

The EU: A Corporatist Racket
How the European Union was created by global corporatism for
global corporatism

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Available from Amazon.co.uk for £8.99

The author of this self-published book is a member of the Conservative Party in Witney in Oxfordshire (MP David Cameron) and, more importantly, a member of that party's anti-EU wing. This is centrally about the background to, and the political and state deceptions involved in, getting the UK into the EU. There is an account here of the 1950s CIA-funded American Committee on a United Europe (ACUE) and its relationship with the European Movement. But it's not a very good version; a better one could be put together from resources on-line. The author is apparently unaware that the left had already covered some of this over 30 years ago.¹

There is a chapter on Bilderberg, which began as an issue for the right in the 1970s and was then briefly of interest to the American left.² But this chapter on Bilderberg tells us nothing not available on the Net and in many other books.

The real point of this book are the chapters on events prior to the 1975 referendum on EEC membership. This is the best account I have read of the campaign run by the pro-EEC lobby in this country. The state, including the Information Research Department (IRD), the quasi-independent anti-subversion, anti-communist propaganda organisation, co-

1 The ACUE/European Movement, for example, was first discussed in 'How the European Movement was launched' in Hirsch and Fletcher's 1971 *Who were they travelling with?* (Nottingham: Spokesman), which is now on-line at <<http://www.wcml.org.uk/Main/en/contents/international/cold-war/the-atlanticist-tendency-of-the-labour-party/how-the-european-movement-was-launched/>> and expanded a little in Weissman, Kelly and Hosenball's 'The CIA backs the Common Market', originally in *Time Out* in 1975 and reproduced in Philip Agee and Louis Woolf (eds.) *Dirty Work: the CIA in Western Europe*, (London: Zed Press, 1978).

2 There is a chapter on it in Holly Sklar (ed.) *Trilateralism* (Boston: South End Press, 1980).

opted large chunks of the media to run its line.³ How cosy it all was back then: a handful of the significant media figures, regular meetings to get 'the line' for the day and a vast, informal propaganda machine was created. This is recounted in some detail from the official files released a few years ago.

The author rang me up and in the course of our conversation asked me what I knew about the 1975 referendum campaign. Not a lot, was my reply. Did I know that the votes had all been counted in one place? No I did not: and what possible reason would there be for not using the existing constituency-based electoral organisation? I can think of only one, the one the author suggests: to rig the vote, if necessary. He notes that Cord Meyer was London CIA station chief at this point. Did Meyer bring ballot-rigging expertise from the CIA? This is not that implausible; but there is no evidence that he did this – or that this expertise was needed: the massive pro-EEC campaign in the months preceding the referendum may have affected the change in public opinion it claimed. The author says that he was told the vote was rigged but does not name his source.

The author includes long lists of businessmen, mostly American, who supported Bilderberg or attended its meetings and who supported the American Committee on a United Europe. These lists, I suppose, are here as evidence for the thesis in the title: the EU is a corporatist racket. It may be one now (depending on your definition of corporatism) but its origins are more diverse than that and they certainly include the Americans' search for reliable anti-Soviet bodies during the Cold War and the desire on the part of survivors of the war to ensure that it never happened again.

Robin Ramsay

³ The best account previously was that of Paul Lashmar and James Oliver, 'How MI6 pushed Britain to join Europe', *Sunday Telegraph*, 27 April 1997 at <http://www.cambridgeclarion.org/press_cuttings/mi6.eu_stel_27apr1997.html>.