

'The United States of Europe as the sole guarantee for peace' from Il nuovo Corriere della Sera (20 September 1946)

Caption: On 20 September 1946, the Italian daily newspaper Il nuovo Corriere della Sera sets out the main points of Winston Churchill's call for European unity, which was made in an address given the previous day at the University of Zurich.

Source: Il nuovo Corriere della Sera. dir. de publ. Guglielmo, Emanuel. 20.09.1946, n° 115, anno 71. Milano: Corriere della Sera. "Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa unica garanzia di pace", auteur:Treves, Piero.

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The United States of Europe as the sole guarantee for peace

From our correspondent

London 19 September, evening.

The declarations by the Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi have been met with eager consensus among leading politicians in London, who are also pleased that a ministerial crisis could be avoided.

With the problem of the dreaded De Gasperi crisis overcome, there still remains the great obstacle of the even more dreaded Trieste crisis. Especially considering that, after the conclusion of the Wallace incident, the American and British delegations at the Paris Peace Conference seem determined not to give in.

Winston Churchill's address in Zurich this morning seems to insinuate a similar attitude.

Of particular importance were certain paragraphs from this speech that appeared to be inspired by a truly European spirit. Speaking about the tragedy of the European continent, Mr Churchill declared:

'If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and the glory which its three or four hundred million people would enjoy.'

'Among the victors there is a babel of voices; among the vanquished the sullen silence of despair. That is all that Europeans, grouped in so many ancient states and nations, that is all that the Germanic races have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide.'

Winston Churchill thus gave expression to the repressed anxiety that is spreading throughout Europe and has, all too often, prevented Government and party leaders from finding the right way to restore true peace among weary nations. The only way, according to Mr Churchill, to achieve this objective is that which leads to the creation of the United States of Europe.

The former Prime Minister is certainly aware of the enormous difficulties that are impeding the successful implementation of the idea of a united Europe and has pointed them out in his speech, suggesting at the same time possible solutions.

'The first step in the re-creation of the European Family must be a partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral and cultural leadership of Europe.'

'The structure of the United States of Europe, if well and truly built, will be such as to make the material strength of a single state less important,' Mr Churchill then declared. 'Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause. The ancient states and principalities of Germany, freely joined together for mutual convenience in a federal system, might take their individual places among the United States of Europe.'

'But I must give you a warning,' Mr Churchill concluded. 'Time may be short. At present there is a breathing space. The cannons have ceased firing. The fighting has stopped; but the dangers have not stopped. If we are to form the United States of Europe, or whatever name it may take, we must begin now.'

It is still too early to understand and evaluate precisely the consequences that this address will have on the development of foreign policy in Great Britain and therefore in Europe. It has, however, been noted in high political circles that Mr Churchill has essentially remained true to the promises he already made in previous speeches in Fulton in March and in Metz on 14 July.

Piero Treves