

Chapter 5

Principles of World Federation

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them should seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

Declaration of Independence, 1776

More than fifty detailed draft constitutions for a world federation have already appeared in the literature, each one different from the others.¹ It is an amusing game to build such castles in the air, and some interesting examples of a federal structure have been proposed; but in the end the details of the constitution can only be established by the founding commission or convention. There is little point in being too prescriptive at this stage, and it may even be counter-productive, because no two people will agree about the fine details. It is probably more useful to try and establish some common *principles* upon which the federation should be based, which might be able to win general agreement.

Let us first pause once more to recall the definition of the word ‘federation’. According to K.C. Wheare,² a federation is “an association of states so organized that powers are divided between a general government which in certain matters .. is independent of the governments of the associated states, and, on the other hand, state governments which in certain matters are, in their turn, independent of the general government. This involves, as a necessary consequence, that general and regional governments both operate directly upon the people: each citizen is subject to two governments.”

A simplified diagram of the association is given above. The “general government” in this case is the world federation, while the “regional governments” are the member nation-states (or possibly, in the future, regional associations or federations). Each of the two levels of government has separate spheres of responsibility: they “are not subordinate one to another, but co-ordinate with each other.” Each of the three elements in the diagram has duties and responsibilities which it owes to the other two elements, and rights and benefits which it receives from them: these are represented by the lines in the diagram. Other elements could be added in, such as the transnational corporations, but for simplicity we shall leave them aside from this discussion.

Wheare’s definition is a broad one, and could apply to many different systems. On the one hand, there are tight, unitary systems like the Commonwealth of Australia, where the states have very little revenue of their own, and are heavily dependent on the central government, and subordinate to it. On the other hand, there are loose and

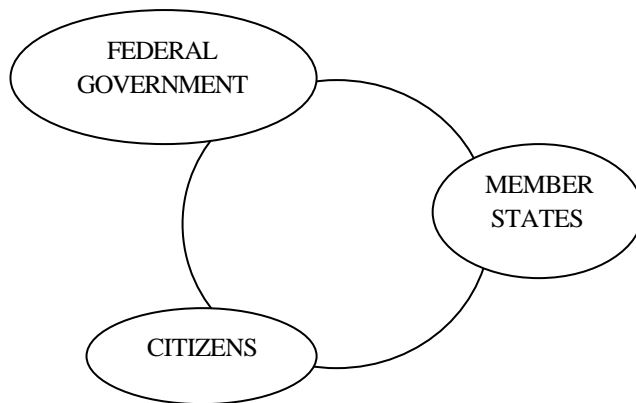


Figure 6. *Simplified diagram of a federal system.*

decentralized systems like the Swiss Confederation, where the cantons retain their independence in many respects, or the European Union, where the member states remain as independent nations. We would envisage a structure for the eventual world federation which lies at the looser end of the spectrum, somewhere between the current European “Union” and the Swiss “Confederation”, as will shortly become apparent.

What are the principles upon which such a federation ought to be based? For these we will rely heavily on the lessons learned in the construction of the European Union. The preamble to the Maastricht Treaty mentions some important principles, although it gives no detailed exposition of them. According to the Treaty³ the member states declare that:

“CONFIRMING their attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law,

DESIRING to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions ..

RESOLVED to continue the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity ..

HAVE DECIDED to establish a European Union ..”

Democracy

The first essential, to a Western mind at least, is that the government of the federation must be based upon the principle of democracy: “government of the people, by the people, and for the people”. Our forefathers have fought and died for this principle on many historic occasions, including the revolution of Simon de Montfort, the English Civil War, the American War of Independence, and the French Revolution. The system may not be perfect, but as Winston Churchill once remarked: “No-one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”⁴

To guard against autocracy and abuse of power, and to preserve the liberty and equality of all its citizens, the government must be chosen by means of free and fair elections, with guaranteed freedom of organized groups to stand in opposition to the

government in power. The elements usually required of a democratic system of government include:

- ?? free and open debate;
- ?? mass media free of government control;
- ?? access for citizens to office holders and bureaucrats;
- ?? review of the executive by the legislature;
- ?? an independent judiciary;
- ?? multiple political parties competing at periodic elections, held by secret ballot on the basis of universal and equal adult suffrage.

These must be guaranteed by the founding treaty or constitution of the federation.

The fundamental advantages of a system of representative democracy are widely accepted. An elected government acquires legitimacy from the consent of the governed. It ensures representative, responsible and accountable administration, in that a governing party which is perceived as incompetent, corrupt or unjust can be replaced at the will of the people. The 'checks and balances' within the constitution and the separation of powers are designed to preserve the freedoms and rights of all citizens alike. Finally, the ability to replace or renew a government by constitutional means helps to assure peace and stability within the state.

While the Cold War was going on, it would clearly have been impractical to propose a universal world federation based on democratic principles, because it would have been rejected out of hand by the Communist countries of the Soviet bloc. But with the astonishing collapse of the Soviet Union that obstacle has disappeared, and democracy has been at least partially embraced by virtually all the countries of that bloc. No other principle of government retains any legitimacy, and even Third World military dictatorships like the one in Burma justify their rule as merely a "temporary expedient", necessary to "maintain law and order", before democracy is restored. The only remaining superpower with a non-democratic government is China.

This point of view has been put very forcefully by Francis Fukuyama in his book *The End of History and the Last Man*. He argues that a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government has emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and more recently communism.

This does not mean that most national governments are fully democratic. The Freedom House group in the United States carries out a yearly rating of countries around the globe, based on a combination of political factors and civil liberties. They estimated in 1987 that 57 states and 34 'related territories' were "free", 57 states and 20 related territories were "partly free", and 53 states and 2 related territories were "not free."⁵ By 1995, there had been some significant changes. After the Soviet collapse, the Baltic states and most of Eastern Europe had changed from "not free" to "free", and the former Soviet republics Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia had become "partly free". South Africa and Namibia had become free, and Cambodia partly free. Elsewhere, there were mixed gains and losses to report. A number of Latin American states, including Peru, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil, had slipped back from free to partly free, along with India; and other states, including Indonesia, Iran, Egypt, Sudan and Kenya, slipped back from partly free to not free. Many of the fledgling states in Asia and Africa are 'guided democracies', or in other words, autocracies in all but name. In these countries opposition leaders are likely to find themselves thrown in jail as soon as they provide any threat to the government in power, or a magazine may find itself closed down if it dares to criticize the government. Overall, however, there had undoubtedly been a significant increase in

democracy world-wide over the period. In 1995, Freedom House estimated that 76 states were free, comprising 20% of the world's population; 61 states were partly free, with 40% of the world's population; and 54 states were not free, with another 40% of the world's population.⁶ A total of 114 states were rated as democracies, although 37 of these were only partly free.

What specific form should the democratic government of the federation take? Should it follow a parliamentary model, or a presidential model? There are many different examples to choose from. A long and detailed comparative study was made by the American Committee on United Europe as a contribution towards plans for the ECSC, which looked at the cases of Australia, Canada, Germany, Switzerland and the United States.⁷ Nowadays the most obvious example to follow is perhaps the European Union itself; but the details hardly matter, since all these models of government have been reasonably stable and effective. The number of seats allotted to each member state must be determined on some equitable principle. The most obvious is "one man, one vote", which would allot seats strictly according to population. Other formulae have been suggested, such as seats allotted according to the square root of the population, which would give the smaller states somewhat more weight.⁸ Only 12% of Everett Millard's group CURE were in favour of a strict "one man, one vote" rule.⁹ A problem with both of the above formulae is that for instance they would give more seats in our hypothetical world parliament to India than to the USA, which would not be in accordance with the realities of world power. The likely consequence is that the US would simply refuse to join such a federation. Perhaps another rule of even greater antiquity should be taken into account, namely "he who pays the piper calls the tune". Thus seats might be allotted on the basis of the financial contributions made by each state, as well as its population.¹⁰ The total number of representatives in the Assembly or Parliament (the 'House of the People') should not exceed something like six hundred - otherwise it becomes impossible to hold a true discussion or debate. Two sample distributions are given below.

Country	Population (m.)	Contribution to UN budget (%)	Seats (Scheme 1)	Seats (Scheme 2)
USA	254	25	29	89
China	1160	0.77	131	68
India	844	0.36	95	49
Russia	148	9.41	17	37
Japan	124	12.45	14	44
Germany	80	8.93	9	31
France	57	6	6	21
UK	57	5.02	6	21
Australia	17	1.51	2	5
Netherland	15	1.5	2	5
Sweden	9	1.11	1	4

Table 1. *Selected examples of the distribution of parliamentary seats according to two sample schemes, normalized to a total of 600 seats worldwide.*

Scheme 1: proportional to population alone;

Scheme 2: based half on population, half on contributions to the UN budget.

Should the executive be elected from within the parliament as in the Westminster or German models, or should it be appointed by an elected president as in the American model, or should both systems be combined as in the French model, perhaps? We have expressed a preference for the cabinet or Westminster model, as did the CURE group,¹¹ on the grounds that it makes the executive more responsible to the parliament and the people, and avoids the possibility of deadlock between the executive and the parliament; but all the systems mentioned above have worked reasonably well in practice, so that there is no overwhelming reason to prefer one over another. It is not really satisfactory, however, to have an unelected executive which is totally separate from the parliament, as the European Union does at present.

Universality

Another fundamental objective is to create a federation which is “universal”, that is one which includes every nation in the world. Only then will it be possible to arbitrate disputes between all nations, and to guarantee peace between them. Only then will it be possible to abolish nuclear weapons, and all other weapons of mass destruction. Only then will it be possible to formulate an effective global strategy to deal with other massive problems of the environment, and hunger and disease in the Third World. Only then will it be possible to extend the benefits of the association equally to all the peoples of the world. Universality was announced as the first principle of world federation at the great Montreux Congress of 1947.

Unfortunately, this immediately raises a most contentious issue, because in the present state of the world the two principles of universality and democracy are not mutually compatible. Should all states be eligible to join the proposed world federation; or should membership be *restricted* only to democratic states? In the long run, the aim is that all the world’s states should be members. But in the long run, one would also hope that all the world’s states will be democratic. In the shorter term, a little thought is enough to show that the federation ought to be restricted to democratic states. Otherwise the federation, in guaranteeing the security of its member states, could be put in the intolerable situation of propping up an autocracy or dictatorship. It would also be completely inconsistent to have a democratic government at the world level, mixed with a non-democratic one at a national level, and would be incompatible with the basic human rights that ought to be guaranteed by the federation, as discussed below.

For all these reasons, we would envisage a federation restricted to democratic states only, which would slowly be enlarged as more nation-states develop democratic institutions, until eventually it would become universal. As an added advantage, this would provide a strong incentive for each nation to make its government more democratic, in order that it might qualify for membership of the federation, and all the benefits and prestige thereof.

This is much the same scenario as was proposed by Henri de Saint-Simon in 1814, or Clarence Streit in 1939, who proposed an initial union of the North Atlantic democracies (actually a list of 15 democracies including South Africa, Australia and New Zealand), which would slowly spread to become universal. “This Union would be designed”, said Streit,

“a) to provide effective common government in our democratic world in those fields where such common government will clearly serve man’s freedom better than separate governments;

b) to maintain independent national governments in all other fields where such

government will best serve man's freedom; and

c) to create by its constitution a nucleus world government capable of growing into universal world government peacefully and as rapidly as such growth will best serve man's freedom ...

Admission to the Union and to all its tremendous advantages for the individual man and woman would from the outset be open equally to every democracy, now or to come, which guarantees its citizens the Union's minimum Bill of Rights."¹²

This is the position adopted by the present-day Association to Unite the Democracies; and similar ideas were discussed by Karl Deutsch *et al* in their large-scale study *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*. The existing European Union is also restricted to democratic states. The Draft Treaty of 1984, for instance, contained an explicit clause to this effect,¹³ while Article F of the Maastricht Treaty states: "The Union shall respect the national identities of its Member States, whose systems of government are founded on the principles of democracy."

By way of contrast, the World Federalist Movement has always envisaged a system which was universal from the beginning, being based on a reformed United Nations. This was the position adopted at the Montreux Congress in 1947,¹⁴ and further discussed by the CURE group,¹⁵ along with many others. The difference clearly arises from the alternative paths by which a federation might be reached. If it begins with a small kernel of the more progressive states, like the ECSC, then it can be restricted to democratic states alone. If on the other hand the federation is achieved by a reform of the present UN, then it will be universal from the start, including both democratic and autocratic or totalitarian states. This would lead to problems and inconsistencies as outlined above, but the CURE group believed that these could be overcome.

Many people will find it unpalatable to demand democracy as a precondition for joining the federation, and some may regard it as a typical example of Western arrogance and cultural chauvinism. Samuel Huntington, for example, disputes the Fukuyama thesis in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. He argues that the concept of democracy is unique to Western civilization, and is not necessarily shared by Asian and Islamic cultures, and that it would be immoral and dangerous to try and force it on other people. But what are the alternatives? Monarchy? Theocracy? Autocracy? Fascism or communism? All these forms of government can still be found in the world today; but none of them could be taken seriously for an instant as a basis for world federation. Democracy is the only form of government with a safety valve, whereby a bad government can be changed peacefully, at the will of the people.

Rule of law

In a federal association, both the central and the local governments (the member states, in this case) have separate and independent spheres of legislative responsibility. In its given sphere, the central association must have the right to make binding regulations and legislation. It must possess a court system empowered to make binding legal judgements based upon that law, and a "police force" or security force empowered to enforce that law if necessary.

The different spheres of responsibility of the central and local governments would be defined by the constitution or founding treaty of the federation. Anything involving international transactions which cannot be controlled by an individual nation would naturally become a federation responsibility. Thus the federation should control and regulate international trade, finance, communications and travel. It should of course

be responsible for common security. It should control all matters concerning the 'global commons', consisting of the high seas, outer space, and (eventually) Antarctica. It should also be responsible for co-ordinating joint action on matters requiring a collective response, such as global environmental problems, disaster relief, and large transnational scientific, technological or industrial projects. Finally, it should be charged with co-ordinating joint action to promote development and better standards of living in the Third World. It may not be granted all these powers at once, but they clearly belong in the federal basket. Many of them are already undertaken, to some extent, by the United Nations.

Any disputes over the interpretation of the constitution or founding treaties, or over the spheres of legislative responsibility of the central and local governments, would be up to the federal court to settle. On matters within the central government sphere, the federal court would take precedence over the various national courts. These are normal practices in any federation.

The security forces would be charged with keeping the peace and maintaining the rule of law within the federation, and with protecting its members against any aggression from outside (if any "outside" remains!). These are also standard practices in any federation. Member states would probably demand to keep their own security forces for the immediately foreseeable future: they are likely to insist on retaining the "right to bear arms". But they would have to guarantee to use the processes of political negotiation and law to settle any disputes among themselves by peaceful means, and to come to the aid of the federation whenever called upon to do so.

It would fall upon the federal security forces to enforce the federation law when necessary. Many people have agonized over the difficulty of enforcing international law upon an independent nation state, pointing out that this could lead to a disastrous state of civil war. This is known as the "enforcement problem", which we shall discuss at more length in the next chapter. For the moment, let us simply point out that the existence of some twenty federal systems in the world today demonstrates that the problem is not insuperable.

Subsidiarity

There has been strong resistance in Europe, led by nationalist figures such as Charles de Gaulle and Margaret Thatcher, against any extension of the powers of the Community beyond those absolutely necessary. Ancient and well-established nation-states will not lightly give up their national sovereignty and cultural identity. To demonstrate that these will be protected, the EU has formulated the principle of "subsidiarity" or self-determination, which was recognized in the Maastricht Treaty.¹⁶

According to this principle, decisions should be taken as closely as possible to the individual citizen, so that whatever can be done locally, regionally or nationally should not be done at community level. Only those functions which absolutely require collective action, and cannot be performed by the member states independently, will become community responsibilities. Thus the member states will retain their sovereignty over internal affairs and most of their external functions as well.

The reasoning behind this principle is clear. To allow citizens to participate fully in the political process, and to avoid feelings of powerlessness and alienation among them, the government must be seated as closely as possible to the people governed. Local affairs should be managed at a local level, national affairs at a national level, and only those affairs which demand international agreement should be decided at the federal level.¹⁷

A similar rule was given long ago by James Bryce in his famous study *The American Commonwealth*: “the general principle, applicable in every part and branch of government, [is] that, where other things are equal, the more power is given to the units which compose the nation, be they large or small, and the less to the nation as a whole and to its central authority, so much the fuller will be the liberties and so much greater the energy of the individuals who compose the people.”¹⁸

The United Nations declares in Article 7 of the Charter: “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.” In the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States adopted by the General Assembly in 1974, Article 1 also affirmed that “Every State has the sovereign and inalienable right to choose its economic system as well as its political, social and cultural systems in accordance with the will of its people, without outside interference, coercion and threat in any form whatsoever.”¹⁹

The European Parliament in its Draft Treaty of 1984 defined the principle of subsidiarity slightly differently: “The union shall only act to carry out those tasks which may be undertaken more effectively in common than by member states acting separately, in particular those whose execution requires action by the union because their dimensions or effects extend beyond national frontiers.”²⁰ This is a somewhat broader definition, and brings in the issue of “effectiveness”. In any case, the principle is a rather elastic one, and many arguments are likely to take place before the respective competencies of the Union and the member states become permanently established.

The member states will certainly demand that the same principle of subsidiarity should also apply to any future world federation. Thus the federation will be a loose or ‘minimalist’ one. The member states must be guaranteed the right to preserve their national and cultural identities, and to manage their internal economic, social and political systems as they see fit, provided that the basic human rights are observed. Thus each nation will retain its own system of law, health, education, welfare, industry, local government, and so on:- the great bureaucratic fiefdoms of each national government would be preserved. We have already suggested that each country would continue to maintain its own ministries of foreign affairs and defence for the time being.

An example is provided by the electoral systems in Europe. Each nation has preserved its own electoral system, and uses that system to elect its representatives to the European Parliament. Some use proportional representation, while others have single-member constituencies, and use a first-past-the-post system. The basic democratic standards are observed in each case. This “pluralist democracy” offers an excellent example of *e pluribus unum* (or Unity in Diversity) in action.

In order to protect their autonomy and sovereignty, the member states have demanded a very direct voice in the running of the European Union, by way of the Council of Ministers and the European Council. One may expect that the governments of the member states will demand the same direct voice in any world federation. Thus the ‘States House’ in the federation is likely to consist of a Council on the European pattern, consisting of ministers or representatives directly appointed by the member state governments. To avoid the problem of the veto, the Council would have to adopt some sort of ‘qualified majority’ rule of voting for normal business, whereby each member receives a weighted vote roughly according to its population and/or financial contributions, and decisions are taken on a weighted majority of votes, without requiring unanimity.

Human Rights

Any world federation would have to guarantee a number of basic human rights to its citizens. This principle is logically not quite consistent with that of subsidiarity, because it overlaps with the internal sphere of responsibility of the member states, but it has already been recognized by the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the United Nations.

The principal conventions on human rights adopted by the UN are contained in the International Bill of Human Rights, in force since 1976. It includes two major conventions, the first one being the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which deals with conditions of work, trade unions, social security, protection of the family, standards of living and health, education and cultural life. The second convention is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which deals with such rights as freedom of movement, equality before the law, presumption of innocence, freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, freedom of association, participation in public affairs and elections, and minority rights. It prohibits torture, cruel or degrading punishment, slavery, arbitrary arrest or imprisonment, war propaganda, and incitement to discrimination or violence.

The UN has no power to impose these obligations on the member states, but the covenants provide for these various rights to be progressively implemented over time by those states which ratify the conventions. By 1994, about two-thirds of the member states had done so. A United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights was also appointed in that year, with responsibility for all UN Human Rights activities, under the authority of the Secretary-General.

The principal European agreement in this area is the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, drawn up by the Council of Europe, which came into force in September 1953 after 10 ratifications had been received. The rights contained in this convention are legally binding, and are protected by the European Court of Human Rights, located in Strasbourg, which has precedence over the various national courts in this area. For instance, in one case it ruled that corporal punishment was no longer permissible in Irish schools, because it contravened the Convention.

There are more than 1,000 private groups around the world monitoring and campaigning for human rights, the best known being Amnesty International. Amnesty has more than 1 million individual members, with subscribers from some 150 countries worldwide. They campaign on behalf of prisoners of conscience, and against violations of human rights such as torture, extrajudicial killings and so forth. An annual report is produced on the state of human rights in each country.

In spite of all this activity, the struggle for human rights still has a long way to go. Over the period 1980-85 Amnesty documented cases of torture in 50 different countries, about one-third of the membership of the UN.²¹ In 1994, there were about 23 million refugees worldwide, and half a million civilians were killed in Rwanda. Amnesty also gave evidence before the Commission on Human Rights of “severe and systematic human rights violations” in Algeria, China, Peru, Turkey, Indonesia and East Timor.²²

There has been great emphasis in recent years on the principles of *equal* rights. Civil rights groups all around the world have struggled and fought for racial equality, religious equality, equal rights for women, and equal rights for minority groups. These

campaigns are continually extending the accepted boundaries of the human rights framework.

Solidarity

To maintain and increase mutual confidence and loyalty to the community amongst its citizens, it is axiomatic that equal rights and opportunities must be afforded to all the people of the federation. Everything possible must be done to eliminate economic and social disparities, and increase “cohesion” within the community. In particular, efforts must be made to alleviate poverty and foster development in the poorer regions of the federation, and bring them up to the same standard of living as the wealthier regions.

This principle was endorsed by the European Union in the Maastricht Treaty. The EU has set up various funds for “structural development”, such as the European Development Fund (EDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). In 1988, it was agreed to double spending on these funds to 14 billion ecu per year over the period 1989 to 1993, and they now account for about a third of the entire community budget.²³ The money is used to promote development in backward regions, to create new jobs in declining industrial areas, to help the unemployed, and to modernize and restructure agricultural production in the poorer rural areas. The Social Fund, for instance, has been used to redeploy or compensate thousands of coal miners affected by pit closures within the community.

The United Nations has implicitly adopted a similar principle. Most of its efforts are directed towards helping the Third World. We have mentioned the work of the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and other agencies in Chapter 3.

Participation

It is important that private individuals and interest groups at a “grass-roots” level be closely and actively involved in the decisions taken by the federation, wherever possible. This helps to increase cohesion and loyalty within the community, and to prevent feelings of alienation and powerlessness among its citizens. The sinews which bind a community together are its civic associations - sporting clubs, parents and teachers associations, church groups, professional societies, labour unions, voluntary organizations, political parties and so forth. The federation must involve groups at this level if it is to receive the acceptance and loyalty of its people. This is closely allied with the principle of subsidiarity.

Participation was seen as the bedrock of democracy by Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic treatise on *Democracy in America*. “It is incontestably true”, he says, “that the love and the habits of republican government in the United States were engendered in the townships and in the provincial assemblies. In a small State, like that of Connecticut for instance, where cutting a canal or laying down a road is a momentous political question, where the State has no army to pay and no wars to carry on, and where much wealth and much honour cannot be bestowed upon the chief citizens, no form of government can be more natural or more appropriate than that of a republic. But it is this same republican spirit, it is these manners and customs of a free people, which are engendered and nurtured in the different States to be afterwards applied in the country at large. The public spirit of the Union is, so to speak, nothing more than

an abstract of the patriotic zeal of the provinces. Every citizen of the United States transfuses his attachment to his little republic into the common store of American patriotism. In defending the Union, he defends the increasing prosperity of his own district, the right of conducting its affairs, and the hope of carrying measures of improvement to be adopted which may be favourable to his own interests; and these are motives which are wont to stir men more readily than the general interests of the country and the glory of the nation.’²⁴

This principle has been recognized by the EU in its creation of the Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions. These Committees have the right to be consulted, and to propose initiatives to the Commission and the Council, on appropriate community matters. The Economic and Social Committee is made up of representatives of employer groups, workers, small businesses, professionals, and consumers. The Committee of the Regions consists of representatives from local and regional authorities, and must be consulted on matters concerning education, public health, and structural expenditures.

The United Nations also involves many non-governmental organizations in the work of its functional agencies and committees. Some of the detailed schemes for world federation have included a separate house of assembly for non-governmental organizations and associations. A network of committees and agencies involving private interest groups and expert representatives would certainly be required to carry on the detailed work of any world federation.

Equity

Equity is the first principle of natural justice, and underlies all the other principles, but here it is meant in a more restricted sense. Each member state should contribute to the federation an amount proportional to its resources, and each state should get out of the federation something roughly equivalent to what it puts in. This is not something to be formally defined in a constitution, but more a practical rule of thumb, to be used as a guide in the day-to-day running of the association.

Perceived lack of equity, or unfairness, is the most common cause of resentment among member states of a community. In the United Nations, an obvious example is the United States, which feels (incorrectly) that it is being left to carry a disproportionate share of the UN budget. Within the European Union, the most prominent example is Britain, which has long felt that it contributes too much to the EU budget, while getting too little in return. Germany is also showing signs of impatience at being required to act as paymaster for the rest of the EU.

Equity is a principle which has to be carefully observed when funds are being allocated for new community projects. Industrial contracts in the EU have to be distributed roughly in proportion to the amount contributed by each member state, in pan-European ventures such as the Ariane space launcher programme, or the Airbus programme. Scientific and technological research facilities also have to be fairly distributed: thus the European particle accelerator laboratory CERN is located outside Geneva, while the plasma fusion laboratory JET is located at Culham in England, and so on.

Some redistribution of resources would still be necessary. Consistent with the principle of solidarity, a certain percentage of the community funds should be set aside for reconstruction and development in the poorer regions. But this principle has to be balanced with that of equity. The net redistribution of funds away from any given state cannot exceed, say, 1% of that state's GDP without producing severe

effects on investment and economic well-being within that country, and thus arousing serious resentment.

Flexibility

If the association is going to be able to evolve and grow in a natural fashion, it needs to have some degree of constitutional flexibility. Whether this should be counted as a principle or a tactic is a matter of semantics, but it is an important point which is currently under discussion in Europe.

The European community has progressed through a series of treaties, each one overtaking or amending the other: the Treaty of Paris, the Rome Treaties, the Single European Act and finally the Maastricht Treaty. Each of these has required the unanimous consent of the member states. This procedure was feasible as long as the community remained small, but it becomes more and more difficult as the size of the community increases. The Maastricht Treaty, for instance, went perilously close to remaining unratified because of the reluctance of the Danes to approve it. As the number of member states increases, the dreaded problem of the veto becomes ever more serious.

The problem is illustrated in an extreme form by the United Nations, which has undergone no significant constitutional change in fifty years, and appears completely rigid and “pot-bound”. In this case it is only the Permanent Members of the Security Council who have a veto, and a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly would be sufficient to approve a change. The number of members is so large, however, and the disparities between them are so great, that no consensus for change has ever emerged.

Some states in Europe, notably Germany, are beginning to discuss ideas whereby the more progressive states should be allowed to proceed towards closer integration, while others (such as Britain, Denmark, or prospective future members from Eastern Europe) should be allowed to opt out or “derogate” from the new provisions, forming a “two speed” European community.²⁵ This is one possible option for maintaining flexibility, and allowing for further progress and change. It would obviously lead to administrative difficulties, but no doubt these could be overcome. It is imperative that constitutional flexibility be somehow maintained in any prototype world federation.

Final remarks

These principles give a broad, qualitative guide to the scope of the rights and responsibilities which should be allotted to each of the three elements in our diagram at the beginning of the chapter. All except the last two have been explicitly mentioned in the preamble of the Maastricht Treaty, and most of them have been recognized, even if partially or implicitly, by the United Nations. They would form a natural basis for any new federal association.

A formal discussion of principles has not often been attempted before. A number of ‘Principles of World Federal Government’ were declared at the great Montreux Congress of World Federalists in 1947. The first of them was a requirement for universal membership. The rest consisted largely of a set of functional objectives, rather than principles of association such as we have outlined, although there are large areas of overlap. The list included the limitation of national sovereignty; enforcement of world law directly upon individuals; creation of supranational armed forces; control by the world federal government of weapons of mass destruction; and the power to

raise revenue.²⁶

More recently the World Federalist Movement has adopted a Statement of Purpose, which does include most of the principles we have discussed. The Statement declares that as citizens of the world, we must all join in achieving a new level of global co-operation to solve the problems of a planet in crisis. The ideals and principles of community life must be applied to international relations. *Democratic* world institutions of law must be developed, to assure a peaceful, just and ecologically sustainable world community. These institutions must have the power to *make and enforce law* in their given jurisdictions, subject to the basic federalist principle of *subsidiarity*. Individuals must be accountable under due process of world law for crimes against humanity; and the Movement promises to work for respect for *human rights* and freedoms, and equitable *participation* of all in the global economy and in global decisions which affect their lives.²⁷

Guy Héraud in his book *Principes du fédéralisme* discusses six “keys to the Federal City” which appear at first sight quite different to ours. They are:

- ?? Autonomy - the right of individuals and groups to autonomy within the community, which Héraud sees as an indispensable aspect of democracy. This would imply that ethnic groups like the Basques or the Bretons should have the right to declare themselves as independent and autonomous communities if they so desire;
- ?? ‘L’exacte adéquation’ - or careful division of competencies between the different levels of government, determined on the basis of subsidiarity;
- ?? Participation - the right of component groups to be actively involved in decisions taken by the general community;
- ?? Co-operation - between the member states, as opposed to domination of one by another, or all of them by the central government;
- ?? Complementarity - between the different levels of government, each performing separate functions, so that there should be no conflict between them;
- ?? Guarantees - of the rights and powers of each level of government and of the individual citizen, which should be provided by the constitution, the courts, and the security forces. This corresponds roughly to our ‘rule of law’.

In the end, both sets of principles cover similar ground. The major difference lies in Héraud’s principle of autonomy. This deserves serious consideration; but it would certainly be a political hot potato, and would hardly command broad general agreement. Thus I would not propose it as a necessary starting principle for world federation.

David Held has proposed a different principle of autonomy in his recent book *Democracy and the Global Order*. By his definition, autonomy means that each person should be free and equal within the political framework, which perhaps corresponds to our principle of solidarity. He advocates a model of “cosmopolitan democracy”, located somewhere between a federation and a confederation, which is quite close to our position.

The most contentious issue within the broader world federalist movement boils down to a single question: should the first principle of the association be democracy, or universality? The Association to Unite the Democracies lays primary stress on the idea of freedom and democracy, while the World Federalist Association has traditionally taken universality as its first criterion. The United Nations, for instance, has foregone democracy for the sake of universality. Its representatives are not democratically elected, nor is its membership restricted to democratic states. This is

its greatest defect, and its greatest source of weakness. A better approach might be to do things the other way around, and to begin with a democratic association, foregoing universality instead. The ultimate aim of the association would certainly be to embrace all nations and become universal, but this could be achieved progressively over time, as the various nations advance politically and become democratic. The democratic system of government has been built up over many centuries of painful struggle, and has proved itself as the only means by which political stability, relatively efficient government, and the preservation of individual freedoms and human rights can be assured. Free citizens of the world community should not be afraid to reaffirm these facts from time to time.