

Keynes and Mitrany as instigators of European Governance

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1 Introduction

“European governance” has become a buzzword in the debates about a new European constitution. The currency of this term was particularly enhanced by the European Commission’s White Paper under this title [European Commission, 2001]. But among the many contributions to the debates about “European governance” we find little mentioning of two of its most important instigators. The first one to whom we want to draw attention is John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), a Cambridge don and former official of the British Treasury. He is generally not much recognised for having had important ideas concerning European governance. Yet, the economic and political shape of today’s Europe owes much to his writing and scheming. The other name to reconsider in the context of current debates about European governance is that of David Mitrany (1898-1975). He was an international intellectual of Romanian origin. One of his seminal proposals was to “contain” in a dialectical sense the old nation states, to entangle and de-substantiate them in a web of transnational economic and administrative functions thus creating a “Working Peace System” beyond the old conflict laden European power system. With the publication of this vision Mitrany [1943] became the intellectual godfather of many subsequent European developments in real politics and in academic analysis. Although Mitrany [1965] himself later denied intellectual kinship with the then just founded and slowly developing European Economic Community (EEC), one nevertheless may see many of the mechanisms presently at work in the European

setup as being related to visions which Mitrany propagated for transnational governance in a seemingly distant future.¹

2 John Maynard Keynes as instigator of European governance

Keynes and Mitrany are seldom mentioned in one breath. If they do get mentioned in a comparative context, it seems to be accepted wisdom in international relations literature that Keynes was just concerned with matters of national governance. Mitrany, however, is considered to have opened the perspective of governance in the international context.² Indeed, he seems to be standing at the very beginning of the creation of international studies in the liberal tradition as Ashworth [1999] suggests. The reason why Keynes is placed so firmly in the just *national* context of governance seems to be due to his *magnum opus*, the *General Theory*. [Keynes, 1936]. In that book he addressed the instruments of national economic policy: monetary, fiscal, and wage policy and he debated rather abstractly their respective merits for alleviating economic depressions in the context of a closed economy, i.e. mostly under omission of considering effects of and on foreign trade. This highly controversial book became just about the most important root for modern macroeconomics. Such Keynesian ideas are still subject of recurring controversies in economic theory and policy.³ Maybe this is why the impression is perpetuated in many academic circles that Keynes' controversial influence on modern governance stems just from this type of contribution.

But to focus on this aspect of Keynes' intellectual influence is to belittle him. Let us remember that long before the *General Theory* appeared in 1936, Keynes had achieved fame and notoriety in the wake of his publishing *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* [Keynes, 1919]. This book was translated into virtually all major languages, including Romanian. It had a tremendous impact on public debate. Its orientation was clearly "continental", if not even global – as actually was becoming in view of the fact that he referred to the aftermath of *World War I*. Keynes [1919, p.4]. was quite conscious that for an Englishman like him this was a novel perspective, introducing himself as "one who, though an Englishman, feels himself a European also", adding that he, "because of too vivid recent experience, cannot disinterest himself from the further unfolding of the great historic drama of these days which will destroy great institutions, but may also create a new world."

With these remarks Keynes referred to the fact that he himself was in the forefront of

¹For a more detailed elaboration of this characterisation of David Mitrany see Ambrosi [1998].

²See Ashworth [1999, p.35]: "whereas... the reforming economics of Keynes focused on domestic politics, Angell and Mitrany made the focus of their work the study of international relations."

³For a survey of some of the issues involved see Ambrosi [2003].

negotiating the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919. He was chief negotiator for the British Treasury. He resigned from public office in order to have the liberty to propose an alternative “governance” of a future European peace order – largely in opposition to his own government which, like in particular the French one, still thought predominantly in terms of 19th century concepts of military power.

What were the elements of the just mentioned European ‘new world’ which Keynes was imagining as possibly unfolding in his days? They were to be found in the diagnosis and in the prescriptions of his 1919 book. It was its purpose to offer “remedies” (so the title of his final chapter), namely for a potentially catastrophic European future. These remedies consisted, among other, in the proposal of a scheme which reads like the blueprint for the later Marshall plan. That plan did indeed help to bring western Europe on its feet again – but only after the further tragedy of a second world war. It was this tragedy which Keynes wanted to avoid. Like Mitrany [1943], Keynes wanted to bring about a *working* peace system in a double sense: it is based on *working together* economically and it is a peace arrangement which should *work better* than a purely military one. But if such visions are perceived as uniting Keynes and Mitrany, it should be remembered that in the case of Keynes they were published in 1919 – and not with the hindsight of the outbreak of World War II, as in the case of Mitrany [1943].

The novelty and sacrilege of Keynes’ approach to European peacetime governance was that he asked for a peace-maintaining *economic* perspective. He had the audacity to point out the total absence of such a perspective in the Versailles Peace Treaty. As official of the British Treasury he had helped to negotiate this treaty himself – a position from which he resigned so dramatically after he saw his vision for peace unfulfilled. Free to speak out publicly after his resignation, Keynes [1919, p.143] voiced his concern and criticism in a chapter on “Europe After the Treaty” which begins with the statement:

“This chapter must be one of pessimism. The treaty includes no provisions for the economic rehabilitation of Europe – nothing to make the defeated Central empires into good neighbours, nothing to stabilise the new states of Europe, nothing to reclaim Russia; nor does it promote in any way a compact of economic solidarity amongst the Allies themselves; no arrangement was reached at Paris for restoring the disordered finances of France and Italy, or to adjust the systems of the Old World and the New. The Council of Four paid no attention to these issues, being preoccupied with others – Clemenceau to crush the economic life of his enemy [Germany, GMA], Lloyd George to do a deal and bring home [to the UK, GMA] something which would pass muster for a week, the President [Wilson, GMA] to do nothing that was not just and right. It is an extraordinary fact that the fundamental economic problem of a Europe starving and disintegrating before their eyes, was the one question in which it was impossible to arouse the interest of the Four. Reparation was their main excursion into the economic

field, and they settled it as a problem of theology, of politics, of electoral chicane, from every point of view except that of the economic future of the states whose destiny they were handling.

It should be noted in this context that Keynes' main concern was not so much related to German reparations and to her (in)ability to pay them. For many later readers Keynes' [1919] message was reduced to this comparatively minor – and with hindsight obvious – question. It was rather that not even among the victorious allies there was any sensible co-operative economic arrangement. His vision was a grand economic one which looked beyond old military enmities as we may gather from the following sample passage:

“A free trade union should be established ... of countries undertaking to impose no protectionist tariffs whatever against the produce of other members of the union. Germany, Poland, the new states which formerly composed the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires [should adhere] ... [I]t is to be hoped that the United Kingdom ... would become an original member.”

These were vain hopes for 1919, however, and they remained utopian for more than thirty years to come. But 85 years and one more world war later they are by and large reality and are even surpassed in a number of ways. They materialised in particular in the context of the EEC of 1957. Article 23 (1) of its founding treaty (TEC) reads:⁴

“The Community shall be based upon a customs union which shall cover all trade in goods and which shall involve the prohibition between Member States of customs duties on imports and exports and of all charges having equivalent effect, and the adoption of a common customs tariff in their relations with third countries.”

This passage describes a customs union in legal terms and emphasises that such a union is *the* basis of the EEC. Thus a customs union is also the prime basis of European governance. In the present context it should not be forgotten that nobody proposed the fundamental economics of such a system more eloquently and more scandalously than John Maynard Keynes in 1919. Seeing him only in the context of *national* governance therefore seems to be a regrettable misconception. Keynes [1919] is one of the most important intellectual pioneers of European integration. One might object that the free trade area proposed by him in 1919 does not imply much abandonment of sovereignty and that had it come true it would not have created the same European administrative apparatus as we have it today. The counter argument against such a view on Keynes is that even his narrower European free trade scheme proved to be overambitious at that time. Any farther reaching proposals would have been even more unrealistic. Under

⁴In the original numbering of the EEC Treaty this was article 9 (1), wording unchanged.

the constraints of his time, Keynes did propose the utmost of international cooperation, He also did his best to lessen these constraints. In subsequent years, Keynes made a number of attempts at fostering genuine functional European integration. His proposals for the post-WW I “new world” should therefore not be seen just with reference to his publishing *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* but in a wider context of subsequent activities. One such activity was a publication project which supplied a platform of public exchange for academic experts, exponents of cultural life, and political actors from all over Europe. Its title was ‘The Reconstruction of Europe’.

3 ‘The Reconstruction of Europe’ – a Keynes-Mitrany project?

We noted above a similarity between Keynes and Mitrany, namely that both of them made proposals for a *working* peace system for Europe. But if we look at Mitrany’s intellectual preoccupations around the time of Keynes’ making his “free trade union” and other co-operative proposals for Europe, we find a total absence of any comparable ideas. Mitrany [1917] published about the vision of a Greater Romania. He entirely identified himself with the aim of a *territorial* solution to ethnic kinship across existing state borders. He prophesied general insecurity if other smaller countries did not likewise look after their national identity. His attached map of “Rumania and its unredeemed Territories” would probably recommend him nowadays to the right-wing “Romania Mare” party which presently attracts voters in Romania with the perspective of a Great Romania. There were, of course, justified grievances of ethnic Romanians about their repression in Transylvania which was then under Hungarian rule. But to concentrate on a purely territorial solution of such type of problems comes as a surprise from somebody who later was known to have nothing to do with nationalism.⁵ Around 1919 his outlook became more international in that his interest was oriented towards the League of Nations and a number of particular nationality questions in that context, but we find no specific publication which would bring him into close intellectual similarity with Keynes [1919]. It was only in the 1930s that we find the first signs of a trans-national approach towards the contemporary problems of Europe [Mitrany, 1933]. There obviously was a remarkable change of outlook occurring in the intermittent period and one may well ask what caused it. There are, of course, many candidates when it comes to try to answer that question. In the present context it seems that one important episode in Mitrany’s intellectual development was a working situation which brought him into close contact with some activities of John Maynard Keynes during the 1920s.

⁵See Anderson [1998, p.578] “... nor would he [Mitrany, GMA] participate in any organization which was basically nationalist, hence his refusal to be involved in any of the motivation for the new state of Israel.”

The biographical linchpin combining Keynes and Mitrany is to be found in C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. He was connected both, to Keynes and to Mitrany. Anderson [1998, pp.577] gives some information on Mitrany in this context:

“A fortuitous encounter with C.P. Scott, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, led first to a summer engagement of four weeks and then to a position on the editorial staff of the newspaper, from May 1919 to 1922, with special responsibility for foreign affairs. His relations with Scott were particularly cordial ... ”

The author goes on (p.577, *ibid.*) to stress “C.P. Scott’s confidence in Mitrany and approval of his views” and quotes Mitrany himself in this context as saying “we happened to look alike on the new world to which the grand Paris Conference was supposed to give birth”. The term “new world” in connection with the Paris Conference reminds us immediately of what had been written by Keynes in this connection and in these very terms. Indeed, Scott was not only in approval with Mitrany in this regard but with Keynes himself. This seems to be the background for C.P. Scott’s proposal to Keynes on 12 October 1921 to issue a series of special supplements to the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* “making an exhaustive survey of the financial and economic problems facing post-war Europe”⁶. Keynes was to be the General Editor and A.P. Wadsworth was his “liaison officer” at the *Guardian*⁷. The general title of this series of supplements was “The Reconstruction of Europe”. David Mitrany was part of Keynes’ supporting network as correspondent for Eastern Europe [Skidelsky, 1992, p.102]. Mitrany [1969, p.10] himself quotes C.P. Scott as having said (presumably on Mitrany’s leaving the paper in 1922) that “the *Guardian’s* foreign policy during the last three years [1919-1922] has been Mitrany’s policy”. This would suggest that the true mastermind behind the ‘Reconstruction of Europe’ was Mitrany. In any case, its General Editor was Keynes and he did take his editorship very seriously.⁸

The first Supplement was published on 20 April 1922, containing three major articles by Keynes. They later were re-worked by Keynes and republished in his *Tract on Monetary Reform*. That book [Keynes, 1923, p.169] closes, by the way, with the speculation that once the monetary situation was stabilised, “Europe would adopt the Sterling standard”. Ironically, eighty years later 12 European countries did have a common currency standard but, alas for Keynes’ aspiration, they were not united under British leadership, but *in spite* of continuing British refusal to participate in monetary unification. It is not here the place to go deeper into the economics of this episode, however. But it is relevant for our study to note that not only C.P. Scott was pleased with the result but his son E.T. Scott as well⁹. This is significant because, as Anderson [1998, p.578] noted,

⁶Editorial comment in Keynes [1977, p.320]

⁷Editorial comment in Keynes [1977, p.327], and Skidelsky [1992, p.102].

⁸For a thorough description of these activities see Skidelsky [1992, pp.102-106].

⁹Editorial comment in Keynes [1977, p.352]

“C.P. Scott’s confidence in Mitrany ... led to his agreeing to an extensive European tour for his son E.T. Scott (then being groomed to follow his father), in the company of Mitrany. From March to May 1924, the two men, with their wives, toured ten countries ... One outstanding interview for the two men was ... , as Mitrany recalled, with King Carol of Romania.”

These remarks must suffice here to convey that, with the Scott family as catalyst, there was indeed a considerable proximity between some of Keynes’ activities in the wake of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* and Mitrany’s activities as journalist in a European setting. Realising this might make better understandable a biographical note which we find with Keynes’s biographer Robert Skidelsky [1992, p.243] who relates that on 10 October 1925 Mitrany suggested to Keynes to become economics minister of Romania (!) – an offer which Keynes declined. The mind boggles when one thinks what would have been the economic situation in Romania if Mitrany’s suggestion had been accepted by Keynes – or what would have become of Keynesian economics if he had been indeed Romanian economics minister from 1925 on. In any case, we have here an interesting kaleidoscope of informations involving Mitrany, Romania, Keynes, King Carol and European governance. It might well merit more scrutiny than we can afford here.

4 Some Hamburg connections of Keynes and Mitrany

Keynes’ biographer Robert Skidelsky [1997, p.251] once observed that “[Keynes,] through his friendship with the Hamburg banker Carl Melchior, acted almost as unofficial adviser to the German government in 1922-3, a curiously underresearched role.” It is indeed a fascinating facet of Keynes’ European activities that he – as freelance writer and Cambridge don – was in a position to give direct advice to German heads of government (Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno in 1923 and also later to Chancellor Heinrich Brüning in 1932).¹⁰ As Skidelsky points out, these encounters were arranged by his Hamburg friend Carl Melchior (1877-1933), partner and, through marriage of a brother into the Warburg family, relative of Eric Warburg of the Hamburg Banking House of M.M. Warburg & Co. He was Keynes’ German counterpart at the Armistice Negotiations in Trier / Trèves in Germany in 1919. One of Keynes’ literary masterpieces is his 1920 memoir ‘Dr. Melchior: A Defeated Enemy’ in which he relates the initial encounters at Trier, later at Spa and Amsterdam, and which was published only posthumously, presumably because of its frankness [Keynes, 1949]. The two ‘enemies’ of the Trier negotiations remained life-long friends until Nazi chicane drove Melchior to early death in December 1933. During Carl Melchior’s lifetime Keynes was not only attached to the city of

¹⁰For these and the following biographical details see also Skidelsky [1992], *passim*.

Hamburg where Melchior lived, but also to a number of schemes of European significance. They both attended the Genoa Economics Conference of April 1922, Melchior as German delegate while Keynes was there as correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* and as a manipulator of the conference agenda who privately launched currency schemes for stabilising allied and enemy exchange rates – the first (and unsuccessful) of a number of proposals which eventually led to the Bretton Woods System of 1944, resp. to the European Payments Union of 1950-1958. Carl Melchior also assisted Keynes' "Reconstruction of Europe" project by arranging German contributions for Keynes' publications which involved Rudolf Hilferding (Marxist theoretician and German Minister of Finance 1923 and 1928) as well as Hjalmar Schacht (President of the Reichsbank 1923-30 and 1933-44), and the later Chancellor Wilhelm Cuno who was already mentioned above. Thus, Melchior was also heavily involved in the Keynes-Mitrany project already discussed in the last section.

Mitrany himself had his own Hamburg connections. When he left Romania, he first lived, worked, and studied in Hamburg for three years from 1908 until 1911 before he moved to England. In view of his later proximity to Keynes' "Recovery of Europe" project it is somewhat astonishing that we have no record of any involvement of Mitrany in Keynes' use of his Hamburg connections at that time. It is clear that Mitrany's socialisation as an expatriate from Romania who had to work in order to finance his studies at the Hamburg Kolonialinstitut – as Mitrany [1969] relates in his autobiographical account – was quite different from the life of the members of the Warburg family of bankers who constituted Keynes' personal contacts in Hamburg. But this should not have been a serious hindrance for his involvement in the preparation of publications, especially in view of his trusted position with the owner of the *Manchester Guardian*. In addition, Mitrany [1969, p.11] relates that he was an old acquaintance of Hjalmar Schacht since the beginning of his work for the *Manchester Guardian* in 1919 when he spent three months as correspondent in Berlin. He used to have weekly lunches with Schacht and (unsuccessfully) suggested him as financial expert for the German Social Democratic government of that time. There seems to be here a hiatus between Keynes and Mitrany which is difficult to explain. This again leaves us with the desire to know more of the factual background of Mitrany's working relations in the 'Recovery of Europe' project than what is available from published sources. We can only feel confident to say that much about the respective connections of Keynes and Mitrany as far as they were Hamburg oriented: Keynes' international outlook, his ability to transcend narrow nationalistic perspectives was clearly much shaped by his friendship with Carl Melchior. There is, unfortunately for our thesis of a close similarity between Keynes and Mitrany, no comparable indication concerning the latter. From his autobiographical remarks and from his published work there emerges no indication that Mitrany had similar experiences either on his own as working student in Hamburg before WW I nor through his working relation under the editorship of Keynes in the context of the 'Reconstruction of

Europe' project.

5 Comitology and the Keynes-Mitrany exchange

One rather intriguing episode involving Keynes and Mitrany is related by Mitrany [1969, p.37f.] himself. He recounts that it was “the most curious, and in a way the most bold” of his many bridge-building proposals. Around 1927 he proposed

“setting up a non-party group of some two hundred people with a standing in professional and generally in public life, with the single purpose of looking into whatever issue of substance came up for public decision, and then publish its findings simply as a factual and impartial guide for opinion at large. The idea found favour with quite a few of those approached; ... Ultimately the scheme collapsed, or perhaps others beside myself lost heart when Maynard Keynes, then at the height of his influence, simply wrote that he did not think public opinion could be made and guided except through political parties. Though, in fact, ... he never went down into the street but preferred the private ear of influential leaders.”

The reader of these lines might think to be able to detect here a grudging tone in Mitrany's mentioning Keynes. Such an attitude would have been rather strange for several reasons: First of all, the proposal which Mitrany mentions here was not in the least international relations oriented. It is therefore somewhat strange that it seems to play a considerable part in his autobiographic reflections. He did not publish details about this project but it seems to have been a purely domestic setup addressed at British public life. But British institutions and interactions have evolved over centuries and it certainly would have been strange to expect them to change on the basis of the suggestion of one who was a total outsider of that established framework. Mitrany himself found his own proposal “most curious” and “most bold”. To expect Keynes to adopt it on the basis of a paper sent to him seems really to expect a bit much from him who – though he was frequently a rabble-rousing activist – nevertheless was an exponent of the British establishment.

Mitrany's comment on Keynes is also somewhat surprising in a more personal sense in that Keynes' reply was not at all destructive but just not supportive. As reproduced by Mitrany [1975b, p.80], it read

16 February 1927

Dear Mitrany,

Many thanks for your letter and its enclosure. I fear that I much doubt whether a so-called non-party group could ever make its weight felt in any way whatever. At present the Liberal Industrial Enquiry Committee, set up by the Liberal Summer School, seems to me to be doing all that is possible on the lines with which you sympathise. The whole thing might prove useless in the long run. But for the present at least I am inclined to give this line of development a chance. I see no room for groups outside the existing organisations. It is a choice between them and purely individual action, in my judgement.

Yours sincerely

J.M. Keynes

The tone of Keynes' letter appears to be a bit teasing if one remembers that Mitrany was attached to – although not member of – the Labour Party. To suggest to him to look towards the Liberal Party for orientation has a jesting touch. But it seems to be a good humoured response. Keynes did *not* answer he would act against Mitrany's proposal should he dare to pursue it any further. Especially after reading this letter one feels compelled to observe: the project of Mitrany's British committee of experts was *abandoned* by himself, it was not fought by Keynes.

Thirdly, and in a more Europe oriented sense, one may wonder why Mitrany, at the time of making these remarks in 1969, did not convey that he could have very well found consolation for Keynes' rebuff by developments in European integration. Much of Mitrany's intended pragmatic "bridge-building" committee work became common practice with the creation of the ESCE in 1951 and the EEC in 1957. Advisory committees organised on a non-partisan basis were from the beginning an integral part of the "community method". Although this aspect of European integration was only at its beginning at Mitrany's time, it clearly was explicitly stated in the treaties and maybe it was even then discernible for the alert analyst as being implied in the workings of the emerging European administrative setup. By now it has led to the new legalese concept of "Comitology" and to an entirely new field of European research [EIPA, 2000]. This development has gone so far that there is now some public concern that the democratic control of public administration is under danger of being eroded. Thus, the present European realities and concerns mirror to a certain extent the exchange of views which we just related with reference to Mitrany and Keynes. The new proposals for a European constitution attempt to give new transparency to such committee work and thus, with hindsight, one may see here a further connection between present day European practice and Mitrany's visions, although the relation must seem to be a somewhat constructed one in view of Mitrany's abandonment of his 'expert committee' project.

6 European integration – Mitrany's unacknowledged triumph?

But did Mitrany really abandon his “bold” proposal? There is a branch of literature which brings more or less clandestine committee work into connection with the very project of European integration – and with Mitrany himself. The catchword here is the “Bilderberg Group”. The formation and likely significance of this group for European integration is described in some detail in an article by Mike Peters [1996]. The group first met in May 1954 at the “Bilderberg Hotel” which was owned by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. Prince Bernhard also triggered off the “immediate chain of events leading to the setting up of the first conference” [Peters, 1996] and was its chairman for several years to come. Subsequent conferences have been held almost yearly until the present. They meet typically in considerable secrecy and at various places, although the name of the original meeting place was kept. They bring together high-level politicians, top managers, and intellectuals who ‘fit’ into that framework. One of the chief organisers of the initial framework was a certain Josef Retinger from Poland, who was with the Polish exile government during WW II but predominantly he was “Eminence Grise” as a biographical book on him calls him [Pomian, 1972]. His role in the Steering Committee of the Bilderberg Group was described as follows by this long-time secretary John Pomian [1972, pp.254-5]:

“...during the first 3 or 4 years the all-important selection of participants was a delicate and difficult task. This was particularly so as regards politicians. It was not easy to persuade the top office holders to come. ... Here Retinger displayed great skill and an uncanny ability to pick out people who in a few years time were to accede to the highest offices in their respective countries. ... today there are very few figures among governments on both sides of the Atlantic who have not attended at least one of these meetings.’

Retinger’s aim in these activities was European Unity and, as Pomian [1972, p.210] relates in a chapter under this very title, this aim was pursued from 1946 on by Retinger in cooperation with, among others, Paul van Zeeland, then Prime Minister of Belgium, “who agreed with me [Retinger] that we should try to revive the concept of the unity of Europe by applying it first to the economic field” (*ibid.*). Such views are reminiscent of functionalistic ideas about transnational contacts similar to those of David Mitrany. But where does he come into this picture?

In order to answer this question it is important to note that the somewhat diffuse intentions for European economic integration had to be brought to maturity by further helpful co-operation. As far as the Bilderberg Group was concerned, this came 1952 from Paul Rykens, chairman of the Unilever Company “who had the ear of the Prince [Bernhard of the Netherlands]” [Pomian, 1972, p.251]. His involvement in the project

seems to have been the crucial step. Paul Rykens became the other prime mover of the Bilderberg Group. After further contacts, too involved to relate here, the first Bilderberg meeting took place as mentioned above. But with Paul Rykens we are back to our topic: As [Mitrany, 1969, p.31] relates:

“... early in 1944 it was suggested that I should become adviser on international affairs to Unilever Limited. The seed it seems had come from a chance remark I had made earlier in the War to the late Paul Rykens ... that after the War there would be little to separate economics and politics ... I thought it might last for a year or two, but it lasted from 1944 till retirement in 1960 ... That it did last was due largely to the remarkable group of men who then made up the core of the firm’s board of directors ... they arranged from the very first that I should be entitled to attend the meetings of the Board ...”

Thus, from 1944 until 1960 David Mitrany, as advisor on the board of directors of the Unilever Company, was – in principle at least – in proximity with its chairman Paul Rykens, one of the founding fathers and steering committee members of the Bilderberg Group. Peters [1996] claims that it is “not implausible” that the route from the European Coal and Steel Community of 1951 to the European Economic Community of 1957 “in fact passed through the first five Bilderberg conferences”. He quotes George McGhee, former US ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, as having said “The Treaty of Rome [1957], which brought the Common Market, was nurtured at Bilderberg meetings” (no source available, GMA). The close personal contact of political leaders and experts in that informal group might have secured the crucial consolidation of the project of European integration so that its budding beginnings were able to reach the customs union stage which still is the “base” of present day European governance. Thus, what Keynes once published as vague and impractical vision in 1919 became reality due to the machinations of the Bilderberg Group in the 1950s.

It should be stated in all candour that this conclusion is to a certain extent based on speculations. But it can be documented beyond doubt that: a) since 1952 Paul Rykens was “founding (co-)father” of the Bilderberg Group, b) his advisor on international affairs was David Mitrany from 1944 until 1960 and c) Rykens’ Bilderberg Group assembled, at least temporarily, virtually all politicians, top managers, and high officials who were instrumental for the creation and running of the European Community on the presently relevant base. If there ever was a “so-called non-party group” of high-level experts – to use Keynes’ characterisation of Mitrany’s committee project discussed in the last section – then the Bilderberg Group was and is a good specimen of such a group. Mitrany could well pride himself that in some sense he called for the constitution of some such group as early as 1926/27, that Keynes was sceptical about the feasibility of such a project, and that Mitrany himself was adviser to that man who, in spite of such scepticism, did make such a scheme come true.

So, maybe the somewhat puzzling undertone of Mitrany's comment on Keynes which we discussed at the beginning of the previous section is misinterpreted when read as carrying an element of grudge. It could well have been a tone of triumphalism over Keynes' scepticism.

The reader might ask at this stage: why was this not said more directly by David Mitrany if he meant to say it? If he was triumphant, why did he not acknowledge his own success? There are a number of reasons imaginable: Firstly, it would not have been appropriate to enlarge on the activities of a group which, for the sake of its efficient operation, had to avoid overdone publicity. Secondly, Mitrany often took pride in the fact that he was not the prime mover of things but the visionary and inspirer. He did state his advisory role with regard to Paul Rykens and the latter was the one who "did it" – with some others. It would have been rather inappropriate to claim direct responsibility for his actions. But Mitrany's role could well have been important for the success of Rykens' initiative in that his reasoning gave it intellectual justification and that Mitrany's long membership in the board of directors of Unilever gave Rykens' international activities continuing intellectual support and legitimacy within the company itself. A third aspect to mention in this context is that Mitrany [1965] was not quite happy about the territorially confined character of the evolving European integration. He therefore could not wholly identify with its successful consolidation. In this he was faithful to his functionalist thought for which he had come to stand. In this he also was faithful to the original spirit of the Bilderberg Group which was not primarily Pan-European but rather Trans-Atlantic.¹¹ But this is an aspect which goes beyond the confines of the present topic.

7 Concluding remarks

Posterity remembers Keynes as figurehead of modern macroeconomics, Mitrany as progenitor of functionalism in international relations analysis. Both men and both theories seem to have little in common. But if we place their memory in the context of European integration, it emerges that such a view is not warranted. Both of them are, of course, intellectual figures to be remembered in their own right. But if we re-trace their biographical and intellectual interconnections, both of them appear with new interesting facets one is generally not well aware of: both authors contributed towards overcoming the nationalistic divisions which did so much harm for Europe in and between two world wars. Both wanted a *working* peace system for Europe, durable and economically viable. Both were exponents of a fascinating era of intellectual debate which still has many aftereffects on our vision of European society. They seemed to be worlds apart: Keynes, the product and representant of the British establishment vs. Mitrany,

¹¹See [Pomian, 1972, p.258]: "... the Bilderberg Group was mainly concerned with problems facing the Atlantic Alliance ...".

the Romanian emigree who tried to find roots first in Germany, then in Britain, then in the USA, and finally beyond any territorial confines. Their paths crossed several times, but it seems that their minds did not meet at those times. That does not mean that they were at cross purposes. Keynes and Mitrany should be united in a common heritage of a future European mind.

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