

Interview with Jean-Pierre Gouzy: the main participants in the Hague Congress (Paris, 19 October 2007)

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[Jean-Pierre Gouzy] The delegations, the representatives consisted of a broad spectrum of people. Remember that France, for example, was represented by two government Ministers: one of whom made a name for himself later — much later — François Mitterrand; and the other, Pierre-Henri Teitgen. There were three former Presidents of the Council of Ministers: Édouard Daladier, Paul Reynaud, and then Paul Ramadier — a Socialist and Mayor of Decazeville, etc. Then there was the eminence of the representatives — whether professional or otherwise, the big names in the world of finance at that time, Fould, Denervaud, etc. — all these important people in the financial and banking sphere, and so on. There was the liveliness, the pugnacity of the French workers' representatives — who numbered roughly as many as those of the employers and bankers. There were also some most noteworthy characters among the independent key figures, such as Raymond Aron and a few others who were present and who subsequently became more well known to the French general public.

The line-up for the British Delegation was likewise rather impressive. The French and the British alone made up the majority of those present. Indeed, the Labour Party had opposed ..., in the sense that it had cancelled the visit, not disapproved, of those who were planning to go to The Hague, in order to demonstrate that the whole thing had been hatched by Churchill and his gang, his team of people, and that the Labour Government viewed it all with some mistrust. Nevertheless, there were at least as many Labour representatives as Conservative. However, the Conservatives certainly had more prominent figures among them: people such as Anthony Eden, who had been Foreign Secretary, Harold Macmillan, who would later become Prime Minister, Lord Belisha, who had been Minister for War, Lord Amery, and a fair few other leading figures.

On the German side — let us not forget that, at that time, Germany was only just coming to the fore — there was at least Konrad Adenauer who was present. It was almost a premonition of things to come. Alongside Adenauer, there was Walter Hallstein, who was Rector of the University of Frankfurt, and a few other key figures. On the Italian side emerged the figure of Altiero Spinelli, who was already starting to stand out from the man in the street, etc.

The representation, therefore, was quite exceptional.