

Address given by Henri Brugmans (Montreux, 27 to 31 August 1947)

Caption: At the first Congress of the Union of European Federalists (UEF) held in Montreux in August 1947, Henri Brugmans gives an address describing the foundations and aims of European federalism.

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The Fundamentals of European Federalism

By Dr. HENRI BRUGMANS

EUROPE MUST FEDERATE

Laboriously, mankind is trying to find its way through a troubled period of transition. Once more political and social institutions have to be transformed; a new regime is being born.

From whichever angle we look at it, the old world is on its deathbed. Three years after the death of Hitler we see around us nothing but mistrust, uncertainty and fanaticism. We live under a Great Fear regime. For tens of millions of human beings starvation and despair are more than threats; they are the realities of daily life. Already blood has begun to flow once more. What with blindness on one side and impotence on the other, the solutions of despair seem to be the only ones applicable and “realist”.

What are we to think about it all?

In 1947, three main factors determined international life: the Marshall Plan, the breakdown of the Conference of the Big Three, and the setting up of “Cominform”. What of our former federalist policy remains valid? Can we still defend our classical position of complete European integration and of constructive pacificism? What attitude should European Federalism adopt today?

Being neither opportunists nor utopians, we are not among those who uphold a principle only to abandon it at the first reverse, nor of those who cling to dreams which political evolution renders – at any rate for the time being – unrealisable. We remain faithful to ourselves while at the same time facing facts. More than ever we are convinced that we are right in proclaiming the necessity for complete European Union. But this does not prevent us taking the facts into account and accepting the realities of the situation.

What are these facts?

The United States, tired of pouring their treasure into a bottomless pit, of trying to finance an unworkable and worn-out multi-national system, have put forward the Marshall Plan. They say: “First get together; then we will see.” That is certainly the language of commonsense, and it is a disgrace that Europe had to wait for a word of command from the other side of the Atlantic before she realised where her own duty and interest lay.

In face of the question thus stated, what is our attitude to be?

Europe at present faces two dangers. The first is to see America, disgusted by our senseless bickerings, relapse into her previous isolationism. An immense danger, because the peoples of Europe are so ruined by the war – war which nobody won – that their future would be seriously jeopardised without the tremendous aid which only the American economic potential can supply.

On the other hand, it is no less evident that the Marshall Plan involves the risk of American domination. Imperialism always gets its chance where the indigenous populations have become weak, disunited and afraid. Further as we have no intention whatever of allowing any outside interference with our evolution towards a better form of society, our European “patriotism” means above all: confidence in ourselves, solidarity, consciousness of our common vocation.

How, then, are we to seize the opportunity which is offered without losing our independence? That is the problem. It must be solved, and its solution is by no means impossible.

First and foremost, it is quite evident that the United States are not pursuing a merely altruistic policy. If we need America, she also needs us. We represent for her an enormous market – of several hundred million persons who are accustomed to a high level of consumption. She does not wish to lose this market in the

future, and she is right. Our position, therefore, is not merely that of the poor relation. Let us keep that clearly in mind when we are negotiating with the Western Great Power. We find ourselves in our present unhappy condition not because we are bankrupt or in a state of fundamental economic exhaustion but only because of political disunity.

But the dangers to European independence do not come only from outside. The most serious of all is the threat of treason, or at least of surrender, within our fortress itself. This danger comes from those “Europeans” who set their faces against any reform of the structure of society, who dream of a return to the past, who are “anti-Communists” not because they believe in freedom – but because they desire privilege; and who, beaten on the field of national politics, count on the United States to bring back the old discredited system. These people would light-heartedly sacrifice their liberty if American aid would rescue them from the nightmare of revolution.

Such a conception is pure heresy. First of all, because federalism could never ally itself with the forces of social reaction. Secondly, because Europe’s fate is in her own hands. It is at once weakness and wishful thinking to imagine that any outside power, however friendly, however generous, can save our continent. Europe is sick; Europe alone can cure herself. Thus only can she hope to make a complete and helpful contribution to the new world-order to which we all look forward.

That is why we believe so passionately in European independence, that is to say: in Europe's own mission. But, for our struggle to succeed, we must unite as quickly as possible. To deserve help from America and at the same time to safeguard ourselves against eventual American interference in our affairs, there is only one weapon – unity. We must forge that weapon, and forge it with the least possible delay.

EUROPEAN FEDERALISM AND THE EAST

There is no doubt that our position would have been infinitely stronger if the Soviet Union had not forbidden the countries of Eastern Europe to link their efforts with ours. In causing the breakdown of the Big Three Conference, M. Molotov greatly weakened the forces of Europe. From every point of view he forced the peoples of Western Europe into the arms of the United States and caused a Western consolidation. Once again Soviet diplomacy, in trying to be too clever, has created a coalition which will tend to isolate it and which involves at the same time its future and our own. If we are forced to accept American “imperialism” and possibly an American “capitalist crisis” we have only the U.S.S.R. to thank.

Nevertheless – and in spite of everything Communism has done to assure the triumph of Mr. Truman's doctrine in the countries of the West – unity remains Europe's sole strength and her last chance. And this chance is a real one. For here is a consideration which I commend to all those who talk a little too glibly perhaps of “American imperialism”. For the first time in history, to the best of my knowledge, the rulers of a great, so-called imperialist power have given the lie to the popular adage “divide et impera”, divide and rule. America convokes us to union – and union is strength. Does she wish to employ this strength for her own ends? Perhaps, but there is no doubt that European unity, if today it would save the United States from dissipating her dollars, would in the future constitute a powerful guarantee of independence. And that for two reasons.

The first is because continental consolidation on our part would encourage other parts of the world to unite. I have in mind China, the Arab League, India, Indonesia and Latin America. Secondly, because, through a European Federation, the British Commonwealth, paradoxically enough, would gain in strength and in cohesion. If the mother country, no longer isolated at the mercy of her American creditors, could count on the support of an organised continent, she would increase her influence as a world power and her prestige in relation to her Dominions.

What conclusion are we to draw from all this? That we must create federalism wherever we can. Wherever we can reduce the importance of frontiers – let us do so! To neglect any opportunities that may occur is to condemn ourselves to a sterile policy, to turn our backs on reality and to abandon Europe – be it for the moment only Western Europe – to impotence and despair.

Have we, then, forgotten our hatred of bloc politics? Are we going to allow the bridges to be blown between ourselves and our brothers of Eastern Europe? Are we to capitulate before the accomplished fact?

Certainly not. On the contrary, more than ever we denounce every tendency towards splitting the world between the two Super Powers (which, as a matter of strict fact, total between them only about 14 per cent of the world's population). More than ever are we convinced that war today is not only criminal but useless. More than ever do we feel ourselves one with the peoples of Eastern Europe.

But still, let us face facts. After the betrayal of Munich and the recognition at Yalta of "spheres of influence", a favourable response to the Marshall offer by the peoples of Eastern Europe was problematical to say the least of it. Today it is impossible for them to have any other foreign policy than one which accords with that of the Soviet Union. They are further tied to her by the direction of their social development, and some of them are attached to the great Slav power by ties of race. Once, therefore, Russia had decided not to take part in the European Conference, there could be in Eastern Europe the wish and the hope to take part, but the die had been cast, and the first nucleus of European unity had to be formed without them.

The subsequent creation of the Belgrade Bureau was a further attempt to lock the Eastern doors, politically and ideologically.

So we will have to work without Eastern Europe for the time being, but never *against* Eastern Europe.

Though the vicissitudes of international politics may separate us for the time being, European federalism does not accept this division as a *fait accompli*. On this point (as on so many others) we agree with Dr. Eduard Benes, President of the Czechoslovak Republic, who said on the 6th May last, on the occasion of the commemoration of the German aggression: "We will never go exclusively with the East, or exclusively with the West, but always at the same time with the East and the West."

For this reason, the E.U.F. will make no decisions without taking into account the aspirations of Eastern Europe. We will not resign ourselves to a rupture which is quite evidently, and in every respect, against the interests of all. The peoples of Eastern Europe can always count on the complete understanding of the E.U.F. and we shall promote, so far as lies in our power, all possible meetings and exchanges of ideas, goods and persons between us. And that is still possible. There are strong links between the two sections of our continent. Let us not forget, for example, that in spite of the recent agreements between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia still gets a large part of her raw materials from the West. Let us not forget the international Socialist and Trade Union Conferences which, despite misunderstandings and formidable differences, provide or create opportunities for agreement. Let us not forget either, that several million Eastern Europeans belong to the Roman Catholic faith, and that this fact has taken on a positive political significance with the condemnation some months ago by the Vatican daily paper, in a series of arresting articles, of all idea of a so-called anti-Bolshevik crusade.

Powerful forces still refuse, for practical or idealistic reasons, to confront Eastern Europe with the pernicious – and unnecessary – choice between the Soviet Union and the Western World. For us this is both encouraging and helpful. Therefore we must not despair, and if the tangible results seem perhaps to be somewhat meagre for the moment, let us nevertheless dedicate a great part of our efforts to getting across this absurd and fatal demarcation line.

But politically this is not enough. All our declarations must seem ineffective and even hypocritical unless we define, once and for all, our attitude towards the Soviet Union.

We know very well that many people in Moscow recognise only three types of persons: Communists, simple-minded sympathizers – and reactionaries, enemies of the Russian people. Unfortunately for them, we do not belong to any of these three categories. We do not subscribe to Bolshevik collectivism; we flatter ourselves that we are no more simple-minded than the next man – and yet we refuse to be the ideological leaders of a campaign against the Soviet Union and its form of government.

We believe that Russian Communism, with all it connotes of one-sided propaganda and censorship, police politics, fanaticism and spiritual inquisition, will never provide a form of society which will permanently satisfy the peoples of Europe whether of the East or the West. We all possess – and intend to preserve – a critical and free-thinking temperament, and if it were no longer possible to say “No” in our own countries – “No” to the legislative bodies, to the Government, to academic art or official science – then Prague, Vienna, Zurich, Paris and London would be cities of the dead.

But if our way of life is fundamentally different from that of the Russians, that does not prevent, on the part of Europe anyhow, either respect or friendship. Further, we recognise that Europe must absorb the social and economic democracy which was the objective of the Soviet Revolution, just as it had to absorb the positive contribution of the French Revolution in the last century. In particular, to our eyes, Stalin's soldiers seem sometimes to have played the same part in Eastern Europe as those of Napoleon played in Italy, Poland and Germany which at that time were reactionary or nationally oppressed countries. Coming as liberators, by the time they left, they had destroyed old, outworn institutions.

But precisely because we see the likeness between the Red Army and the Sans Culottes or the old Imperial Guard (realising, of course, that all comparisons are bound to be arbitrary), it is our duty to warn the Russians against the historic temptation which may falsify their mission. They too are tempted to settle the social problem by force, and to bring in a new order (according to their formula) on the points of their bayonets. In the name of Europe and in the name of liberation itself, which, according to the dictum of Marx, can come about only through the personal efforts of the people concerned, we proclaim our intention of working out our own destiny. A good neighbour policy towards the Soviet Union? Certainly. But surrender of our European personality – never!

The liberation of Europe will be the work of the Europeans themselves. Let us at last stop looking elsewhere and waiting for others to solve our problems for us. Let us reflect on the profound statement made to the American people by George Washington at the end of his presidency:

“Treat all nations with good faith and justice . . . Permanent, inveterate hatred of certain peoples and a passionate attachment for others must be ruled out. The nation which abandons itself to lasting hatred or unswerving affection for another nation, in some measure makes itself a slave.”

The position which I have just outlined involves a perfectly clear pacifist attitude. In opposing every form of colonisation and appropriation, we believe we are rendering a service to the real interests of an America or a Soviet Russia whose peoples ask only to be left to work in peace.

Our pacificism, it must be understood, is not a question of cowardice. Most of us realise only too well that there are some things whose value is higher than that of life itself. But can these things be safeguarded by war? Could a competition in atomic destruction settle the Russian or the American “problem”? We believe that military solutions, in spite of the smoke-screen of “firmness” and “power” with which we surround them, are at bottom only proofs of impotence and surrender. Armed conflict decides nothing: Problems are solved only by a proper organisation of society. Those who want peace no longer prepare for war. They prepare for federal government, in Europe and everywhere else.

EUROPEAN AND WORLD FEDERALISM

We are often asked if we, European Federalists, are in favour of a World Federal Government, or whether we intend to work in the first place for our own continent.

I will answer this question with complete frankness.

We believe that by the very fact of pursuing a European policy we are already pursuing a policy of world

order. It would be absurd to try to organise Europe in a watertight compartment. The fact that we have taken as our motto “One Europe in One World” proves that we regard any action to achieve a peaceful Europe in a divided world as utopian. From the beginning, the cause of Europe has been indefensible except within a world framework.

Indeed, of what use would it be to unify our part of the world if there were no international authority to control the use of atomic energy? Of what use would it be for us to achieve partial planning in the economic field if it was not enough to save the European people from starvation? Of what use would it be to create European armed forces if they were to be condemned to serve the interests of outsiders or imperialist oppressors?

That is why we believe that all attempts to achieve peace are utopian unless they lead to World Federation. That is why we fight for the creation of functional world organisations which alone can prevent disaster and maintain the peace of the world.

I will go even further. To our mind it is not a question of progressive steps, or proceeding by stages – first, for example, to establish “Benelux”, then to organise Europe, and finally to unite “the great globe itself”. No. History does not work like that. Every problem involves every other problem. Without a federated Europe, no local effort will be safe, and what would happen to Europe itself if it remained at the mercy of atomic destruction and famine? For us world peace is not a far off dream but an immediate necessity, which involves practical solutions starting from today. That is why we played such an active part in the World Federalist Conference which was held in Montreux in August 1947. I think I can claim that our efforts at that conference were not in vain.

FEDERALISM ON EVERY PLANE

As complete federalists we must work on every plane and wherever possibilities offer. As men menaced by the atomic bomb we must fight for world control of atomic energy. As Europeans our desire is to rescue our continent from the chaos into which it is sinking. As citizens of this year of grace 1948 we must operate in the framework that history has provided for us: the practical results of what we do are limited by events caused by others.

The breakdown of the Big Three Conference has created a state of affairs which closes certain avenues to us. At the same time, it forces certain more limited action upon us. I will give an example of what I mean.

Up to last summer, we had not devoted all our energies to pursuing Franco-British agreement. We wanted it, of course, but we did not wish to give too much preference to an alliance which might be interpreted as a manoeuvre directed against Eastern Europe. Now, since we cannot expect an early change in the direction of world politics, partial solutions have definitely to be put on our agenda. Would an immense step forward not have been taken and an example given which might have been followed by the rest of the world had Mr. Churchill's proposal to France on the morrow of Dunkirk – the proposal of a common citizenship – been realised? And what about Count Sforza's idea of creating one supra-national corporation for Alpine electricity run jointly by the French, the Swiss, the Italians, the Germans and the Austrians? In January our French and Italian movements held a federalist demonstration at the Scala Theatre in Milan to promote solutions of this kind. Now they are not only possible but urgent.

From pious wishes, let us pass on to action. We must work for federalism wherever it is possible. And for that we believe that the greatest possible concentration of European forces is necessary.

Last summer, in Paris, we signed an agreement with the Independent League for European Co-operation and the British and French United Europe Movements to co-ordinate our action. By so doing we sacrificed none of our political liberty nor our right to act in all spheres. But the three of us together are to examine in all loyalty and good faith how we can best take the next steps.

We believe that liaison work of this kind – and even common initiative – are useful and wise in the present

state of affairs. But that makes it all the more necessary at the same time to define the true character, the long-distance aims, and the fundamental beliefs of federalism and its social message.

THE SOCIAL MESSAGE OF FEDERALISM

I arrive at this point with joy because it is by that also that we shall be judged. It is by our capacity to bring about social rehabilitation that we shall prove that Europe can live and is worthy of a free life.

“How do you visualise concretely the evolution of Europe as a free and organised open Federation?” If we cannot answer this question, our failure is certain. It is certain, because on the one hand all problems will appear in a new light when considered in the framework of supranational federal co-operation. And on the other hand, a European Federal Union can come about only if it is quite clearly seen to be part of the great revolution of our time.

What do we mean by the words “Revolution of our time”? Certainly not street-fighting, partisan activities, dictatorship and civil war. What we are thinking of are certain well-known historical precedents which can be used for the service of mankind. “The only way of preventing a revolution”, said Proudhon, “is to make one”.

Furthermore, present-day procedure is revolutionary. Just as the invention of printing and gunpowder and the great voyages of discovery of the fifteenth century led to revolutions which we called “Commercial Capitalism”, “Humanism”, “Reformation” and “Renaissance”; just as steam and the pinning jenny brought about the industrial revolution, Liberalism, and the working-class movement; so, today, films, aircraft, wireless and atomic energy have created a society quite out of tune with the old-fashioned nationalist and capitalist systems.

But not only has technical development revolutionised the world. Human psychology refuses to be cabined and confined and, in spite of war weariness and the disillusionments of post-war unrest and the bitter experience of a “liberation which was no liberation”, European man is a potential revolutionary.

In fact, our peoples are completely steady while their governments are at the same time quarrelsome and weak, and that is the typical historic formula for a pre-revolutionary period. Do not let us be deceived by the apparent calm of the peoples or by their political indifference which sometimes degenerates into sheep like stupidity. Do not let us be deceived either by the apparent stability of governments and governmental systems. A single spark could cause an explosion. Outworn systems fall easily if, in fact, they have already abdicated their authority. In such circumstances the people either decay or revolt. Which is it to be? It is for us to fill the vacuum created by the downfall of national states and their party systems. If we do not fulfil the latent hopes of the peoples, others will come along and lead them into some unknown adventure.

Federalism must therefore be ready to take power, and to provide not only a new political system, but also a new social order.

What does federalism offer in this field? Two elements indissolubly linked: organic solidarity and liberty – in other words, development of the human personality. Only viewed thus can liberty cease to mean exploitation, and solidarity avoid turning into totalitarian dictatorship.

Federalism provides social liberty for the world – the maximum responsibility for all human beings and groups in every field of public life.

To our minds the worker is not free if he is the slave of mechanisation or of profit, if the undertaking in which he works is not at the same time *his* undertaking; if he cannot be certain that what he produces will add to the well-being of the community as a whole.

The employer is not free to exercise his natural function of direction if his part is reduced to that of a civil servant carrying out orders from above, be it from trusts, high finance or the State.

And the consumer is not free if he is subject to the dictatorship of a monopoly which imposes on him famine prices – even if the trust concerned has secured the well-paid participation of workers' representatives.

An alliance of producers and consumers organised to combat all trusts, monopolies and combines, the co-operation of all free men and all autonomous groups, implying common action and the responsibility of all for the common good – self-government and democracy from top to bottom – that is federalism.

The sort of society whose picture we carry in our minds is a society which enjoys organised liberty at every stage. For we reject sovereignty of every kind which does not liberate man from servitude. We reject the divine right of employers and technicians, when they claim to be organising economic life, to exploit man by using him as human raw material. We hate to see the concentration of power in the hands of a tiny minority of modern feudal barons. We hate no less the domination of that supertrust which calls itself “the State”. We hate, too, the dictatorship of the “average” man, that mediocre and soulless creature mass-produced by means of mass publicity. Finally, we hate, as an affront to human liberty, the supremacy of a totalitarian party, the political monopoly-trust, which claims to be the incarnation of absolute national sovereignty. “Every yoke is made to be broken”, said Diderot.

But enough negatives; enough “antis”. Let us end by quoting our master, Proudhon, who wrote in 1866: “To end the irreparable abuse of sovereignty, I demand once and for all the dismemberment of sovereignty”. In this “dismemberment of sovereignty” lies the real *politique de la personne*, and the only guarantee of organic, living, lasting solidarity, for humanity, and not for the sake of a machine.

In the light of these principles, let us now examine two vitally urgent problems: the problem of nationalisation and the problem of Germany. There are others that we might have discussed (I am thinking, for instance, of the Colonial question), but I am going to stop there. I apologise to my British friends for my excursion into the realm of theory. I hope they will forgive me for mixing philosophy with action. It is, I am afraid, an old Continental sin.

FEDERALISM AND ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

So, first, nationalisation.

An ideological discussion has developed on this subject. To us it looks like a debate that will never end and will not help us to promote workable solutions, because the arguments are generally based on abstract principles. The Right is against: the Left is for. And what does that mean?

One side wants to make certain that industry is carried on in the public interest. Nothing could be fairer. The other underlines the crimes committed by the State as employer or as producer – and again they are often right. How are we to get out of this impasse? By a General Election? Such questions can never be settled by “general ideas” or by a political majority. What then?

Federalism – that is to say, a policy for man as he really is: an individual and a member of several self-governing collectivities – can resolve the problem in each case as it arises without any theoretical prejudices. Every time it will take three basic factors into account: the economic factor, the social factor, and the territorial factor.

In our eyes, an undertaking is above all an economic unit for the production of a useful commodity. It is therefore in the public interest that this production should be as flexible as possible. If nationalisation helps towards this end, let us go for nationalisation. If, on the contrary, it makes the undertaking more rigid and more liable to be involved in politics – as is the fact in France, for example – it goes against the common good, so why advocate it?

On the other hand, an undertaking demands team spirit – the team being those who work in it. They have the

right to know why and for whom they do what they do. They must feel themselves part of a whole for which they are responsible and part of a community which looks after them and, if necessary, protects them. In this connection a whole series of problems arises and must be solved. We need a complete change in methods of mass-production, social democracy, recovery of pride in a man's work, of common responsibility for work carried out in common. Can nationalisation solve these problems? We must look at the facts.

Finally, if an undertaking is turned over to the "community", are we quite certain that the state is its natural repository? Why not the parish or a federation of parishes; why not the province, the canton or a special administrative region whose territorial boundaries are perhaps not the same as those of the sovereign nation state? We believe that nothing has been more fatal to the national workers' movements than this mania for self-hypnotism about national solutions, the identification of socialism with socialisation, of socialisation with national bureaucratic management, of the state with the community. There is no doubt that Mr. Emery Reves is right when he sees in every form of "national" Socialism a dangerous strengthening of nationalism in public institutions and in men's minds.

Here is an example. In France great complaints are being made that not enough coal is being received from the Ruhr. It is said, and rightly, that Lorraine and the Rhine-Westphalian Basin form a single whole and represent the two hands of the same worker. Cannot we see, then, that if we want to get back to the natural organic co-operation which is essential, nationalisation is taking us further away from our aim? The main question of today is not whether industry should be privately or publicly owned or partly one and partly the other – the real question, which is the key to all the others, is whether, when all is said and done, we can break the vicious circle of economic nationalism.

Is it not absurd, really, to talk of "Belgian", "French", "German" or "Dutch" coal and so jealously to entrust its working to national officials who have to carry it out in the artificial framework of a so-called "national" economy? If nationalisation encourages the nationalist virus – and often it does – let us say quite definitely that it is reactionary.

I know I have sketched only the bare outline of the problem. We shall come across it again presently when we come to the question of Germany. We must go into it carefully with all the interested parties, the experts and especially our Trade Union friends. But in any case I maintain that on this problem European federalism has something to say.

GERMANY IN A FEDERATED EUROPE

In the same way, we believe that the German problem is insoluble except by federalist methods and by fighting nationalism in all its forms.

Do not let us waste our time on psychological speculations or in considering the national character of the German. We know that the Germans are very easily led, that their late development as a nation has made them chauvinists of an exaggerated type, that their herd instinct derives from a form of idealism at once empty and inflammatory, that, in a word, they have a morbid tendency towards mass movements in which they can sink their personal responsibility. All that we know by experience. But at the same time we cannot conceive of a Europe without the tens of millions of Germans who must be given hope for the future.

Do not let us ask ourselves in the abstract whether we are "optimists" or "pessimists", whether we believe or do not believe that "re-education" is possible. Let us get down to practical work – let us produce a policy for Germany which is at least possible . . . as we know only too well, alas, that an integral solution is excluded so long as the demarcation-line subsists between East and West. For my own part I am still convinced that, if we can set on foot a real and realistic European federalist movement, we shall find in Germany hundreds of thousands of men and women who, as a result of bitter experience, will be ready to respond to our appeals. For heaven's sake, before talking seriously about Germany, let us rid ourselves of our self-righteousness. And particularly, let us be quite definite in our own minds that if we expect Occupation to heal this defeated people, we may just as well expect the dead to arise.

Having said this, what are our concrete proposals?

As we see it, the reconstruction and re-equipment of the country, getting its economic potential into working order, cannot be brought about by a policy of decentralisation. There is nothing “federalist” in a Westphalian, a Saxon, or a Bavarian economy, or in a zonal or bi-zonal organisation. But we must go further than that, and say that this whole question today goes far beyond the borders of the German state, supposing they are ever restored, just as it does in the case of any other national unit. To speak of a “German” economy is quite wrong. We must speak of a European economy in a world framework.

From this follows the need to organise this European economy within a world framework. And here the “German” problem is linked to our own. Not only would we be hypocrites if we recommended federalism to Germany and ourselves remained nationalists, but it would also be practically and technically impossible to “federalise” the German economic potential without touching the economic set-up of other countries. As we already stated at our conference at Amsterdam: Federalism is not a punishment inflicted on the conquered, nor a solution inspired by fear of invasion – it is the realist solution par excellence, and it cannot be introduced in one country unless all the others follow the same line.

Once again I will give an example. No problem is more discussed than that of the Ruhr. Should the industries of this immensely important and dangerous area be given back to German owners or to the Reich? Should they be “nationalised” for the benefit of one or more of the victorious powers? In either case the solution would put a premium on militarism and encourage a policy of depredation.

What is needed is to establish the first nucleus of autonomous European administration of coal and heavy industry, administrations which would restore in the economic sphere the geological and geographical unity of the coal-producing and industrial basin of Western Europe, which would then be able to function effectively, freed at last from national trammels. These organisations would be controlled by all the interests concerned, and, for this very reason, would no longer be in danger of serving potential aggressors.

There are many other possible examples in the same category. I am thinking, in particular, of the establishment of a unified network of European transport services, of which the European Federal Railways would be one of the basic factors, and for which a federalised Reichsbahn would make a concrete starting point. That is the direction in which we must seek guarantees against a militarist Fourth Reich. To the French especially we say: Without European Federation there can be no security.

And what would this security mean for Germany herself?

The certainty that her dreams of domination have – at last and thank goodness – become Castles in Spain, by-passed by history. But also, such a continent-wide organisation would open the door to her progressive and real integration into the human family. There, and only there, is to be found the possibility of moral recovery. For once there is the prospect of material revival and European co-operation, the decentralisation of the country ceases to look like anti-national and reactionary dismemberment. Once the Ruhr becomes part of One Europe, in exactly the same way as Lorraine, Luxembourg, the coalfields of Belgium and North-Eastern France, Liege and the Limburg the spectre of “Balkanisation” disappears, and the life of the locality, the parish, the province can develop freely, in a large, united “living space”.

For we know that the worship and practice of the unitary state have been more pernicious in Germany than anywhere else. In the sphere of administration, of social, political and cultural life, only decentralisation can create the conditions of true democracy. Let us work for that. We alone, we European federalists, have the right to advocate it.

And finally, in this respect, we would like to make one last concrete demand. In our view it is essential that the policy of occupation should cease to hinder the free circulation of European culture in Germany. The victorious democracies should, on the contrary, encourage it. And there is still hope in this field.

We realise, of course, that some of the Allied organisations have made a real effort in this direction. But it is

also true, alas, that innumerable Germans with a European culture and outlook, seek in vain for regular contact with the spiritual life of the world. Not only must these contacts not be prevented in the future, but they must be encouraged and organised with method and understanding under the control and on the initiative of a council established for the purpose. What has been called the re-education of Germany is not the privilege nor the burden of the victors or the occupying powers; it is the responsibility of the whole European and human community.

THE MISSION OF EUROPEAN FEDERALISM

Federalism, then, on every plane – federalism, creator of organic and visible solidarity, European and World federalism, the only means of resolving the contradictions of a period in which all men are jointly and severally responsible for the activities of their fellow men.

Federalism, federalism again, and always more and more federalism, so that we may live in freedom, and frontiers and divisions may at last be swept away.

Those are the solutions we must present to public opinion and we propose to set them out in exact terms. But the technical elaboration of these solutions is not enough. We must, above all, create in Europe the political power to bring them into being. Our peoples must arouse themselves from their stupor, and revolt at last against a policy which uses them as pawns in their own lands and against their own interests; they must unite for their common good.

Sometimes this appears an overwhelming task, and like all who have changed the course of history, we feel like voices crying in the wilderness. But behind our devotion to the federalist cause, behind our decision to devote our lives to it – what is there? Personal ambition? Overweening pride? No; merely a common and personal vocation which we have not the right to deny.

Shall we succeed? If we knew that in advance, there would be no history. William of Orange, Henry IV of France, Bolivar, Mazzini, Lenin, Sun Yat Sen or Roosevelt, did any of them know their chances of success? We may be certain that many difficulties and many disappointments await us, but let us also realise that a force has been born among us which today truly represents Europe. Federalism is not the only representative expression of Europe today, let us be thankful to say, but at this moment it represents with the greatest energy and political clearness the will of our peoples to safeguard their fundamental values and to push on towards a new order of life.

And because we are the living synthesis – not in thought only but in actual fact – between age-old European traditions and the revolutionary thought of the present day, we have powerful allies. We appeal with equal confidence to such different groups as the Economic and Social Council of UNO, which has invited us to become one of its consultative bodies, the Christian churches, the Chambers of Commerce, the Trade Unions, and the Former European Resistance movements. With all of them we have one special approach to make, one special advantage to offer. In each case we feel we are offering them something new and yet familiar – an element of liberation and enrichment, the enrichment of a positive purpose.

It was in September 1946 that the first European Federalist Conference met at Hertenstein in Switzerland. The road we have travelled since then has taken us a long way. If we all set our minds to it, in the coming year we can accomplish still more. I refuse to finish with a flowery peroration. I simply express the hope that European Federalism will emerge more united, better armed, more pugnacious, more realistic and more deeply rooted in the popular consciousness. For the rest, the future is not in our hands – it is in the hands of God.