruhr und Europa: Föderalismus und Europapolitik, 1945-1955*, Essen: Klartext, 1990.
- Schot, Johan and Wolfram Kaiser, *Writing the rules for Europe: experts, cartels, and international organizations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Schot, Johan and Vincent Legendijk, "Technocratic internationalism in the interwar years: building Europe on motorways and electricity networks," *Journal of Modern European History* 6, 2 (2008).
- Scully, Roger, *Becoming European? Attitudes, Behaviour, and Socialization in the European Parliament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

- ShaeV, Brian, "Estrangement and Reconciliation: French Socialists, German Social Democrats, and the Origins of European Integration," dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2014.
- ShaeV, Brian, "The French Socialist and German Social Democratic Parties and the Future of the Working Class in the European Coal & Steel Community, 1948-1954," *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* 9, 1 (2012).
- Spienburg, Dirk and Raymond Poidevin, *The History of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community: Supranationality in Operation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1994).
- Wiesen, S. Jonathan, *West German Industry and the Challenge of the Nazi Past, 1945-1955*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001.