

Interview with Guy Gervais de Rouville: the German delegation at the Hague Congress (Vabre, January 19, 2008)

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[Guy Gervais de Rouville] We had invited fifty or so Germans, who were forbidden ... (Unfortunately... I say "unfortunately", because it was not very smart ... even if they had lost the war), the right to speak. And I was there together with Christian Monnier, who was very open-minded. We were watching ... because it was interesting to be a foreigner in this great hall of Ridderzaal Parliament that you may know...and then we saw people standing about who seemed to be looking around themselves etc. and I asked:

"But who are they?"

"That is the German delegation."

I said to Christian: "Well, it is now or never for us to go sit with them! "

And I went over to them and said (in my bad German): "Gentlemen, could we sit at your table? "I saw one or two of them look at each other and tell themselves:"These Frenchmen who are asking to sit at our table, they could go sit a bit further on !"

And I told them, "Well, you see, my uncle Christian Monnier, who is a banker in Paris, lost his two brothers in World War I and he himself was a volunteer at age 17. I just lost my two brothers-in-law in this war, and the third is seriously injured (the banker, Remy Schlumberger, who had a crippled hand, was seriously wounded in my regiment). So here we are, both of us, with you, so that never again such a tragedy occurs between our two countries. "

I did not know who was there. I sat next to a man who spoke a little French. That was enough. But the next day I asked, "Who was there at that meal? [the day before], "and the tallest man, who had been across from me, was Adenauer who had just been appointed chairman of the CDU.

[Étienne Deschamps] Did you feel, in such circumstances as those of the Hague Congress in 1948, that still at that time, three years after the end of the war, the Germans were invited, but only tolerated...sidelined?

[Guy Gervais de Rouville]: Yes. I reacted brutally, during the meeting, saying how can we allow ourselves to invite people and ask them to be quiet. Instead, they needed to explain things to us ... If they were there at all, it was because they were the foremost anti-Nazis!