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The European University Institute and the Historiography of European integration: the Limits of Independency

Introduction

This paper explores the role of the European University Institute (EUI) in the creation of a historiography of European integration with a focus on Walter Lipgens and Alan Milward, who both occupied the EUI's Chair of European Contemporary History in the 1970s and 1980s. I set out to determine why the European Commission's initial intention to establish the EUI's Department of History and Civilization as main center of research on the history of European integration failed as early as the end of the 1970s. Indeed, despite the creation of archives of the European Economic Communities (EC) at the EUI in 1986, the EUI ceased to be a point of reference for this emerging discipline which found an active and durable forum in a transnational network, the Liaison Committee of Historians. It appears that in the 1980s, the Institute's main interest in the field of European history shifted from the history of European integration in the 20th century to the history of Europe in the long term, with a focus on concepts such as 'European culture' which were at the time on the top of the EC's political agenda.

After having presented the creation of the EUI's Department of History within the broader context of the EC's action in the university field, I will determine the initial objectives of the project 'History of European Integration' for which the EUI and the European Commission signed a contract in 1975. I will analyze the reflections of the historians involved in this project on how to define the object and methods of this new field of historical research. The action of Walter Lipgens during his residence at the EUI will be closely studied, as well as his role in the creation of the Liaison Committee of Historians. I will try to determine the reasons why the links between the EUI and the original project 'History of European Integration' were dissolved after Lipgens' departure and why Alan Milward's residence at the EUI from 1983 to 1986 did not re-launch decisively the Institute's research activity in the history of European integration. I will show that in this very period, the scientific orientation of the EUI in the field of history changed and that this change shall be put in relation with important evolution in the EC's political agenda, especially the launching of the People's Europe Campaign.

This paper draws its sources from Walter Lipgens' and Emile Noël's archives, from the private archives of Michel Dumoulin and of the former European Commission's official Jacqueline Lastenouse as well as from interviews with key actors (historians, members of the Liaison Committee of Historians, officials of the DG X of the European Commission and of the EUI).

The context: the Community's information policy and the creation of the EUI

The creation of the EUI and of its Department of history has to be placed in the larger context of the European Commission's action in the university milieu. Since its creation in 1952, the Press and Information Service of the EC, forerunner of the Directorate-General for Information (DG X) created in 1967, had identified the university milieu as one of its priority targets (*'milieux prioritaires'*)¹ The official documents of the Information Service underscore what was seen to be the particular value of the university milieu, which justified specific action in this field. Two dimensions of universities were seen as making them worthy of special consideration. Firstly, universities were understood to be the training ground for the 'rising generation' of European leaders:

It is thus necessary [...] to focus our effort of information and formation on the rising generation, especially on young academics and students [...], by highlighting – without propaganda and in a concrete way – the dynamism and the irreversibility of the integration process.²

Secondly, it was acknowledged that universities produced knowledge, and moreover, that the forms of knowledge they produced were usually considered legitimate and respected by society more generally. The Information Service was particularly concerned with the latter factor. In 1965, Jacques-René Rabier, Director of the Service, publicly expressed his intention to use the legitimizing effect of academic knowledge for the promotion of the European project: 'University lends the phenomenon [the European integration] a sort of legitimacy of a great significance by making it the object of research, teaching and examination.'³ An administrative document of the Information Service drew a comparison with the role played by the university in the nation-building process. The redactors of the document suggested that universities could play a 'similar role in the formation of the European unity'.⁴ To those responsible for the Communities' information policy and the promotion of research on European integration, establishing regular cooperation with researchers and institutions of higher education appeared as a means of initiating a '*coopération culturelle européenne de forme communautaire*'.⁵

The creation of the EUI was based on the same rationale: to promote a European consciousness and to serve the political objectives of European integration. This objective is clearly identifiable in the inter-governmental negotiations that are at the origin of the EUI. In the 1960s, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gaetano Martino, made this revealing statement regarding the future European University:

¹ Reinfeldt, Alexander, 'Promoting a Knowledge of Europe: The Youth and European Integration' in *European Voices: Actors and Witnesses of European Integration*, proceedings of HEIRS 3rd annual colloquium, 2007, pp. 62-71, here 65-66.

² European Commission Historical Archives Brussels (ECHAB): Service de Presse et d'Information des Communautés Européennes: Programme d'Activité pour 1965. 2/2909.

³ Rabier, Jacques-René, 'L'information des Européens et l'intégration de l'Europe', leçons données des 17 et 18 février 1965, Enseignement complémentaire 10, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut d'Etudes Européennes, p. 15.

⁴ Reinfeldt (2007) p. 67.

⁵ Rabier (1965), p.18.

The primary objective in creating a European university is what Walter Hallstein spelled out at Messina [...], the development of a European consciousness that is essential if we are to reach our final objective [...], which is the political integration of Europe.⁶

During the signing ceremony of the EUI convention in 1972, the Commission vice-president, Scarascia Mugnozza, explained that this institution was to give ‘the young, who will soon be carrying on our legacy of work and thought, access to a European frame of mind and dimension’ and announced that the ceremony would ‘certainly remain in memory as the essential starting point for the future of our great homeland, Europe.’⁷ The use of the term ‘homeland’ reveals a certain conception of the social and political role of universities. I mentioned above the parallel drawn in a Commission document between the function of universities at the national and European levels. This served to highlight the determining influence of universities on the formation of national identities. Universities were indeed one of the places where the history of the nation was forged, then transmitted to elites and progressively communicated and promoted within the wider society. Was the EUI to be endowed with such a mission, i.e. to produce a history of the ‘homeland’, to use Scarascia Mugnozza’s expression? It seems that this objective was indeed envisaged at a very early stage. On 22 March 1962 in a conference at the Institute of Sociology of the Free University of Brussels, Etienne Hirsch, President of the European Atomic Energy Commission and Chairman of the Interim Committee mandated to plan for the future European University, made the following remarks on the prospect of a European University:

The nature of the tuition has given rise to most heated debates over priorities. When I told them [*men such as Oppenheimer and Smith, in the United States*] that to my mind, the main subjects to be taught and studied at the European University had to do more with the human sciences than the exact natural sciences, a man like Oppenheimer was startled. I replied that there was no difference between American physics and French or German physics, but in the field of human sciences there were differences in Europe as structured nationality-wise – to say nothing of the ‘Europe des patries’. There has been a natural tendency to follow one’s own line in the study of culture, history and so on, with the result that history does not come out the same whatever you do in France, in Germany, in Belgium, in Britain or in America!⁸

The creation of a Department for History and Civilization was partly the result of this position, which was taken by the Interim Committee more generally: it offered the possibility of collaboration between European historians of diverse nationalities and created the conditions for a more European approach to European history.

Transnational collaboration between scholars of different national origins became the fundamental principle in each of the projects in the field of history supported by the European Commission from the mid-1970s onward. The rationale for the transnational method was to go beyond the usual national view of European history. Jacqueline Lastenouse, who worked on the university milieu during her entire career at the Commission, from 1962 until 2001, insists that the Information Service saw in the

⁶ As quoted in Jean-Marie Palayret, ‘Des négociations à la création de l’Institut universitaire européen de Florence’, Paper presented at the Colloquium, ‘L’enjeu de la culture dans le champ multilatéral’, Université Lumière Lyon 2 and Institut d’études politiques, 10-12 May 2001, p. 9.

⁷ *Bulletin from the European Communities* 6 (1972), p. 7.

⁸ *Bulletin from the European Communities* 85 (1962), p. 6.

creation of international networks one of its central tasks in the field of academic research. Since the European Commission was not able to influence the content of this research, it could at least seek to modify the conditions in which it was carried out, by bringing together scholars from different countries of the Community. The EUI, by nature a resolutely international research institution, was perfectly suited for the development of such research networks. Even before the Institute was officially opened in 1976, the European Commission launched a project in the field of history based at the History and Civilization Department of the EUI.

The project 'History of European Integration' at the EUI

The origin of this project lies in a request from the European Commission, and more precisely from its Secretary-General Emile Noël, to the newly appointed President of the EUI and former Secretary to the High Authority of the European Community for Coal and Steel, Max Kohnstamm.⁹ The request regarded the setting up of a '*Projet d'histoire de la Communauté européenne*'.¹⁰ This project did not deal with the history of Europe as 'homeland' but with the European Communities. As such it was quite in keeping with the idea of producing knowledge of and a sense of attachment to Europe as a political project. Although the EUI opened its door October 1976, already in March 1975, a contract between Noël and Kohnstamm, representing their respective institutions, stamped this international research project on European integration with official approval. The EUI asked Pascal Fontaine to produce a note concerning the preparation and the realization of this project.¹¹ The choice of Pascal Fontaine, young professor at Sciences Po Paris, is revealing. Fontaine stems indeed from what Antonin Cohen describes as a 'European family', very close to Jean Monnet and the pioneers of the EU institutions.¹² He is the son of François Fontaine, a close collaborator of Emile Noël, who was head of the Commission's Press and Information Office in Paris and who had actively participated in the creation on the *Commission pour l'Etude des Communautés Européennes* in 1965. François Fontaine was an active member of the Jean Monnet Foundation and one of the promoters of the project of Jean Monnet's memoirs. His son Pascal Fontaine had been the personal secretary of Jean Monnet between 1971 and 1976. The Fontaine father and son, as Cohen calls them, actively participated to the design and diffusion of a '*récit des origines de la construction européenne*'.¹³ The involvement of Pascal Fontaine shows therefore how much, in the eyes of the European Commission, the project of history of the European Communities was part of a larger design aiming at the production and promotion of a European '*grand récit*'.

The German historian, Karl Dietrich Bracher, a renowned specialist of the Third Reich, had been originally been chosen to occupy the Chair of Contemporary European

⁹ Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU): Fonds Walter Lippens WL-96, 1946-1980, Memorandum addressed by Peter Ludlow to Walter Lippens, March 1979.

¹⁰ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, EC, Legal Service, Note à l'attention de Monsieur Audland Secrétaire Général Adjoint, 'Projet de recherche Histoire de l'intégration européenne de l'Institut universitaire européen', 5 December 1979.

¹¹ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981 Research project 'History of European Co-operation and Integration',

'Etude sur les origines du Marché commun et de la Communauté Européenne' by P. Fontaine (03/1976).

¹² Cohen, Antonin, 'Le 'père de l'Europe'. La construction sociale d'un récit des origines' in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 166-167, 2007, pp. 14-29, here p. 20.

¹³ Ibid.

History at the EUI.¹⁴ He reviewed Fontaine's preliminary reflections. The young English historian, Peter Ludlow who was to become associate professor of the History and Civilization Department, was also asked to give his feedback on the project. On 6 March 1976, Ludlow, addressed the following reflections to Fontaine, clearly warning him about the risk of a too federalist stance and about the teleological dimension that this historiography of European integration could take:

We say that we want to write a history of the European Community? But what *is* the latter? [*original emphasis*] Western Europe is a Community in process of formation, without a single center and without a clearly defined future. There may one day be a single political entity, but there are at the present, as they have been in the past, many different forms of association and cooperation, and as historians of European integration we must allow for the variegated and partial character of what we are trying to describe. We have to base our work on a concept of Europe which is neither a collection of nation states, nor, still less, a new nation: a conceptual framework which allows free rein to the many different elements, official and unofficial governments and multinational companies, market forces and cultural and ideological enthusiasms, pro-Europeans and 'antis', which have moulded the politics of our community.¹⁵

In September 1977, the decision was made to organize a program of collective research 'History of European Integration', under the general guidance of an international advisory board. This initiative – as envisaged by the Commission – was pivotal to the study of the emergence of European studies because it laid the foundations for transnational cooperation in a discipline which had until that point been little concerned with EU actions: history. The protagonist of this emerging network was Walter Lipgens. Indeed, when Karl Dietrich Bracher found himself in the impossibility of taking up the Chair of Contemporary European History, the position was offered to Lipgens, who held the chair it from 1976 to 1979.¹⁶ The appointment of Lipgens had a strong impact on the evolution of the project.

Walter Lipgens' action at the EUI

Lipgens, born in 1925, was a Catholic intellectual and originally a specialist of the Church.¹⁷ He also wrote articles and essays on the forced German unification and analyzed critically the role played in it by Otto van Bismarck.¹⁸ Lipgens was critical toward the deleterious effects of nationalism in Germany and in Europe in the first half of the 20th century and was a committed advocate of European unification. From the mid-1960s onwards, the unification of Europe actually became the central theme of his

¹⁴ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, Note de dossier, Historique du projet de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence sur l'histoire de la coopération et de l'intégration européenne, DG X, 4 January 1980.

¹⁵ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, Letter from Peter Ludlow to Pascal Fontaine, 6 March 1976.

¹⁶ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, Note de dossier, Historique du projet de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence sur l'histoire de la coopération et de l'intégration européenne, DG X, 4 January 1980.

¹⁷ See *Kardinal Johannes Gropper (1503-1559) und die Anfänge der Katholischen Reform in Deutschland*, Münster, 1951; *John Henry Newman. Auswahl und Einleitung von W. Lipgens*, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1958; *Ferdinand August Graf Spiegel und das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat 1789-1835. Die Wende von Staatskirchentum zur Kirchenfreiheit*, Historische Kommission Westfalens, Münster, 1965, 2 vols.

¹⁸ See for example 'Bismarck, die öffentliche Meinung und die Annexion von Elsass und Lothringen 1870', in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 199, 1964, pp. 31-112.

research. He first carried out a thorough study of the Briand Plan based on the archives of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁹ He then dedicated a monograph to the projects of European federation forged by the European Resistance movements during the Second World War.²⁰

Lipgens' federalist stance characterized his scholarly production during his stay at the EUI. In a letter of 1977, Lipgens described his vision of European history to his collaborators in the project 'History of European Integration', a vision that is clearly pro-European and which contrasts with Ludlow's cautious approach:

Because of the process of European integration which strongly differentiates Europe after different ways: as the continued development of the history of the nations and as the common history of integration with common institutions, common patrimony of archives, etc. The scientific historiography of the national histories goes further in our countries. The History Department of the European University Institute considers as its duty the promotion of the multinational cooperation indispensable to the study of the common history of Europe. For the European Community, it is also important to acquire a proper and historical consciousness resting on scientific bases.²¹

Like those officials of the EC Information Service who did not hesitate to champion the notion that academic knowledge could justify European integration, Lipgens clearly affirmed the political dimension of the project, which was described in terms of a tangible political commitment: the European Community *needed* a scientific knowledge of its history and the EUI History Department would produce it.

And like the DG X officials Jacques-René Rabier and Jacqueline Lastenouse, Lipgens also underlined how crucial it was to promote 'multinational cooperation'. Lipgens' objective was not only to write of history of European integration. This history had to be 'a common history of Europe'. The transnational nature of the object of research made necessary to change the methods of research through the involvement of historians of various national backgrounds but also through the study of the 'common patrimony of archives'. These were precisely the ambitions discussed at the conference that Lipgens organized in September 1977 at the EUI and which was entitled '*Problèmes méthodologiques et pratiques d'une histoire de l'intégration européenne depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale*'.²²

Since the practical conditions for the achievement of such a history was at the very heart of this meeting of historians of contemporary Europe, the issue of the access to the archives was extensively discussed. As Wilfried Loth underlines, it is at this occasion that the historians called for an opening of the archives of the European institutions after 30 years, like most of the national governmental archives.²³ The main outcomes of the

¹⁹ 'Europäische Einigungsidee und Briands Europaplan im Urteil der Deutschen Akten', in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 203, 1966, I part, pp. 46-89, II part, pp. 316-363.

²⁰ Europa-Föderationspläne der Widerstandsbewegungen 1940-45, Oldenbourg, München, 1968.

²¹ HAEU: Fonds Walter Lipgens, WL-179 03/1977-09/1977, Lettre d'invitation au colloque 'Problèmes méthodologiques et pratiques d'une histoire de l'intégration européenne depuis la deuxième guerre mondiale' tenu du 29/09 au 01/10/1977 à l'Institut universitaire européen, 10 March 1977.

²² Ibid.

²³ Loth, Wilfried, 'La contribution du Groupe de liaison à l'histoire des institutions européennes' in Mangenot Michel et Schirmann Sylvain (eds) *Les institutions européennes font leur histoire. Regards croisés soixante ans après le traité de Paris*, Brussels, Peter Lang, 2012, pp. 47-58, here p.50.

conference were thus the official request made to the European institutions to facilitate the access to the archives and the definition of the objectives of the project 'History of European Integration'. A preliminary report foresaw the publication of 3 series: a first series on the archives of European integration, a second series on its documents and a third series composed of monographs dedicated to specific phases of the integration process. The goal was clearly to stimulate historical research on the integration process, especially by identifying and making accessible important sources like archives and official documents.

Only a small part of this large project was actually achieved. The first series for which four volumes were planned, produced one single book, published in 1980: *Sources for the history of European integration (1945-1955): a guide to archives in the countries of the community*.²⁴ For the third series devoted to the monographs, four books had been originally planned:

- Volume 1 by Walter Lipgens: 1945-1947, the formation of the European unity movement;
- Volume 2 by Walter Lipgens: the European idea in parties and governments and the birth of the European institutions (OSCE and Council of Europe);
- Volume 3 by Pierre Gerbet: 1950-1952, the birth of the CECA;
- Volume 4 by Raymond Poidevin: 1952-1955, the debate of the European Defense Community.²⁵

This plan actually implemented the transnational method and the involvement of renowned scholars from different national origins. However, only the first volume of this series was published: *History of European Integration. The Formation of the European Unity Movement*.²⁶ This book was a translated and expanded version of Lipgens' work published in 1977 *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik*,²⁷ enriched with contributions by Wilfried Loth and Alan S. Milward.

Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik: *the keystone of European integration historiography?*

Considering the retrospective importance attributed to this work in the historiography of European integration, it is important to give some elements on its content. Beginning with a sweeping analysis of the decline of Europe in the first half of the 20th century, the book describes 'the incubation period' of the movement toward European unity from the Resistance hopes of 1943 to the announcement of the Marshall Plan in 1947. The book focuses on non-governmental groups in seven Western European countries and their promotional efforts for Europe. Lipgens locates the origin of the European integration process in the spirit of the Resistance against Nazism and in the reconfiguration of the world's balance of powers. With the emergence of a bipolar

²⁴ Lipgens, Walter (ed.), *Sources for the History of European integration (1945-1955): a Guide to Archives in the Countries of the Community* by Leyden, Sijthoff, 1980.

²⁵ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, Note de dossier, Historique du projet de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence sur l'histoire de la coopération et de l'intégration européenne, DG X, 4 January 1980.

²⁶ *A History of European integration, 1945-1947: The Formation of the European Unity Movement*, with contributions by W. Loth and A. Milward, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982.

²⁷ *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik 1945-50, Erster Band: 1945-1947*, Stuttgart, Klett, 1977.

world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union, the European nations became too weak to remain in control of their destiny. Unity was therefore the only way to preserve Europe and its culture.

Many scholars see *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik* as the keystone of an emerging research field. The British historian of European integration Piers N. Ludlow describes the book as ‘the point of departure of the integration historiography’.²⁸ The Italian Sergio Pistone considers this text as ‘the most complete reconstruction achieved till then of the arguments for European unity.’²⁹ Lipgens’ former student at the University of Saarbrücken, Wilfried Loth, considers that with this book, Lipgens became the ‘real founder of the contemporary research on the European integration process’.³⁰

Other historians of European integration like Kiran Klaus Patel or Antonio Varsori, although recognizing the pivotal role played by Lipgens in the emergence of the discipline, have criticized Lipgens’ approach to Europe’s unification because of its strongly normative and even teleological dimension.³¹ Patel also considers that his analysis of the European movements has some shortcomings. Lipgens did underline the importance of the pro-European thoughts and movements since the end of the First World War. However, his analysis failed to bring into light the impact of the negotiations of the different European movements on the concrete institutional evolution of the European Communities.³² Finally Patel remarks that the role of Lipgens as ‘founding father’ of the European integration historiography shall not be overrated, considering for instance that someone like Pierre Gerbet in France was working on a very similar project in the same period, which resulted in his 1983 book *La Construction de l’Europe*.³³

Whatever the status attributed to Lipgens’ work, his stay at the EUI clearly contributed to its international impact. Indeed, it allowed him to update and translate into English *Die Anfänge der europäischen Einigungspolitik*, making the book accessible to a larger audience and increasing therefore the visibility of this new field of research. Moreover, he involved in this enterprise two young scholars that were to become major contributors to the history of European integration, Wilfried Loth and Alan Milward, creating thus scientific synergies that were to be maintained in the following decades.

²⁸ Ludlow, N. Piers, ‘Widening, Deepening and Opening Out: Towards a Fourth Decade of European Integration History’, in Loth, Wilfried (ed.), *Experiencing Europe: 50 Years of European Construction 1957–2007*, Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden, 2009, p. 33–44, here p.33.

²⁹ Pistone, Sergio, ‘The Posthumous Writings of Walter Lipgens on the History of European Unification’, in *The Federalist*, Year XXX n°2, 1988, 2 p. 85.

³⁰ Loth, Wilfried *Walter Lipgens (1925–1984)*, in Duchhard, Heinz, Morawiec, Małgorzata and Schmale, Wolfgang et al. (eds) *Europa-Historiker. Ein biographisches Handbuch*, Vol. 1., Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2006/2007, p. 317–336, here p. 332.

³¹ Patel, Kiran Klaus ‘Europäische Integrationsgeschichte auf dem Weg zur doppelten Neuorientierung. Ein Forschungsbericht’, in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 50, 2010, p. 595–642, here p. 597 and Varsori, Antonio, ‘From normative impetus to professionalization: origins and operation of research networks’, in Kaiser, Wolfram and Varsori, Antonio (eds), *European Union History Themes and Debates*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 6–25, here p. 11.

³² Patel (2010), p.597.

³³ Ibid. p. 598. See Gerbet, Pierre, *La Construction de l’Europe*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1983.

Lipgens' departure from the EUI and the end of the project 'History of European Integration'

Lipgens' stay at the EUI allowed him to lay the foundations for a transnational cooperation. This was the original ambition of the Commission when it decided to support the project 'History of European Integration'. However, another aspect of the Commission's objective was to turn the Department of History and Civilization into a permanent and attractive research center on European integration history. This second objective was not achieved.

This failure is mainly due to the complex relations that bound the project 'History of European Integration', Walter Lipgens, the EUI and the European Commission. In September 1979, Lipgens' contract at the EUI ended. He did not ask for a renewal and returned to the University of Saarbrücken. His departure triggered a conflict regarding the future of the project. In October 1979, Walter Lipgens expressed the desire to pursue the project in Saarbrücken and asked for a transfer of the European Commission's subsidies devoted to the project.³⁴ However, the European Commission refused, arguing that the project was legally attached to the EUI and could not be carried out in another research institution.³⁵ The EUI was however facing a problem: it had not found any successor to Walter Lipgens. In the period between 1979 and 1983, the Chair of Contemporary European History at the Department of History and Civilization remained vacant. Peter Ludlow was still associate professor at the EUI and had initially been involved in the project 'History of European integration'. However, his views on European integration were clearly diverging from those of Lipgens, as the letter mentioned above reveals and as administrative reports from the Commission confirm.³⁶ He ceased to collaborate with the project in 1980 and eventually left the EUI in 1983.

Although important parts of the project simply stopped after his departure (the series on the archives and the monographs), the series *Documents on the History of European Integration* survived to Lipgens' return to Saarbrücken in 1979 and to his sudden death in 1984. The first volume *Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945* was edited by Walter Lipgens and published shortly after his death.³⁷ It was again a translation and augmented version of a book published in German.³⁸ After Lipgens' disappearance, his former student at the University of Saarbrücken Wilfried Loth took up the task of editing the second and third volumes.³⁹ These subsequent volumes did no longer benefit

³⁴ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, Letter from Walter Lipgens to Christopher Auland, 31 October 1979; Note de dossier, Historique du projet de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence sur l'histoire de la coopération et de l'intégration européenne, DG X, 4 January 1980.

³⁵ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, EC, Legal Service, Note à l'attention de Monsieur Audland Secrétaire Général Adjoint, 'Projet de recherche Histoire de l'intégration européenne de l'Institut universitaire européen', 5 December 1979; Letter from Christopher Auland to Walter Lipgens, 31 December 1979; Note de dossier, Historique du projet de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence sur l'histoire de la coopération et de l'intégration européenne, DG X, 4 January 1980.

³⁶ HAEU: Fonds EUI-10, 1974-1981, Note de dossier, Historique du projet de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire Européen de Florence sur l'histoire de la coopération et de l'intégration européenne, DG X, 4 January 1980.

³⁷ Lipgens, Walter (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration, vol. I: Continental Plans for European Union 1939-1945*, Berlin-New York, W. de Gruyter, 1985.

³⁸ *Die Europäische Integration. Quellen und Arbeitshefte zur Geschichte und Gemeinschaftskunde*, Stuttgart, Klett, 1972.

³⁹ Lipgens, Walter and Loth, Wilfried (ed.), *Documents on the History of European Integration, vol. II:*

from the European Commission's subsidies. The EUI still supported the project in its publishing process and the three volumes are indeed EUI/Walter de Gruyter publications. It is however the Volkswagen Foundation that financed most of the project, in the research and editing phases.⁴⁰

In my opinion, Lipgens' most influential achievement in his EUI years was the organization of an efficient transnational network, which made possible the combination of archival sources from different national origins, and allowed for a more European approach to European integration. However, although the process started at the EUI, these synergies developed outside the EUI's framework. Since the 'partnership' the Commission had envisaged with EUI historians did not survive after Lipgens' departure, the Commission had to find new interlocutors in the academic community to help to promote the history of European integration.

The Symposium of professors of contemporary history in 1982 and the creation of the Liaisons Committee of Historians

The creation of the Liaison Committee of historians and the long process of opening of the archives of the European institutions are closely intertwined and both have Walter Lipgens as a protagonist. After the historians' plea for quick access to the archives at the end of the 1977 conference in Florence, the Secretary-General of the Commission Emile Noël initiated a reflection together with other Commission officials on the issue. Both the Commission and the European Parliament were conscious that opening access to the archives of the Communities could influence the relation between citizens and European institutions. In an EP Report of September 1981, the *rapporteur* Olaf Schwenke explained that 'access by researchers to the records would serve to encourage research on the history of the Communities, and thus promote public interest in the development of European unification'.⁴¹ It was decided that from 1982, the European Communities would adopt the 'thirty year rule' and that historical archives would be established in Brussels and Florence.⁴² To organize the access to and the exploitation of the archives, the Commission needed to engage historians likely to use this material. Since the link with the EUI historians was relatively weakened, new figures and new forms of collaboration had to be invented. Jacqueline Lastenouse explains that, parallel to opening the first archives of the Communities, the Commission hoped to make a further attempt, comparable to its actions in the mid-1970s regarding the project at the EUI, to bring historians together and to create a research community interested in the history of European integration.⁴³ To this end, in January 1982 the Commission organized an international conference of professors of contemporary history under the

Plans for European Union in Great Britain and in Exile 1939-1945, Berlin-New York, W. de Gruyter, 1986; vol. III, *The Struggle for European Union by Political Parties and Pressure Groups in Western European Countries 1945-1950*, Berlin-New York, W. de Gruyter, 1988.

⁴⁰ Loth, Wilfried, 'Preface', in *Documents on the History of European Integration*, vol. III, *The Struggle for European Union by Political Parties and Pressure Groups in Western European Countries 1945-1950*, Berlin-New York, W. de Gruyter, 1988, p.VIII.

⁴¹ European Parliament (EP): Report drawn up by Mr Olaf Schwenke 'Opening to the public of the records of the European Communities', Doc A2 192-188, 28 September 1981, p. 10.

⁴² Audland, Christopher, 'The Historical Archives of the European Union: Their Opening to the Public, Management and Accessibility', in *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 8(2), 2007, pp. 177-192.

⁴³ Interview with Jacqueline Lastenouse, Brussels, 3 September 2008.

chairmanship of Gaston Thorn, President of the European Commission.⁴⁴ The initiative came from the DG X, Unit University Information, which, via Jacqueline Lastenouse, was already individually in contact with contemporary historians like Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, René Girault, Hans-Peter Schwarz, Josef Becker and Walter Lipgens.⁴⁵ A group of well-known historians, along with some eighty academics and officials of the Commission, gathered during three days in Luxembourg to discuss the writing of European integration history and to deal in greater detail with the issue of the archives.

In his introductory speech, Thorn expressed the hope that this form of cooperation with and between historians would help to ‘elucidate the functioning of the European institutions and bring the process of European integration out from behind closed doors, official communiqués and diplomatic compromises.’⁴⁶ Once again, the link between academic activities and the need to reach out the citizens in order to arouse their interest in the European project was clearly expressed. Thorn saw the historicization of European integration as a means of bringing the latter closer to citizens, of giving it a more human dimension. In his eyes, the historical study of the Communities’ origins would produce ‘a fuller understanding of what makes Europe tick and what it is moving towards, without which we are left with nothing but rules and regulations, lifeless analyses, statistics and calculations of short term interest.’⁴⁷ The opposition between a cold and technocratic Europe and a vision of Europe that was more vibrant and human reflects a concern about the gap between European citizens and institutions which emerged in the 1970s and early 1980s, and which the DG X and of the Adoninno Committee later took steps to address. Thorn, while underlining the political dimension of the historians’ task in the framework of European integration, denied any intention on the part of the Commission to use history writing as a means of propaganda:

The purpose is most certainly not to campaign for European unification under the cloak of scientific research. It would be just as bad to deliberately ‘refocus’ studies in line with a European political Grand Design in order to make Europeans, as to continue treating the facts from each country’s particular standpoint only in order to preserve patriotism, as has been done regularly in the last century and is too often still done today.⁴⁸

It is surprising to observe that at the same time the President of the Commission was implicitly calling for a transformation of the way history was written. This transformation would not make history an instrument for European integration, but at least it would remove obstacles to the emergence of a more Europeanized way of writing history. Indeed, the nationally-bonded aspect of the historic discipline was highlighted as a problem:

Like it or not, historians have played a leading part in the rise of nationalistic and nationalist movements. And in fact the prestige that history and historians had in the

⁴⁴ Jacqueline Lastenouse’s Personal Archives (JLPA): DG X/University Information, Report and Papers (April 1982): International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History, Luxembourg 28-29 January 1982. Study of the Beginnings of European Integration: The Value of Source Material and Records, p. 9.

⁴⁵ Interview with Jacqueline Lastenouse, Brussels, 3 September 2008.

⁴⁶ JLPA: DG X/University Information, Report and Papers (April 1982): International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History, Ibid. Opening Speech by Gaston Thorn, pp. 29-43, here p.29.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 30.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 32.

nineteenth century and frequently still have in the twentieth has had a whole lot more to do with this function of providing justifications for patriotic attitudes than with that of impartially recounting what actually happened and how one event led to another.⁴⁹

This reference to the national example again echoes the parallel drawn in the 1963 Commission's document between the role played by universities in the nation-building process and the one they could play in the on-going European integration process. In this comparison, the Information Service's officials did not see the 'nationalist' use of universities as a problem to avoid, but as an example to be followed. In fact, Thorn's argument was similar and what he was actually calling for was a political use of history. However, as in the case of the universities, the forms and contents of history writing required modification in order to become usable in favor of European integration. In order to counteract the nationalist bias in history writing, Thorn called for a 'cultural extraterritoriality of science'.⁵⁰ This rhetoric was in fact rather clumsy and revealed the Commission's awkward position. On the one hand, Thorn thought that historians should by no means renounce their scientific objectivity in order to meet political requirements, since this was 'the sort of thing 'historians' do under totalitarian regimes'.⁵¹ Aware that he was moving into the very highly contentious field of the relations between historians and political powers, the President of the Commission took gross rhetorical precautions with the obvious intention of forestalling any criticism concerning a possible instrumentalization of history. By criticizing the nationalist use of history made in the past and by calling for a new 'de-territorialized' approach to history, he nonetheless invited historians to write history in a way that could be beneficial for the transnational nature of European integration.

Ironically, Thorn's denial of any attempt to promote a 'European Grand Design' was immediately contradicted by an intervention made by Walter Lipgens. Lipgens began by exposing the different tasks posed to historians as a result of the limits of nation-states and the 'historical necessity' of the European Union. Having underlined the decline of Europe and the rise of two new powers, the USA and the USSR, the former EUI professor explained to his European colleagues:

It is up to the historian to demonstrate that technological progress and power now depend on geographical size which the nation states of Europe can no longer match. It is up to the historian to show that none of the European nation states is in a position to fulfill the most basic tasks of central government on its own – namely the security and the welfare of their people. It is up to the historian to show that this can only be done by continental unions like the USA and the USSR and such as the 'United States of Europe' could be.⁵²

Lipgens' argument was not about history as science of the past. His rhetoric dramatically highlighted the historian's responsibility to the present, which concerned the civilizational challenge Europe faced in the new global configuration. In his eyes, the contemplation of the past and of the present was bound 'to arouse in any historian

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 34.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 32.

⁵² JLPA: DG X/University Information, Report and Papers (April 1982): International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History, Ibid. Introductory Paper on the Public Archives, by Walter Lipgens, pp. 49-58, here pp. 50-51.

the fundamental feeling that the road to European Union [was] a historical necessity.⁵³ Like Gaston Thorn in his intervention, Lipgens justified the role of history through an argument relating to objectivity. European Union was a fact, not a project. In order to highlight the existence of the unity, historians need not distort reality, they should simply record events as objectively as possible, to say ‘purely and simply what happened.’⁵⁴ The extent to which Lipgens insisted on the ‘naturalness’ of European unity is interesting. He repeatedly used the term *ipso facto*. In his eyes, writing the history of Europe was *ipso facto* showing the necessity of the United States of Europe, but it was also *ipso facto* demonstrating ‘the century-old unity of European culture.’ Lipgens insisted on the cultural nature of European unity, which was not a unity in the sense of political domination. The values which underpinned this European culture – and implicitly identity – were Christianity, reason, the individual and his inalienable rights and the rule of law.⁵⁵ Like Thorn, Lipgens underlined the negative role played by academics of the national era, who destroyed the unity of European spirit in the name of national culture.⁵⁶ On the occasion of his encounter with European historians, Lipgens invited his colleague to compensate for the mistakes of their predecessors and to restore the unity of European history, and hence, of European culture. He clearly took position in favor of a militant approach to history as a discipline. Lipgens’ plea for a European history of Europe went far beyond the history of European integration strictly defined, which was the official theme of the conference. According to his approach, the understanding of European integration in the present was based on deep historical movements in the long term. He justified the study of European integration – and more precisely a militant study of European integration – on two temporal levels: it was a necessity in the present because Europe was facing civilizational decline, but it was also historically evident, as the consequence of an age-old intellectual and political integration of the continent. This historical depth and the long-term origins of integration are leitmotifs of the research projects supported by the European Commission. This approach to European history combines the classical and modern regimes of historicity described by the French historian François Hartog. Hartog argues that in the classical regime of historicity, history writing mainly consisted of drawing lessons from the past in order to give sense to human actions in the present.⁵⁷ Lipgens advocated such an approach when declaring that the observation of the past furnished evidence of European unity and constituted an invitation to citizens to pursue the unification process. At the same time, when describing the European States of Europe as the only way for the European nations to survive in a globalized world, he clearly took the future as point of orientation. The subordination of history writing to a political *telos* corresponds to the modern regime of historicity, which emerged in the nation-building era. To this extent, Lipgens attributed a political mission to the ‘European’ historian ironically very similar to the one of the ‘nation-builder’ historian.

In their introductory speeches, Thorn and Lipgens therefore openly revealed how the promotion of European integration was the background of this meeting of historians. It is in this highly politicized context that the most important network of historians of European integration, which was to decisively influence the research in this field in the upcoming decades, was created. At the end of the conference, René Girault, professor at

⁵³ Ibid. p. 51.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Hartog, François, *Régimes d'historicité. Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris, Seuil, 2003.

the Sorbonne, presented a document proposing the creation of a network which was unanimously approved by the participants.⁵⁸ The group, officially named '*Groupe de Liaison des professeurs d'histoire contemporaine près la Commission Européenne*' was eventually created in 1983. The first chairman was René Girault.

The Liaison Committee sought an international balance in terms of its composition. It included historians from Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Ireland and the United Kingdom. Both Walter Lipgens and Alan Milward were part of the group. To this diversity of national origins must be added the certain diversity in the members' intellectual positions with regard to European integration. The debates of the Luxembourg conference and especially Walter Lipgens' interventions show that a militant approach to history loomed large at the time the group was created. However, this attitude was not necessarily dominant. Michel Dumoulin, then a young professor of contemporary history at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium, explains that although a number of the historians present at the Luxembourg conference were truly pro-European, many of them did not share Lipgens' 'rabid federalism' and had an altogether different vision of European integration.⁵⁹ Antoine Marès, a collaborator of René Girault at the Sorbonne, was also present at the conference and confirms that Lipgens' position aroused suspicions and sometimes irritation among the historians.⁶⁰ Dumoulin insists that the first chairman René Girault, had a more practical approach. Unlike Lipgens, Girault was not convinced that integration was the way *par excellence* for Europe and that European unification was a historical necessity. Dumoulin reports that in the period in which the Liaison Committee was formed, the historians involved debated the use of the expressions European 'integration' and 'construction'; while Lipgens defended the former, Girault favoured the latter. Girault considered the denomination 'historian of European integration' invalid on the basis that it uncritically accepted the notion of 'European integration' proposed by the Commission.⁶¹

Walter Lipgens died suddenly in 1984, but the network that he largely contributed to create is still active today. It regularly organized important conferences and is above all at the origin of the only historical journal specialized in European integration, the *Journal of European Integration History*, created in 1995 and coordinated since 1999 by the *Centre d'études et de recherches européennes Robert Schuman* in Luxembourg, which more generally became the geographical point of reference of the Liaison Committee and where its archives can be consulted today. The question of the independence of the group vis-à-vis the Commission is debated. While Wilfried Loth and Morgane Le Boulay underline the independence of the group,⁶² I have argued elsewhere that, until 1999, when all financial and institutional links were broken, the Commission influenced in certain ways the scientific agenda of the Committee.⁶³ In any case, with the 1982 conference and the creation of the Liaison Committee, the

⁵⁸ JLPA: DG X/University Information, Report and Papers (April 1982): International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History, *Ibid.* Resolution by René Girault for the Creation of Liaison Committee of Historians, p. 110.

⁵⁹ Interview with Michel Dumoulin, Brussels, 4 September 2009.

⁶⁰ Interview with Antoine Marès, via e-mail, 3 April 2010.

⁶¹ Interviews with Michel Dumoulin and Antoine Marès.

⁶² Le Boulay, Morgane, 'Investir l'arène européenne de la recherche. Le 'Groupe de Liaison' des historiens auprès de la Commission européenne', in *Politix*, n°89, 2010, pp. 103-124 and Loth (2012).

⁶³ Calligaro, Oriane, *Negotiating Europe: EU Promotion of Europeanness since the 1950s*, Palgrave Macmillan, New University Series 'Europe in transition', forthcoming 2013.

Commission did succeed to re-launch the transnational cooperation after the failure of its original project based at the EUI. From this moment on, the EUI ceased to be a significant center of research on European integration history, even after the appointment of Alan S. Milward in 1983.

Alan S. Milward at the EUI

It is difficult to obtain precise information that would account for the EUI's incapacity find a successor to Walter Lipgens and to maintain a research activity on the history of European integration between 1979 and 1983. An official of the EUI explains that the conflict between the Commission and Walter Lipgens, which brought to light the strong financial and institutional bounds that linked the EUI to the Communities' institutions certainly discouraged many historians jealous of their scientific independence.⁶⁴ Moreover, the EUI is an atypical institution; it is not a university and it is not anchored in any national academic reality, which can make it hard for a professor to integrate a three-year residence at the EUI into a national career.

It is only in 1983 that the Department appointed Alan S. Milward to occupy the Chair of European Contemporary History. Milward was an economic historian, born in 1935 and previously Chair of European Studies at the University of Manchester. By the time of his appointment at the EUI, Milward was finalizing one of his major works, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51*.⁶⁵ Through this research on the reconstruction of Europe, Milward studied the Schuman plan and the creation of the ECSC, therefore entering the field of European integration history. While at the EUI, Milward started to work on his controversial book *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* in which he considered European integration as an instrument that helped weakened nation-states in facing problems of national welfare.⁶⁶ This thesis was in complete opposition to the traditional neo-functionalist approach and to the official 'grand récit' of the founding fathers promoted by the European institutions, in which a united Europe is presented as the *telos*, as the driving force behind the integration process.

As Antonio Varsori underlines, Alan Milward, contrary to Walter Lipgens, was not a federalist.⁶⁷ The EUI administrator whom I interviewed remembers that Milward was reluctant to cooperate with the EC institutions on scientific projects. Indeed, during his residence at the EUI, Milward did not promote large-scale research projects based on subsidies attributed by the European Commission.⁶⁸ Milward did edit a collectively authored book on theory and history of European integration.⁶⁹ The book mostly involved some of his research students at the EUI and therefore did not rely on a significant transnational network. Milward left the EUI in 1986 but was appointed a second time, from 1992 to 1996. During his EUI years and until the end of his academic

⁶⁴ Interview with anonymous administrator of the EUI, Florence, 15 March 2013.

⁶⁵ Milward, Alan S., *The Reconstruction of Western Europe 1945-51*, London, Methuen and Company, 1984.

⁶⁶ Milward, Alan S., *The European rescue of the Nation State*, London, Routledge, 1993.

⁶⁷ Varsori (2010), p.12.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Milward, Alan, Lynch, Frances, Ranieri, Ruggero, Romero, Federico, and Sorensen, Vibeke, *The Frontier of National Sovereignty History and Theory 1945-1992*, London, Routledge, 1993.

career, Milward remained an active member of the Liaison Committee of Historians. For the Committee, he played the role of consultant on the access to the Communities' archives, part of which started to be transferred to the EUI from 1986 onwards.

The issue of the archives

At its creation, the Liaison Committee had set out to help historians 'to make better use of source material at their disposal'. This objective logically raised the question of access to the archives of the European Commission, which became the topic of considerable controversy. The members of the Committee repeatedly criticized the refusal of civil servants and archivists working for the Commission to cooperate with historians. It was only on the occasion of the Rome conference in March 1987 that the Secretary-General of the Commission, Emile Noël, invited the Liaison Committee to participate in the discussion on the opening of the Commission archives, whose transfer to the EUI had started in 1986.⁷⁰ At this date, Noël knew that he was to become President of the EUI in September 1987. In this sense, when proposing the collaboration with the Liaison Committee, Noël was acting simultaneously as Secretary-General of the Commission, concerned with preserving the memory of his institution and as future President of the European University Institute which was partly in charge of managing the sources used to construct this memory. The Liaison Committee had entrusted Gilbert Trausch and Alan Milward to deal with the issue of the archives. In June 1987, Noël proposed to grant a 'temporary and experimental' status of consultant to the two scholars in the works of the Declassification Committee. In their report on their consultancy, Trausch and Milward considered their dialogue with the Commission fruitful, since it led to the adoption of a certain number of satisfying resolutions on the management and the accessibility of the archives.⁷¹ However, the collaboration with the historians in the field of the archives did not go any further. Indeed, the historians were not granted permission to publish Community documents. Instead Emile Noël reserved this task for the institution that was subsequently to employ him, the EUI.⁷² These events illustrate that at times the elaboration and diffusion of knowledge on European integration became a source of competition between different actors. The position of the European Commission was ambiguous here. The Commission supported the creation of the Liaison Committee to incite historians to produce knowledge on the history of European integration, yet it maintained substantial control over its archives, the central source for this history. This highlights some of the challenges to a successful collaboration between an institution and historians who intend to write its history.

The 1980s and the new scientific priorities at the EUI's Department of History

Ironically, while the Commission was preparing the transfer of the archives to the EUI, the Department of History was developing a scientific agenda in which the main focus and subsidies were moving away from European integration. In the mid-1980s, 'European culture' became the buzzword at the EUI. In this period the EUI launched or

⁷⁰HAEU: Fonds Emile Noël, EN-1137, Rapport annuel sur les réunions de consultation avec les représentants du groupe de liaison des professeurs d'histoire contemporaine, 17 June 1988.

⁷¹HAEU: Fonds Emile Noël, EN-1137, Groupe de liaison des professeurs d'histoire contemporaine auprès de la Commission Européenne: Rapport des Professeurs A.S. Milward et G. Trausch sur leur mission aux Archives de la Commission des Communautés Européennes, 16 June 1988.

⁷²Michel Dumoulin's personal archive (MDPA): file 'Groupe de Liaison des Historiens', Réunion du Groupe de Liaison, 19 mars 1987, p.2.

supported projects that dealt with the history of Europe over the long period and which aimed at highlighting the deep origins of European unity. In 1984, the EUI President Werner Maihofer launched a recruiting campaign for a new interdepartmental Chair entitled 'History of European culture'. In a letter of 4 May 1984, Alan Milward, explained that the creation of this Chair, considered as the result of a desire on the part of the EC and the President Maihofer, had been highly criticized by members of his department.⁷³ The French historian Daniel Roche held the Chair from September 1985 onwards. In the following year, a project was launched for the creation of a Research Center on European Culture at the EUI. Finally, in the second half of the 1980s, the EUI hosted several meetings of the group of historians involved in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle's project, *Europe: a History of its People*.⁷⁴ This project, launched in 1985, benefited from subsidies of the European Commission. As the letter mentioned above reveals and as confirmed by an EUI administrator, Alan Milward openly denounced the fact that the EUI's scientific orientation was strongly influenced by the EC's political agenda. A look at the debates and evolutions that took place in this period at the EC level backs up his argument. The Fontainebleau European Council of 1984 had mandated the Adonnino and Dooge Committees to respectively design actions to foster European awareness among citizens and to reflect on institutional reforms. The Adonnino and Dooge Reports were both approved at the Milan Council of June 1985, which officially launched the People's Europe campaign. These reports underlined the idea that a political deepening of the Community made symbolic and cultural initiatives necessary. The Dooge Report called for an 'improvement in the level of knowledge about all the peoples of the Community in all their diversity and their different contributions to European culture'.⁷⁵ Moreover, the new President of the Commission appointed in 1985, Jacques Delors, immediately showed an interest in cultural issues. In his presentation of the Commission's program to the EP in March 1985, he mentioned the importance of a cultural policy for Europe.⁷⁶

In these reflections on the promotion of European culture, the issue of history writing has been directly tackled. Taking as its reference the recommendations of the Adonnino Report, the Luxembourgish Presidency of the European Council asked the Ministers in charge of culture to make concrete propositions. During a meeting on 20 December 1985, the Ministers discussed the importance of history for the realization of a People's Europe:

A People's Europe without History is not conceivable: our historians are writing it, with the help of our archivists. [...] However, if we intend to constitute a 'historical archive of the Community', we should take care to involve the citizens themselves. The Council and the Ministers of Culture invited the Commission to take steps in this sense.⁷⁷

⁷³ Personal archives of Professor Michel Dumoulin 'Groupe de Liaison des Historiens': Letter from Alan Milward to Michel Dumoulin, 4 May 1984.

⁷⁴ HAEU: Fonds Emile Noël, EN-2503, File 'F. Delouche (1988), Manuel d'Histoire de l'Europe'. Réunion du 28-29 octobre 1988 'Une histoire européenne de l'Europe', Histoire de l'Europe, étape I.

⁷⁵ Report of the Ad Hoc Committee for Institutional Affairs to the European Council, Brussels 29/30 March 1985 in *Bulletin of the EC*, March 1985, N°3, pp. 102-110.

⁷⁶ Debates of the EP, Presentation of the program of the Commission, 2-324/76, *OJEC*, 12.3.1985.

⁷⁷ MDP A: file 'Groupe de Liaison des Historiens', Procès-verbal de la 1057ème session du Conseil des Ministres responsables des affaires culturelles réunis au sein du Conseil du 20 décembre 1985, point 'Histoire communautaire vécue', p.8

The expression 'our historians' is striking. Does the expression refer to the Liaison Committee? In any case, such a discourse reveals the clear political intention to use historiography of European integration as part of a wider agenda designed to increase popular support for the Community. The various scientific initiatives in favor of the study of European culture taken by the EUI can be hardly disconnected from this political purpose at the Community level.

Conclusion

The role of the EUI in the historiography of European integration reveals all the complexities and pitfalls of writing the history of an on-going political project. The first transnational project of history of European integration was undoubtedly launched by actors within the EC institutions. These institutional actors, like Emile Noël, Max Kohnstamm or Jacqueline Lastenouse, clearly envisaged the EUI as an appropriate framework where to carry out their academic research legitimizing and promoting the European project. These obvious political objectives do not imply that the historians involved in this early project were at the service of a propagandist undertaking. Lipgens' federalist stance and normative approach to European integration does not undermine the scientific impetus that his early research at the EUI gave to the new emerging historical discipline. The heated discussions between contemporary historians, within the EUI with Peter Ludlow and Alan Milward for instance, or later within the Liaison Committee, shows that in these formative years the distance to be preserved between scholars and institutions was openly debated.

It is however quite clear that the scientific orientation of the EUI's Department of History in the early 1980s was influenced by political agendas at the EC level. This proximity between the EUI and the EC institutions certainly prevented the Institute from becoming a major and durable center of research on history of European integration because of the tensions that it created with the historians. Although the EC and the EUI originally offered the conditions to make the creation of a transnational network possible, the network which was eventually created, the Liaison Committee of Historians, grew away from Florence. However, away from Florence does not necessarily mean away from Brussels. The ties between with the Liaison Committee and the Commission remained strong for more than a decade until the clear emancipation of 1999.

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