

INTRODUCTION: DE GAULLE'S SHADOW



As head of France's recently installed Provisional Government, Charles de Gaulle passed an entire week in Moscow in December 1944. Buffeted by four wartime years of political sparring with Winston Churchill and disdained by Franklin Roosevelt up to the time of the Normandy landings, he had travelled to the Soviet capital to negotiate with Josef Stalin in the confidence that he now enjoyed some real international authority. One hope behind the visit was to win the Soviet leader's assent to the principle of French control of the left bank of the Rhine in any post-war German settlement. The Rhine had been seen as one of France's 'natural frontiers' at the time of the French Revolution, and de Gaulle's reflexes were attuned to the preoccupations of Marshal Foch and Raymond Poincaré after the First World War when they had unsuccessfully championed the cause of an independent Rhineland. A bilateral treaty with an initial term of twenty years was signed in Moscow, but without substantive commitments from the Soviet side. De Gaulle thus returned largely empty-handed to France. Fifteen years later his description of this wartime journey to the USSR and the surreal and macabre atmosphere he encountered in the Kremlin were to lie at the heart of one of the celebrated chapters of his elegantly crafted war memoirs – the chapter tellingly entitled '*Le rang*', the author's concern being France's 'rank' in a radically transformed post-war world.¹

De Gaulle was not invited to the Yalta Conference in February 1945. And nor was he invited to the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. France had therefore little say in what might be termed the Potsdam order for Europe, that is, the shape given to the continent through the arrangements governing Germany's future that were decided by the Big Three in Brandenburg's historic capital. Yet only five years afterwards, by virtue of the Schuman Declaration, France took the lead in initiating a process that would transform the face of the western half of the continent through the setting up of the European Communities (EC). Then four decades later, when the geopolitical divide associated with the Yalta Conference crumbled and German unification took place, France and Germany played the dominant role in the framing of the Treaty on European Union, signed

Notes for this introduction begin on page 13.

in Maastricht in 1992. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the big push for economic and monetary union had come from the French president, François Mitterrand. Furthermore, the Maastricht Treaty's so-called pillar structure accorded with French views of the role of the nation state in the process of European integration. Even if by the start of the twenty-first century France's leadership role – either in its own right or in partnership with Germany – had become less secure, the scale of the achievement could not be doubted. France had emerged from the Second World War in a far weaker diplomatic position than it had come out of the First World War. Yet, in the second half of the twentieth century, France succeeded in restoring a powerful place for itself in Europe, whereas in the 1920s the undisguised ambition to establish and consolidate a position of ascendancy on the continent had singularly failed.

To consider the period of some sixty years since the end of the Second World War, de Gaulle may be seen as the linchpin figure. 'European union' figured highly among his aims. He saw it as consisting essentially in permanently organised close cooperation between Western European states under French leadership. In the late 1940s, under the Fourth Republic, French diplomatic efforts had already been deployed to this end, long before de Gaulle's return to power at the head of the Fifth Republic. Crucially there was the innovative role played at the start of the 1950s by Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman. And much later in the century France was to be at the fore again when Mitterrand did so much to shape the Maastricht Treaty. Through it, the European Economic Community (EEC) and an otherwise inchoate European union were transformed into an integrated international organisation, the officially named European Union (EU). However, de Gaulle's contribution was arguably greater than that of any other of his countrymen, even if none of the major international treaties advancing the political and economic unity of Western Europe was signed when he ruled over France. His achievement was to have put the European integration process securely on the rails for the remainder of the century, after making clear France's conditions for backing it and putting down markers for the process's future development.

This assertion of de Gaulle's significance may appear questionable and, in view of his dislike of supranationalism, something of a paradox. But it is less so when seen from the perspective of the Fifth Republic's beginnings. A telling point in this respect was made by Raymond Aron in his *Mémoires* when he dwelt upon the consequences for future European integration of de Gaulle's resignation as head of government in 1946 and then his return to office twelve years later. Aron pointed out that the succession of regimes – the non-Gaullist Fourth Republic and then the Fifth – made for a quirk of history favouring the successful birth of the EC. 'The politicians of the Fourth Republic', he said, 'had bequeathed a legacy of *faits accomplis* which the General could not go back on', and so the 'cunning of reason' in history (Hegel's '*die List der Vernunft*') was

favourable, since de Gaulle 'would not have signed the [EC] treaties', whereas 'the Fourth Republic would probably have been incapable of implementing them'.²

The pivotal year was indeed 1958. De Gaulle had assumed power in June; and soon afterwards in September the new constitution was approved and in December he was elected President of the Republic. This same year, when the Fifth Republic came into being, was coincidentally the first in the existence of the EEC, which had been established by the Treaty of Rome, signed in March 1957, 'to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe' (Preamble). Due to take place at the beginning of 1959 was the first round of tariff cuts by the EEC's six member states, thus starting the progressive establishment of the planned customs union. The incoming French president could well have scuppered this move and the entire EEC project at this particular point in time. Ready support would have been forthcoming in France, since many of the politicians of the erstwhile Fourth Republic remained opposed to the Treaty of Rome for political or economic reasons. Pierre Mendès France, for example, was among their number. Yet de Gaulle chose to stay his hand, notwithstanding his own deep misgivings about the elements of supranationalism in the EEC's design and his lack of sympathy for various ideas of Monnet and Schuman, the two Frenchmen at the origin of the whole EC endeavour in 1950.

Apart from reassuring the heads of government of the other EC member states of France's continued commitment to the treaties, de Gaulle influenced the future development of the EC in various ways. Although his proposals in 1961 for the creation of a 'Union of States' to exist alongside the EC ultimately proved abortive, these same proposals foreshadowed the 1970s, when there was the setting up of the European Council at the instigation of the then French president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and also the inception of cooperation by EC member states in the sphere of foreign policy. Furthermore, some thirty years later, the 'pillar' structure of the EU, as established by the Maastricht Treaty, echoed de Gaulle's earlier design. This design for a union of European states testified to his resolve that the pursuit of integration in Western Europe should remain firmly in the control of its nation states. Sometimes in opposition to Monnet, he was determined that any ambiguities in the Treaty of Rome about the locus of power should be settled in favour of power at intergovernmental rather than supranational level. And he was equally determined that France's interests should be served by the EC decision-making machinery.

This twin determination was evident in the matter of the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), whose shape had been left open by the Treaty of Rome with the consequence that it became an object of negotiation by EC member states in the 1960s. As widely expected, de Gaulle exerted France's weight to ensure that the CAP arrangements

served many of the interests of the country's large agricultural sector. Less expected was the diplomatic crisis over the CAP's financing that he provoked in 1965–66; he and Maurice Couve de Murville, the foreign minister, successfully used it to force assent to the principle of unanimous voting by the EC Council of Ministers whenever important national interests were at stake. This principle, as unofficially enshrined in the so-called Luxembourg Compromise, was to be watered down only in 1987 on the coming into force of the Single European Act (SEA), which made qualified majority voting mandatory for matters relating to the completion of the single market. Yet France and other member states, notably the UK, have continued to attach importance to the principle of unanimity, notably in respect of major issues in the sphere of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

Finally, in this enumeration of the ways in which de Gaulle left his imprint on the EC and post-war Europe, there is the forging of France's special relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) by virtue of the Elysée Treaty of Franco-German Cooperation which he and Konrad Adenauer signed in 1963. If various events since the middle of the 1950s had helped prepare the ground, the treaty itself marked the formalisation of an alliance that was to shape the future course of France's external relations. Its significance was heightened by the French president's decision to simultaneously blackball the UK's first application for EC membership. Largely because of initial opposition on the German side, the treaty bore fruit only with the passage of time, notably during Giscard's presidency and, more importantly still, Mitterrand's. Yet de Gaulle and Adenauer, through forging this alliance, had indirectly contributed to what later emerged as a union of European states in the shape of the EU.

There have thus been striking continuities in France's approach to European union over the past half century and more. Such continuity marked the passage of the Fourth Republic to the Fifth. And it has also marked the passage of one presidency to another during the Fifth Republic. These continuities have testified to a high degree of constancy in perceptions of national interest. Lying behind the protean enough concept of the national interest have been a variety of considerations that have often meshed uneasily together. Yet if there has been a dominant and persistent idea, it is simply that of its being in France's interest to build and strengthen a union of European states, with France itself holding a privileged place therein.

In this matter of the national interest, more should be said about de Gaulle, especially if he is deemed to have worked for the cause of European union. His ambitions for France on the European stage were not the reflection of any so-called Hobbesian view of international politics – one in which states were implacably locked in continual jealousies and gladiatorial postures of real or virtual war, to borrow imagery from Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Instead, his assumptions about the nature of

international politics as practiced within the borders of Western Europe were typical of those who had experienced the old European order prior to the outbreak of the First World War. In particular, there was the assumption that the assurance of peace and security on the continent called for the collective exercise by certain states of a diffused hegemony, with the important rider that, in de Gaulle's mind, there should be a *primus inter pares* in the exercise of such hegemony and that this role should fall to France. That he could propose a 'Union of States', to be set up alongside the EEC and act as its political framework, marked not only a presumption about France's vocation but also a conviction that this European Union's members would remain bound together by common interests and common values. In short, they would constitute a European 'society of states' – to borrow a term associated with the seventeenth-century diplomat and jurist, Hugo Grotius – albeit in a highly developed and institutionalised form.³

De Gaulle's concern with the rank and grandeur of France should be seen in this perspective. Through his conviction, moreover, that the restoration of the French state to a position of preeminence could take place only in the framework of a European society of states, whose leadership lay effectively in the hands of France, not only did he aspire to a recasting of the nineteenth-century European order that had been killed off by the Great War and then partly resurrected in the 1920s, but also he harked back to an earlier period. For – however clichéd the allusion – the founder of the Fifth Republic shared something of the spirit of a Louis XIV in entertaining the aim of a French order for Europe. Or, to borrow a term used by Voltaire, de Gaulle's ambition for continental Western Europe was the creation of an '*espèce de grande république*' ('sort of commonwealth'), with France at its head. However, such ambition was perforce of a quite different and much more modest kind than that pursued a century after Louis XIV by Napoleon. The self-crowned emperor's attempted order had been revolutionary in kind, aimed at the destruction of the existing European society of states, whereas the temper of de Gaulle's thinking about European international statecraft may be judged to have more in common with the frame of mind expressed in, say, the *Regicide Peace* of Edmund Burke or, somewhat differently, Charles Maurras's *Kiel et Tanger*.

It would be anachronistic to look for any precursors prior to the Westphalian settlement of 1648, even in the person of Richelieu, the outstanding French statesman who had marked the Thirty Years War by successfully raising expediency abroad to a fine art in the name of *raison d'état*. Yet one eminent portraitist of de Gaulle, namely Henry Kissinger, has chosen to identify him above all with the heritage of Richelieu. In *Diplomacy* – a distillation of practical and academic wisdom – the former US Secretary of State and student of Metternich, Castlereagh, and Bismarck opposes two approaches to the pursuit of the national interest, and he identifies them in the American context with the contrasting figures

of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, the two presidents who first brought the US out of isolation in the century of Europe's largely self-inflicted decline. Roosevelt's muscular foreign policy was founded on considerations of balance of power in the European tradition of diplomacy, whereas Wilson's idealism, giving birth to the League of Nations, was quintessentially American in its zeal to equate the national interest with the realisation of a world order founded on moral principle. Such is the diptych which Kissinger places at the beginning of his book. Looking to Europe in the second half of the twentieth century, he portrays de Gaulle as the finest exemplar of the European tradition of diplomacy in the service of old-fashioned national interest; and – alongside Theodore Roosevelt, but in a different way – he is effectively presented as a worthy successor to Richelieu, whom the author of *Diplomacy* credits with the first formulation of the twin concepts of (an amoral) *raison d'état* and the balance of power.⁴

But it may be wondered, as regards Kissinger's treatment of de Gaulle's place in history, whether the close linking of the concepts of national interest and *raison d'état* illuminates adequately the reasons that led the French president in the late 1950s and early 1960s to adopt the policies he did in the sphere of European integration. Certainly, balance-of-power considerations entered strongly into play in de Gaulle's forging of the German alliance at the expense of England – his preferred name for France's rival cross-Channel power – and, more globally, in his attempt to create a European 'Union of States' that would pull weight alongside the US and the USSR. On the other hand, in de Gaulle's dealings with other EC heads of government, there was no systematic resort on his part to the practice of *raison d'état* if by that concept is meant the unprincipled pursuit of interests and power in a Machiavellian mode, without any erosion of the state's independence. If a striking feature of his position on European union building is to be singled out, it is not any evidence that it was all a matter of *raison d'état*, but rather his acceptance that not only the functioning of the EC but also the pursuit of the national interest through European political cooperation called for some limited but real waiving of the state's powers.

It was thus that de Gaulle accepted, even if sometimes with great reluctance, the role of the EC supranational institutions as established by treaty law and also the joint framing by the Commission and the Council of Ministers of common EC policies. Furthermore, in his never-to-be-implemented design for a 'Union of States', there was provision for additional shared institutional arrangements. Opposed as he was to encroaching supranationalism in those areas of the EC treaties where the apportioning of powers had been left imprecise, he was nonetheless ready to countenance the sacrifice of certain powers. From the bundle of attributions making for statehood, he acknowledged that certain of them

could be partially or wholly relinquished, provided the identity and ultimate sovereignty of the nation state was retained.

That France's greatest twentieth-century political figure chose to see matters in this light helps explain why there could be so marked a continuity in French policy towards European unity in the century's second half. De Gaulle was far from totally at odds with Monnet and Schuman. And later Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand – not to speak of the two neo-Gaullist presidents, Georges Pompidou and Jacques Chirac – were to be far from being totally at odds with de Gaulle. For the representation of France's role in the early EC years, hagiographical fashion has presumed to dictate that only a Monnet or a Schuman is entitled to the honour of 'father of Europe', but it would be wrong to portray these two figures as championing the cause of idealism for the continent's sake, especially if that same idealism is to be set in stark contrast to the General's crusty realism. No such Manichean divide can be justified, and this holds true too of some of the comparisons drawn between de Gaulle and Mitterrand, especially when the latter has been portrayed, at the expense of the former, as the virtuous heir of both Monnet and Schuman. Mitterrand himself, showing mastery in the display of symbols, laid claim to such a heritage when he decided that it behoved the Republic to have Monnet's and Schuman's remains transferred to the Panthéon in 1988; though since Schuman's family demurred, only Monnet's remains came to be disinterred and civically honoured by being placed in that august place of repose.

This is not to deny that, in the second half of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first, there were sometimes significant differences in the policies adopted on Europe by different French presidents or governments. However, when such differences occurred, they were not usually ones that could be measured in varying degrees of loftiness of motive. They were rather differences in practical judgement about the range of attributions of statehood that could be legitimately delegated or pooled for the purpose of greater European union serving France's interest. No government or statesman in office under the Fourth and Fifth Republics has ever questioned the principle of national sovereignty itself, in the sense that the fount of power has always been seen to reside with the nation state even when the latter has voluntarily ceded certain of its attributions to a wider European body.

It is evident that at the heart of French efforts to construct a European union has been the troubled question of Franco-German relations. 'I love Germany so much that I am thrilled that there are two of them', François Mauriac is famously said to have remarked in 1958.⁵ His *boutade* testifies to the trauma wrought on France by three wars with its powerful neighbour in the space of three generations. Even the one victory in 1918 had proved to be of the pyrrhic kind inasmuch as the huge bloodshed did not forestall a further war that ended in national humiliation. Because of this trauma, it is scarcely surprising that France's concern with its German question has

lain at the heart of more than half a century's attachment to rebuilding a new European society of states. Expressed crudely, the ambition was, and has remained, to lock (initially) part and (more recently) the whole of Germany into a European union so as to secure French interests, not least peace and cooperation between the two countries.

However, what started as a French initiative was gradually transformed over time into a set of international and supranational arrangements under which Germany came to pull as much weight. Thus, from one Fifth Republic presidency to another, the balance of power has changed. De Gaulle – President of the Republic from 1959 to 1969, after having been the Fourth Republic's last prime minister in 1958 – confidently assumed that France alone could exercise a hegemonic role in continental Western Europe, with the young West Germany kept in a subordinate position. Pompidou (1969–74), fearing correctly that this hegemony was threatened by growing German economic and monetary power, sought anxiously to maintain France's leadership. However, Giscard d'Estaing (1974–81) acquiesced to the establishment of what tended to be a Franco-German diarchy; its *modus operandi* reflected West Germany's newly acquired leadership role in monetary affairs – both within the EEC and, as the leading European monetary power, in the wider world – and, secondly, the greater political weight which it was acknowledged France could still exert internationally. Mitterrand (1981–95) inherited and sought to consolidate this Franco-German relationship, notwithstanding the emergence of a more confident UK under Margaret Thatcher; and then, when German unification loomed into view, he vigorously accelerated the pace of European integration so as to preserve the special relationship with Germany and lock it more tightly into the union. It was left to Chirac (elected in 1995 and anew in 2002) to look beyond the world of the framing of the Maastricht Treaty and develop relations with the new greater Germany, a state whose European credentials have been impeccable, but whose centre of gravity has moved away from the Rhineland back to Berlin, the capital founded by the Second Reich.

Symbolism has always counted for much in this special relationship. In 1962, half a year before the signing of the Elysée Treaty, de Gaulle and Adenauer had come together for High Mass in Rheims Cathedral, that edifice of High Gothic glory which had been greatly damaged by German artillery fire in the First World War. Two decades later, in 1984, the Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, stood in silence holding hands with Mitterrand on the battlefield of Verdun in a notable gesture of political friendship. Then, in 2003, the German and French parliaments met at the chateau of Versailles to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty and somehow disown earlier awkward memories: the crowning in the Hall of Mirrors of Wilhelm I as Kaiser of the Second Reich in 1871, and the signing in the same place of the punitive Treaty of Versailles in 1919. In 2004 Mitterrand's successor, Chirac, and Kohl's successor, Gerhard Schröder,

publicly embraced one another at the War Memorial in Caen on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Normandy landings.

Yet in the four decades separating the prayers and remembrances of Rheims and Caen, much had changed in the nature of the two countries' relations. The face of Europe had been radically transformed well before the century's end, not only because of German unification but also because of the wider geopolitical upheaval in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Until the end of the 1980s successive French presidents had sought to exercise leadership, or a diffused hegemony, over an EC area lying, perforce, largely to the west of the Elbe. Initially, at the time of the EC-6, it was a 'Carolingian Europe', associated geographically and culturally with the lands that had once been Charlemagne's empire, and such coincidence was partly the legacy of the Yalta divide. De Gaulle in his lifetime would have welcomed the restoration of independence to Poland and other Soviet bloc countries, and perhaps also their inclusion in the EC. However, Mitterrand's reaction to these countries' freedom proved ambivalent and almost begrudging, as witness his attitude in the early 1990s once the question of the future EU's enlargement, to include formerly communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe, came to be seriously discussed.

However, by the time of the 1993 legislative elections – which led to the formation of a *cohabitation* government and a waning of Mitterrand's power – the combination of German unification and a new fluidity in international relations in the wider Europe had made politically for a very different continent, which called for a more outward-looking EU. Only then was there the beginning of an adequate perception on the part of France's political establishment that the nature and challenge of continuing European integration had been radically transformed. In particular, the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, marked by so-called ethnic cleansing and even genocidal mass-murder, provided a forceful reminder that politically inspired barbarism was still endemic to the continent at the end of its grim twentieth century. And there was a corresponding recognition in Paris that the EU enlargement process had to continue, perforce prudently.

Swept away by the geopolitical change of the late twentieth century were the conditions under which France had once been able to aspire to the leadership of continental Western Europe. Yet French interests were still being catered for. After the EU's introduction of the euro in 1999, implementing the final stage of economic and monetary union (EMU), France's traditional concern with Germany was freed of many of the fears that had long surrounded the prospect of German unification. Furthermore, it was under the firm guidance of the former French president, Giscard d'Estaing, that the Convention for the Future of Europe prepared much of the EU's constitutional treaty, signed in 2004. In the eyes of both Giscard and Chirac, this constitutional treaty appeared to consecrate what had always been the preferred French approach to European integration,

an approach encapsulated in the concepts of a 'federation of nation-states' (Chirac's preferred expression) or a 'union of states with federal competences' (Giscard's preference), and allowing for the continued wielding of national power. *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France*, the felicitous title of a historical work covering the post-war period up to 2003 captures the spirit well – to make Europe, without unmaking France.⁶

The French electorate's rejection of the EU's constitutional treaty in the referendum held in May 2005 was therefore a blow to such assumptions. In France and elsewhere, this rejection was immediately perceived to have been a watershed event for the future course of European integration. Only time will tell whether this judgement was correct, or whether instead the referendum's result was little more than a historical blip, merely delaying the further reshaping of the EU's institutional arrangements by its member states.

This moment of French disenchantment in 2005 and its lingering spell in the remaining two years of the Chirac presidency, constitute an appropriate time for looking back on France's huge role in the process of European integration since the Second World War. Thus, the broad purpose of this book is to relate how France came to assume this role, to detail how it exercised its ascendancy, and to show how the geopolitical upheaval in Europe towards the end of the twentieth century compromised this same ascendancy. A further purpose is to point to the importance of high politics, rather than purely economic considerations, in the conduct of French policy towards what in France is called *la construction européenne* ('the European construction') – a term that catches better the high politics dimension than the equivalent English term, 'European integration'. This approach has often lent a special character to French policy making, especially when framed by the President of the Republic, and it has contrasted with the less lofty goals that have tended to be pursued by most other European states, their horizons primarily set by the prospect of economic gain. The prospect of such gain has, of course, always been greatly important for France too, the most obvious example being the CAP, but it has been associated with, or subordinated to, other considerations relating to the country's security in Europe and its ability to wield power both in Europe and on the wider world stage. De Gaulle's shadow has loomed large.

Yet it has been argued by some scholars, most notably Andrew Moravcsik, that the 'French exception' in this respect is less than meets the eye. Correctly stressing the undiminished centrality of the nation state in the integration process, he has maintained that French policy making in respect of the EC or the EU has been as much dictated by economic considerations as anywhere else in Europe, that such considerations have been uppermost for all countries, and that even de Gaulle's motives were more economic in kind than geopolitical.⁷ If the focus is strictly on the original EEC, and if, in addition, monetary affairs are lumped together

with economic or commercial ones, there is much to be said for this thesis. However, once national foreign policies and matters of security and defence are taken into account, whether before or after the setting up of the EU, the primacy of the economic dimension is not self-evident. Furthermore, and crucially, if monetary integration is considered a matter falling largely under the remit of high politics, the picture changes even more. The strictly economic dimension may then have no claim at all to primacy.

The surrender at national level of what has traditionally been a prime regalian power, namely that of the state's monopoly issue of currency, could never have been a purely economic matter for France. Few would dispute that geopolitical considerations, relating to France's place in Europe, drove Mitterrand's huge, unrelenting effort to secure the implementation of EMU – first in 1989–91, when he forced German assent to the project in the framework of a binding treaty, and, secondly, in 1992–93, when he insisted that the project should not be derailed by any easing of French economic and monetary policy. What has been less widely recognised is the importance of power and security considerations in the leading role earlier played by Giscard d'Estaing, opposite the German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, in the planning of the future European Monetary System (EMS) and its Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) parity grid. In 1978, behind the jargon-laden Franco-German negotiations concerning symmetrical or asymmetrical burden sharing, lay the deeply political question of the degree to which any French government should be subordinate in the shaping of its economic and monetary policies to decisions taken across the Rhine. The collapse of the Bretton Woods system at the beginning of the 1970s had indirectly led to a change in the relation between the FRG and France in respect of the substance of power wielded in Europe by their respective governments and central banks, and, in this context, Giscard's (ultimately unsuccessful) bid to win German assent for an ERM assuring symmetrical burden sharing was driven even more by high politics than economic calculus.

In brief, therefore, policies pertaining strictly to the EEC as designed by the Treaty of Rome have tended by their very nature to be shaped by economic interests, and France has been no exception to this rule. But once the scope of European integration is viewed more widely, to encompass matters of state and not primarily market arrangements, high politics or geopolitical considerations necessarily intrude, and for no country has this been more evident than for France. In the period between the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the putting in place in the 1990s of the European Central Bank (ECB), France's subordination to Germany in the exercise of monetary power was a matter of state for Giscard and Mitterrand – and indeed briefly for Chirac as well.

These distinctions make for the absence of a linear structure in the narrative that follows. The tale told in the first and third parts – the first part running up to the end of de Gaulle's presidency in 1969, the third part

taking over the story on Pompidou's accession – is essentially one of high or geo-politics. The quest for security, after the trauma of three German invasions within the space of a century, and the related French ambition to exercise a leadership role in the Western half of continental Europe, constitute the dominant theme. French statesmen and governments repeatedly assume that many of the country's external interests are best achieved, through leverage, within the framework of a tightly organised European society of states. Furthermore, the pursuit by France of European monetary integration, to the extent that its rationale is the restraint of German monetary power, is necessarily a highly charged political endeavour. This is strikingly the case once German unification is at hand.

Almost making for a separate tale is how France – initially very reluctantly, and never without second thoughts – adopted progressively the economic liberalism that underlay much of the original Treaty of Rome.⁸ Thus, a retreat from the full-blown *dirigisme* of the immediate post-war years started already in the second half of the 1950s, and, at an uneven pace, it continued down to the beginning of the twenty-first century, by which time *mondialisation* ('globalisation') had become established as a catchword denoting the new and sometimes inclement international economic environment. For the French economy, from a business standpoint, it is the tale that really counts. Yet politically speaking and, more particularly, in terms of the initiatives actually taken by France with its partner European states in the second half of the twentieth century, it is a tale that is largely subordinate to the country's wider quest for security and continental influence.

The structuring of the book into three parts, with the first and third parts encasing the second part that deals primarily with the economic (but not the monetary) dimension of European integration, reflects therefore the truth that considerations of power and security have provided much of the wider context for France's concern with European union. If the treatment of France's membership of the EEC – understood in its founding sense as the 'common market' – is confined to only the second part of the book, it is because the pursuit of economic gain as such has not been the prime motivating force for France's leading role, either in its own right or together with Germany, in the post-war European integration process. This is not to say that economic gain has been considered by those who govern France as being in any way unimportant, far from it; rather that the pursuit of economic gain, however vigorous, has often been made subordinate to the pursuit of power and security and the related enhancement of France's place or rank in Europe and the wider world.

On this last point it might even be argued that the French political establishment's often blinkered attitude towards economic matters, especially during the Mitterrand and Chirac years, contributed to the popular vote against the EU's constitutional treaty in May 2005. Widespread incomprehension of the treaty's more arcane aspects was manifest during the

referendum campaign period. And there were related worries that incremental treaty change had cumulatively transformed by stealth the locus of sovereignty within the EU. But, equally important, the referendum was seized as an occasion to express a deep-rooted resentment about the state of the French economy, particularly the chronically unsatisfactory employment situation. Arguably, the investment of less high politics into EU affairs by both Mitterrand and Chirac, together with a more consequent approach to the liberalisation of the economy and labour-market reform, would have enabled France to keep better abreast of the changes wrought since the 1980s by the EU's tardy (and still ongoing) completion of its own single market and its insertion as a regional bloc into an ever more global economy.

Be that as it may, Europe in the early years of the twenty-first century had become an utterly transformed continent, compared with the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. For France, the question of how the Gaullist vision of a European 'Union of States' can still influence developments in a greatly enlarged EU remains an open-ended one. Any answer to this question would bring us beyond what Hegel termed the 'grey in grey' world of both philosophy and history – where the 'cunning of reason' might be retrospectively discerned – into the realm of conjecture about an indeterminate future.

Notes

1. Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre*, 3 vols, Paris, 1954–59, vol. 3, 54–80. Two days after de Gaulle's return to Paris, the first number of the daily newspaper *Le Monde* appeared, and it welcomed in lyrical terms the 'Franco-Soviet alliance' – see *Le Monde*, 19 December 1944.
2. Raymond Aron, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1983, 229. The paradox is also underlined in Maurice Couve de Murville, *Le Monde en face. Entretiens avec Maurice Delarue*, Paris, 1989, 96–100.
3. For the idea of a 'society of states' or an 'international society' in international relations, see three defining works (listed in the chronological order of their conception): Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, (eds) Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter, London, 1991; Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 2nd edn, London, 1995; Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, London, 1992. Arguably, the Gaullist vision of a European union fits in well with what Wight termed the Rationalist or Grotian tradition of international theory, whereas the contrasting vision, in which the emergence of a federal super-state is seen as the final end of the Treaty of Rome's 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe', belongs to what he termed the Revolutionist or Kantian tradition. Wight's third tradition, the Realist or Machiavellian or Hobbesian one, allows no place, conceptually speaking, for anything that may be meaningfully described as a European union. See Wight, *International Theory*, 30–48, and Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 24–27, for his reformulation of Wight's threefold division.
4. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, New York, 1994, 56–67, 575–77, 602–19.

5. The wording is apocryphal. However, this writer and admirer of de Gaulle did clearly express his preference for two Germanys rather than one – see François Mauriac, *Bloc-notes*, 2nd edn, 5 vols, Paris, 1993, vol. 2, 17–18.
6. Gérard Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943–2003)*, Brussels, 2005.
7. Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca, 1998. On de Gaulle in particular, see *ibid.*, 83–84, 159–237 (the chapter pointedly entitled 'Grain and Grandeur: Consolidating the Common Market, 1958–1969').
8. The fortunes of the economic liberalism lying at the heart of the EEC Treaty are related in John Gillingham, *European Integration, 1950–2003: Superstate or Market Economy*, Cambridge, 2003. His focus is largely economic integration, and he rightly criticises so-called 'functionalist' theorising, according to which 'spillovers' in the processes of integration drive ever more federalist political agendas and out-turns (the programmed terminus ad quem being the 'super-state' of the book's title). However, Gillingham pays scant attention to much of what is understood in France as belonging to '*la construction européenne*'.