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## V. The 'European Movement'

ALAN HICK

### *Introduction*

'When the impartial history of [the] efforts to unite Europe comes to be written it will be recognized that it was thanks to the Hague Congress and to the subsequent campaign of the European Movement that the Council of Europe was established.'

This opening statement, issued by the Belgian Premier Paul-Henri Spaak<sup>1</sup> at the height of the European political campaign in the Summer of 1949, was one of the many distinguished references made at that time drawing attention to the vital role of the European Movement in the setting up of what was then identified as the essential political apparatus of the united Europe of the future, namely the Council of Europe. For the 'historic' Congress of Europe, held at The Hague in May 1948, leading directly only one year later to the founding of the Council of Europe, an integral part of which was a unique transnational European Assembly representative of and recognized by all the member states, was indeed a remarkable achievement. It was, without doubt, a testimony to the 'certain creative freshness' and 'strange driving passion' which, in the words of Denis de Rougemont,<sup>2</sup> inspired the whole undertaking, and which depicted so well the zeal and optimism which permeated the movement for European unity in that immediate post-war 'clean slate' era.

Forty years on, however, it has become fashionable to deride the political campaign led by the European Movement in the late 1940's as either inconsequential or simply a sham operation. The Council of Europe – specifically the Consultative Assembly – did, it is admitted, do some useful work at times, but was devoid of real political teeth, lacking in sustained impact, and unable, in the final event, to muster any real influence or popular support. The European Movement itself was, at best, a minor political distraction from the real work at hand, and at worst, a 'confused'<sup>3</sup> array of political dreamers represen-

1 P.-H. Spaak, Foreword to *European Movement and the Council of Europe*, London, 1949.

2 D. de Rougemont, 'The Campaign of the European Congresses', in *Government and Opposition* 2 (1966–1967), pp. 329–34, here pp. 330 and 329.

3 See, for example, J. Monnet, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1976, p. 323.



tative of no official constituency, and with a rather bloated view of their own self-importance. In short, neither the Hague Congress nor the European Movement, nor, apparently, the European Assembly itself, contributed significantly to the 'making of Europe'. Instead, it was the sage and pragmatic inter-governmental co-operative process, it seems, which effectively prepared the ground for practical Western European unity, first in the security field with the Brussels Treaty and later NATO, and secondly in the economic sphere through the OEEC. Without such a firm initial basis, so the argument goes, Monnet's 'functional' integration of Europe would have been inconceivable.<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, the vital military consolidation and spectacular economic recovery of Western Europe, in the face of the perceived Soviet threat and looming economic crisis after the war, were essential steps in the overall integration process. The crucial question propounded and articulated by the European Movement, however, was that such European regional measures dealing with immediate security and reconstruction needs did not in themselves hold out the germ of further integral development, and how therefore was the remaining transnational gap, casting a shadow over lasting united action and sustained joint recovery, to be filled?<sup>5</sup> The answer proffered, albeit in varying degrees of elucidation, was the need for some sort of *supranational* political consolidation; and it is in this sense that the documents which comprise this chapter must be understood.

Indeed, despite its considerable diversity of action and expertise, the central and overriding theme of the European Movement in the years in question was *political*. The political campaign which led to the official setting up of the Council of Europe, it is true, eventually proved to be immobile when confronted by the unforeseeable rigidity of Britain's opposition to any real supranational political commitment in Europe, and was in turn eclipsed by Monnet's 'back-door' technocratic approach to supranational integration, based initially round the 'Europe of the Six'. But, nevertheless, the political campaign of the European Movement in the years prior to the Schuman Plan did successfully place the fundamental issue of supranationalism firmly at the centre of the Europe debate, which official intergovernmental action had hitherto failed to do, and without which even Monnet's more judicious approach would not have gained an audience. Herein lies the crucial role which the European Movement momentarily played in the 'making of Europe'. Moreover, its main creation, the European Consultative Assembly, despite all the tight governmental controls in the Council of Europe Statute, set an historic precedent in transnational political unity of action. In a more popular and convincing way than either the Brussels Treaty or OEEC, it bridged the gap between nations previously at war, it broke the ice existing between France and Germany, it expressed as had never been done before a

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the General Introduction to this volume, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> This question was also put in relation to the purely co-operative limits of the U. N. Charter.

common identity and sense of purpose in Europe, and thereby boosted the psychological and moral breakthrough between peoples without which the present-day European Community – for all its faults – could not have been built. Indeed, had not this first unique step been taken over thirty years ago, the European Parliament of today, itching to establish its supranational political credentials, would have remained a pipedream. Herein, also, lies the historical relevance and current value of the immediate post-war European political campaign led by the European Movement.

Besides the EUF, the EPU, the ELEC and the MSEUE, there were in July 1947 two national associations which belonged to no transnational movement, but consisted of notable political figures in their respective countries.<sup>6</sup> In Britain the United Europe Movement, under the presidency of Winston Churchill, was founded by his son-in-law Duncan Sandys (now Lord Duncan-Sandys) in January 1947, and in the middle of July a similar body, the Conseil Français pour l'Europe Unie, was set up by René Courtin<sup>7</sup> and Raoul Dautry.<sup>8</sup> To ensure co-ordination between the various movements a meeting was held in Paris on 20 July between H. Brugmans and A. Marc for the EUF, L. Maccas for the EPU, J. Retinger<sup>9</sup> and D. Serruys<sup>10</sup> for the ELEC, D. Sandys for the United Europe Movement and R. Courtin for the Conseil Français. It was there decided to set up a joint Liaison Committee, with no chairmanship or secretariat, to agree 'common lines of action'. The EPU withdrew from the arrangement immediately afterwards, but the other four associations agreed on 14 December 1947 to replace the loose Liaison Committee by a more effective Joint International Committee of the Movements for European Unity.

<sup>6</sup> For a full account, see A. Hick, *The European Movement and the Campaign for a European Assembly 1947-1950* (thesis, European University Institute) Florence, 1981. For the Movement's official account, written at the time, see *European Movement and the Council of Europe*, while from the federalist point of view, see H. Brugmans, *L'idée européenne 1920-1970*, Bruges, 1970. For an introductory account, see W. Lippens, *A History of European Integration*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1982.

<sup>7</sup> Courtin, René: Born 1900 (France). Professor of Law at Paris University. Former Secretary General at the Ministry of the National Economy. Editor of *Le Monde* and later of the *Revue d'Economique Politique*. Leading member of the *European Movement* International Executive Committee, 1948.

<sup>8</sup> Dautry, Raoul: Born 1880 (France). Economic National Council, 1926. Director of National Railways, 1936-1937. Minister (Independent) of Armament, 1939-1940. Minister of Reconstruction, 1944-1946. Head of French Atomic Energy Department, 1947. Chairman of the *CFEU*, 1948.

<sup>9</sup> Retinger, Joseph: Born 1888 (Poland). Director of the Polish Bureau, London, 1912-1914, working for Polish independence during World War I. Adviser in Mexico, 1918-1926, and then in London as agent for General Sikorski and the Polish Socialist Party in opposition to Piłsudski. Close collaborator of Prime Minister in exile, Sikorski, 1940-1943, and worked clandestinely in Poland, 1944. Founding Secretary General of the *European Movement*, 1948. Later, founder of the Bilderberg organization.

<sup>10</sup> Serruys, Daniel: Born 1875 (France). Civil Servant and aide to Clemenceau, then Poincaré. Chairman of the inter-war League of Nations Economic Council.



This was empowered to take binding decisions on specified types of joint action, each of the associations having four votes (despite their very unequal size); an Executive Committee was elected consisting of Sandys (chairman), Retinger (secretary), Brugmans, Silva, Dautry and Serruys.

The first joint action was the Congress at The Hague from 7 to 10 May 1948, presided over by Churchill and attended by 800 leaders from all West European countries, including several former premiers and foreign ministers as well as ministers in office. It provided an impressive demonstration of the will to unity, and formulated concrete proposals. These called for 'union or federation' of the European nations which 'must transfer and merge some portion of their sovereign rights'; a common market and a human rights convention, and a 'European Assembly chosen by the Parliaments of the participating nations' with the task of recommending 'practical measures'. Proposals for a directly elected or constituent Assembly were, however, rejected. The proposal for an Assembly was presented by delegations to their national governments and endorsed by the French government in July 1948. In January 1949 it was endorsed by the Council of Ministers of the Brussels Pact organization over the objections of the UK, which for a long time was only prepared to agree to a European Council of Ministers. A year, almost to the day, after the Hague Congress the proposal became a reality with the establishment on 5 May 1949 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, though this body had only advisory powers.

In October 1948 the Joint International Committee adopted the name European Movement, under the honorary presidency of Léon Blum, Churchill, De Gasperi and Spaak. Retinger had created an efficient secretariat with offices in London and Paris. In each of the countries concerned a National Council of the European Movement was set up, including members of the 'pressure groups' and political parties, the churches and social organizations, the academic world etc. For countries under dictatorial rule, such as those of Eastern Europe and Spain, 'National Committees' were formed by politicians in exile.

The four founding associations were joined in 1948 by the (Christian Democratic) *Nouvelles Équipes Internationales* under Robert Bichet<sup>11</sup> and the *Mouvement Socialiste pour les États-Unis d'Europe* under Michel Rasquin and André Philip.<sup>12</sup> The federalist trend within the EM was reinforced by

11 Bichet, Robert: Born 1903 (France). Editor of Christian Democrat resistance journal *Cahiers du Témoignage Chrétien*. M. P. (MRP) for Seine-et-Oise, 1945. Secretary of State for Information, 1946. Founding President of *NEI*, 1947, then Secretary General. Vice-Chairman of the *European Movement* International Executive Committee, 1948. Member of the European Consultative Assembly, 1949.

12 Philip, André: Born 1902 (France). Professor of Political Economy, 1926. M. P. (Socialist) 1936. Opposed to Vichy capitulation. Reached London and 'Free French', 1942. Resistance co-ordinator for the French National Committee, 1942–1943, and subsequently on the National Council of Liberation. Finance Minister, 1946. Minister of National Economy, 1947. Chairman of the MSEUE, 1949. Delegate General of European Movement, 1949. Active member of European Consultative Assembly, 1949.

these accessions and by more decisive assertion of numerical strength on the part of the EUF. This was reflected in the resolutions of the Brussels conference of the International Council on 25–28 February 1949, at which the new institutions of the EM were inaugurated under the presidency of Churchill and Spaak, and the same federalist trend was seen in the work of the study committees. The Economic Committee under Sir Harold Butler approved detailed plans for a customs union and common market at its conference at Westminster in April 1949. The Legal Committee under Pierre-Henri Teitgen, with Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe and Fernand Dehousse as rapporteurs, in July 1949 submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe the draft of a European Convention on Human Rights, to be upheld by a supranational Court. The Cultural Committee under Denis de Rougemont at a conference at Lausanne in December 1949 passed important resolutions on educational and scientific matters and on the creation of the Centre Européen de la Culture in Geneva and the Collège d'Europe at Bruges. A social conference held at Rome in July 1950 under the chairmanship of L. Jouhaux made recommendations on social techniques, the free movement of labour etc. and emphasized that only a European Political Authority with the necessary powers could overcome existing divergences. Finally, the Central and East European Commission under the chairmanship of Harold Macmillan worked out the principles of a supranational policy towards the Soviet bloc.

After the humiliating outcome of the first session of the Council of Europe at Strasburg in November 1949, when the UK and Scandinavian representatives in the Committee of Ministers vetoed all recommendations of the Assembly that had any constitutional bearing, Continental member associations of the European Movement became increasingly discontented. In January 1950 Sandys had to acquiesce in a decision by the Executive Committee of the EM accepting the principle of a 'Pacte fédéral' for the creation of a 'European Political Authority with limited functions but real powers'; the Committee at the same time recognized the possibility that Continental countries might go ahead on their own if others were not yet ready to pool their sovereignty. When the UK refused to agree to any modification of the Statute of the Council of Europe Sandys resigned from the chairmanship of the International Executive of the EM, and was succeeded in November 1950 by Paul-Henri Spaak. The organization of the Movement was simplified, and from then on the Executive was predominantly federalist.

By 1950 the European Movement had indeed passed its heyday as a united political force with impact. Major activities followed under the chairmanship of Paul-Henri Spaak, such as the Ad Hoc Assembly campaign of 1952, but this could not prevent the fact that the great political campaign for a supranational Europe which had emerged so strongly in the late 1940's had been eclipsed. In the end, there were no 'miracles', and a crucial and opportune time for 'making Europe' gave way to the 'functionalist approach'. But the passing of time can never fully destroy the appeal and the significance of views and ideas which have been so forcefully and passionately expressed. In the light, perhaps, of the re-emergence of a European political initiative, it will be left to the



reader to decide whether these views of the recent past have real meaning for today.

### 68. ILEC, EUF, EPU, UEM: European Liaison Committee

20 July 1947

EM Archives, File 'International Committee'; printed by W. Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1982, pp. 662–3.

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By mid-1947 the multiplicity of European pressure groups which had emerged in the emotional aftermath of World War II and in response to post-war East-West tensions and the economic crisis ran the risk of causing confusion and potential discouragement in the developing European unity campaign. For this reason some sort of co-ordination was imperative. Both Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and the EUF leadership, in this connection, initially saw it as their respective task to lead an umbrella movement.<sup>1</sup> It was Sandys, however, determined to use the Anglo-French based UEM as a central launching pad for co-ordinated European action, and relying on his influential acquaintances and his tenacious organization skills to force the pace of linkage under his lead, who seized the initiative at a mainly Anglo-French federalist sponsored meeting held in Paris on 17–20 July 1947.<sup>2</sup> There, he proposed and pushed through the following tentative agreement setting up a Liaison Committee for the Co-ordination of International Movements for European Unity, thereby inaugurating what was to become the 'European Movement'. (The agreement was signed on behalf of their respective organizations by Joseph Retinger and Daniel Serruys for the ILEC; Henri Brugmans, Alexandre Marc and Raymond Silva for the EUF; Léon Maccas for the EPU; Gordon Lang and Duncan Sandys for the UEM/British Committee and René Courtin and André Noël for the UEM/French Committee).

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1. In order to secure concerted action and to avoid unnecessary duplication between the principal Movements which are working in the international field to promote the cause of European unity, it has been decided to set up a European Liaison Committee composed of the following organizations:

Independent League for European Co-operation  
European Union of Federalists

1 See, for example, R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, 'United Europe': memorandum on the planned merger of the British Committee for a United States of Europe and the Pan European Union, Gstaad, 1 November 1946, EM Archives, File 'Member Groups'. The EUF leaders had talks with Sandys in London in February 1947, laying down the 'conditions' for the UEM to 'adhere to' the EUF, and were later at the launch meeting of the UEM at the Albert Hall in May 1947. See Note sent by Brugmans, Marc and Nord to Sandys on 3 February 1947, EM Archives, File 'Member Groups'; W. Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1982, pp. 366–7.

2 See Lipgens, *History*, pp. 659–61; EUF *Lettre Circulaire*, No. 13, 22 July 1947, CEC Archives, File 'EUF'; *Federal News* No. 149, August 1947, EM Archives, File 'Member Groups'.

European Parliamentary Union  
United Europe Movement (and associated Movements).  
2. The four organizations have accepted responsibility for different spheres of work as follows: –

a) *Independent League for European Co-operation.*

The formation of a body of international experts on economic questions; the conduct of expert economic studies; the preparation of reports on economic subjects; the organization of conferences to discuss economic problems.

b) *European Union of Federalists.*

The co-operation internationally of the national movements affiliated to it; the organization of conferences of representatives of these national movements; generally the work of assisting these national movements to build up a mass membership.

c) *European Parliamentary Union.*

The organization of inter-parliamentary action; inter-parliamentary conferences; the initiation of action in the various Parliaments to secure support for the European cause.

d) *United Europe Movement (and associated Movements).*

The formation of a body of prominent public figures in each country; the organization of large public meetings of an international character; the direction of large-scale international propaganda (radio, films, newspapers, exhibitions, etc.).

3. The Movements will give to each other all possible assistance in discharging the responsibilities allotted to them. In the event of a Movement wishing to undertake activities other than those mentioned above, it will notify the others of its intention.

4. The Movements will, through the European Liaison Committee, exchange views upon the political situation and will seek, as far as possible, to agree upon the adoption of a common line of action.

5. The Committee will have no official staff or offices.

6. The Movements will endeavour in all important matters to act in consultation and agreement with each other. However, membership of the European Liaison Committee will, in the event of disagreement, not prejudice the freedom of action of the individual Movements.

### 69. ILEC, EUF, UEM, CFEU: European Co-ordinating Committee 11 November 1947

EM Archives, File 'International Committee', Doc. IC/P/1; printed by Lipgens, *History*, pp. 674–5.

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The draft liaison agreement of July 1947 took another four months to materialize into a tighter accord between the member groups. It was a difficult process, causing rifts within