

Address given by Duncan Sandys (Montreux, 27–31 August 1947)

Caption: During the Congress of the Union of European Federalists (UEF) held in Montreux from 27 to 31 August 1947, Duncan Sandys, former British Minister and founder of the United Europe Movement in May 1947, delivers an address on European unification.

Source: Union européenne des fédéralistes (sous la dir.). Rapport du premier congrès annuel de l'UEF 27-31 août 1947 Montreux (Suisse). Genève: Union européenne des fédéralistes, [s.d.]. 141 p.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_duncan_sandys_montreux_27_31_august_1947-en-7243675d-c365-4a09-8df4-aebbab2d2231.html

Publication date: 22/10/2012

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There are two really big dangers which confront Europe and the world, the danger of economic depression and the danger of war. I do not for a moment claim that a United Europe provides a complete answer to those two giant problems. I do, however, sincerely believe that if it were achieved, it would take us a long way towards it.

Europe is the kernel of the problem. Mr. Foster Dulles said, the other day, that Europe was « the world's greatest fire risk ». That is very true. Europe is also one of the main starting points for economic depression. Establish prosperity and peace in Europe and you will have gone a very long way towards establishing them throughout the world.

When we talk of « United Europe », what do we mean ? Which countries are to be included ? That is a practical rather than a theoretical problem. The greater the number of countries which join the Union, the greater will be their common prospects of strength, prosperity and security. I think we may, therefore, take it that the natural tendency among those who will have the responsibility for deciding this question when the time comes, will be to want to include more rather than fewer.

The position of France is clear. France must be the key-stone of the structure of a European Union. The leading part which she has played in European history, her situation on the continental mainland, her contribution to civilisation, all these mark out France as one of the indispensable leaders of the new Europe. Equally, without Germany there can be no Europe. For the moment, Germany is shattered, but she is not destroyed. The pertinacity and efficiency of the German race will in time restore that people to a position of power and influence. Before the war, Germany was one of the great centres of European industry, and one day she will be so again. Her population is still the largest in Europe.

On the other hand, the extent of her territory is greatly reduced. She has forfeited East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia. Large numbers of the inhabitants of those provinces have been evicted and have been compelled to look for their livelihood in the already congested areas of Central and Western Germany. I mention that only for this reason - that if Hitler in the « thirties » was able to work up a successful agitation for *Lebensraum*, how much easier is it going to be for a successor in the next generation to convince the Germans that they must expand or perish ? There is no solution to Germany's economic problem within the limits of her present diminished frontiers. For a while we can restrain her by military force. For some years she will be checked by her economic weakness. But that is no final answer. Unless a peaceful and constructive outlet can be found for the energies of the German people, we may be sure that sooner or later, either alone or with such allies as she can gather around her, Germany will make a desperate attempt to burst her bonds.

The only way to provide that peaceful outlet is to re-shape the structure of our European economy and to reduce the impediments which at present confine populations to working within the restricted area of their own national territories. Somehow we have got to create a wider continental stage upon which all peoples, according to their abilities and regardless of nationality, can play their part and make their contribution.

To ask France to set up a European system in which Germany is sooner or later going to play a leading role is asking much. Three invasions in seventy years, the mass deportation of French workpeople, the organised kidnapping of French children to swell the German population, every kind of atrocity and indignity, - these are things which it is not easy for the French people to forget. With these bitter experiences fresh in her memory and the knowledge that the Germans are more numerous and potentially more powerful, France will want to be quite sure that a United Europe does not turn out to be just another name for Greater Germany.

There are two ways in which these legitimate French anxieties can be eased. First, the industry of the Ruhr, the core of Germany's war-potential, must be placed under permanent international control. Secondly, France must be assured that there will be in the European Union another large Power upon whose friendship and good faith she can implicitly rely. There is, of course, only one such Power, and that is Great Britain. Unless Britain can convince France that she means to play her part as a full and effective member of the

European family, the whole project will come to nought.

Britain naturally has to consider her own special position as a member of another family, the British Commonwealth. There can be no question of weakening the ties that unite the peoples of the British Empire ; nor can we ever risk giving the impression that we are divorcing the Commonwealth to marry Europe. But in practice, that dilemma will not arise. The whole trend of opinion in the Dominions in recent months makes us confident that when in due course that issue is put, we shall have not only their tacit consent, but their active encouragement.

At the other end of the continent there is a much more controversial question which arises. Is Russia to be included, or is she to be left out ? That is a matter which will be largely decided by Russia herself.

Is Russia genuinely willing to help create a free, peaceful and prosperous Europe ? Is she prepared to accept the obligations which membership of a European Union would entail ? If she were, it would be sheer insanity to repel or exclude her. If all European nations, including Russia, were to set up a regional system which would provide effective unity in the sphere of economics and defence, the benefits to the whole world would be immeasurable. Their combined resources of manpower, food, minerals, industrial plant and experience, if used for the common interest of the whole region, would provide a basis for the expansion of productive activity and an increased standard of living hitherto undreamt of outside America. If, in addition to economic reorganisation, internal wars and fears of wars could be banished over that vast area of Europe and Russia, the problem of peace throughout the whole world would be largely solved. Those are the prizes which would be within our reach if Russia were prepared to play her part as a helpful member of the European family.

Unhappily, the Soviet Government, by its fateful decision to turn down the Marshall offer, has for the present, refused to take any part in European consolidation and recovery. In these circumstances, the question arises - should a United Europe be formed without Russia, or should the project be altogether abandoned ?

Russia's participation would be of the greatest value, and every reasonable effort must continue to be made to obtain it ; but it is not indispensable. Even without Russia a union of all the other nations of Europe would represent a tremendous advance towards economic stability and peace.

For the present, we cannot count on any active assistance from the nations of Eastern Europe. From their enforced refusal to attend the Paris Conference, it is clear that Russia is not only unwilling to participate herself, but is determined to forbid all cooperation from the countries in the Soviet sphere.

We have, therefore, to go forward with those countries which are free and willing to cooperate. In practice, that means the nations of Western Europe, with the addition of Greece and Turkey. But let us not underrate the importance of this group. These nations have a total population of 250 million Europeans, and if you add the inhabitants of their colonial territories they embrace nearly a quarter of the population of the whole globe. An act of cooperation on this scale could not fairly be dubbed a clique or bloc. On the contrary, it would represent a great practical step forward towards world unity.

Together, this group of ancient and experienced democracies would provide a firm and solid basis upon which to build the first foundations of the New Europe. Still, even so, this must only be regarded as the original nucleus around which others will gather when they can. The unity of all the nations of all Europe, and nothing less than that, must be our aim.

Doubtless we shall have to approach our objective by a series of steps. There are those who think that straight away the thorny question of drafting a federal constitution should be tackled. Others believe that Europe ought to be economically integrated before we grapple with any political problems. The truth, of course, is that the economic and political aspects are inseparable. The one cannot be solved without the other.

However, in face of the dramatic initiative of Mr. Marshall, it will no doubt be easier, in the first place, to broach this question from the economic angle. The European peoples must radically reorganise their economic relations. They must make rational use of their combined resources. Above all, they must create an internal market of sufficient size to make possible mass production methods on something approaching the American scale.

But this is not purely an economic problem. Any attempt we may make to plan the combined use of Europe's economic resources would have immediate repercussions on preparations for defence. For example, it might be thought sensible for one country to draw a part of its electrical power for some of its factories from hydro-electric plants in a neighbouring state. It might be found economical to concentrate the manufacture of rolling stock or ball-bearings in certain other countries. But as soon as you start considering such things, military issues at once arise. No nation can afford to make itself dependent upon another without first making sure of its peaceful intentions and satisfying itself that adequate arrangements exist for defending that other country against aggression from a third party.

An area which is closely integrated economically must sooner or later be integrated also for defence. The Governments should, therefore, begin now to consult with one another upon the political and military problems which are involved ; because until these are solved, it will not be possible to contemplate the bold remedies which are urgently needed in the economic sphere.

Whether in the economic or in the political sphere, complete unity will not in any case be achieved overnight. At first it may only be possible to adopt quite modest measures of cooperation among a restricted number of nations. But the important thing is to make a start. An attitude of cooperation, once initiated, becomes a habit, and the scope rapidly expands. A group of nations working in harmony with one another by their example attract others to them, and the area of confidence progressively widens.

The people of Europe have the chance now to tread together the path of peace and recovery. It may be they will persist upon their separate ways, but not for very long. If they refuse freely to come together for their own salvation, they will soon find themselves forcibly thrown together in the common miseries of economic collapse and in the common frightfulness of modern scientific war. Once that choice is explained and understood, is it conceivable that ordinary people in any land will reject the course of sanity ?

Rt. Hon. DUNCAN SANDYS.