Prologue: Churchill’s Congress

From 7 to 10 May 1948, 722 representative figures from twenty-eight European countries met in The Hague to discuss paths and possibilities for a unification of Europe. Six former prime ministers of European countries took part in the gathering along with fourteen active and forty-five former ministers. In addition, West German governors, leading members of parliaments, business leaders, key representatives from organized labor, academics, artists and religious officials were present. Winston Churchill, Britain’s celebrated prime minister during the war years and now leader of the opposition in the House of Commons gave the opening address. Outside the official halls, public interest was evident. Around forty thousand people attended a public declaration during the third day of negotiations. The congress led to the formation of the European Movement and indirectly to the founding of the Council of Europe.¹

Four Driving Forces

The Hague Congress set off crucial negotiations for the creation of European institutions. These negotiations—otherwise than the talks around the proposal for “a kind of federative association” among the peoples of Europe that had been proposed by French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand in September 1929 to the assembly of the League of Nations—would prove successful and lead to the foundation of a European community that today has great influence over the lives of Europeans. This community concentrated movements that aimed to overcome the functional deficits of nation states and of the nation-state-dominated European political system and that had developed as early as the First World War. They were driven by four varying yet closely linked agendas.²

The first objective was to deal with the problem of anarchy among states which had been the spark for all “classical” plans to secure the peace, ranging

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from Dante to Kant. The urgency of finding a better institutional solution to deal with its prospects was ever more pressing with the development of modern military technology and the resulting death of millions of victims followed by economic damage of a magnitude unimagined in the era of cabinet warfare. Hence, the experience of the First World War had led to multiple European peace initiatives, of which the “Pan-Europe” campaign by Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and Aristide Briand’s Europe Plan were the most notable. With the peace order established at Versailles incrementally breaking down from 1938 onward, this movement received further impetus. For example, Léon Blum, the French Socialist leader and prime minister of the People’s Front governments of 1936 to 1938, wrote in the spring of 1941: “In one point, my convictions are profound and unshakable, whatever the world may say. If this war does not at last give rise to fundamentally stable international institutions, to a really effective international power, then it will not be the last war.”

A special challenge to secure the peace involved the German question: How to allow the strongest nation in the center of the European continent to develop while at the same time avoiding the consolidation of German hegemony? Or conversely: How to put a check on the Germans without provoking renewed desires for revenge via one-sided discrimination against them? Blum captured the view of many authors from the Resistance against the German occupation and the National Socialist regime as he wrote “there is only a single way to resolve the contradiction, to make Germany harmless in a peaceful and stable Europe, and that is the incorporation of the German nation in an international community.” This would include not merely the supervision of the Ruhr District but also a common steering of all European heavy industry, not only a reduction of German military sovereignty, but a common command over all European armed forces. After the failure of the peace order established at Versailles and the rise of National Socialism, the value of these measures could not be ignored.

A third functional deficit of the nation-state system stemmed from the development of productive forces in the industrial age. Over the course of time, it became more and more clear that national markets in Europe were too narrow for rational production methods. Mutual walling-off only made sense temporarily and for some sectors—over the long term, however, it resulted in a loss of productivity. This had an economic as well as a power-political aspect; both had been present since the 1920s, above all in the form of American competition. Thus,
unification initiatives in the economic sphere were correspondingly numerous, and here too the experience of the Second World War provided an additional motivational push. Whereas the Europeans largely exhausted their resources in that conflict, the US more than doubled its production for being the most important supplier of materiel to the Allied coalition in addition to being favored by the absence of European countries from the world market.

The fourth reason for European unification initiatives has thus already been touched upon: The effort of European nations to assert themselves vis-à-vis the new world powers. The concern over American economic and political supremacy as well as the fear of an expansion of the Bolshevik Revolution had already provided motives for European unification plans in the 1920s. Both were strengthened by the power-political results of the Second World War. With the US as the leading world power and the Soviet Union as the strongest military power on the European continent, earlier divergences in interests among the European nations lost meaning to the benefit of the common interest in autonomy and in avoiding a conflict between the two main victors of the war.

British Labour Party leader Clement Attlee, who was to serve as prime minister from 1945 to 1951 captured this dynamic best in 1939: “Europe must federate or perish.” This became a plausible slogan in several respects in the aftermath of the First World War already, when the insufficiency of the peace order established at Versailles was criticized. The plausibility increased when the Munich Agreement made it clear that the established order was no longer sustainable; and increasingly from 1943 onwards when Allied victory was in the offing. This watchword evoked fascination in the most divergent political camps. It also created links extending across national borders and—as must be emphasized given the later fixation on the East-West conflict and the resultant ahistorical attitude toward the countries that belonged to the Soviet Bloc until 1990—it was by no means only a Western-European phenomenon. The European organizations had branches in Prague and Budapest, just as they did in Paris and Brussels.

The numerous unification plans developed in the resistance all over Europe did not immediately coalesce at the end of the conflict into a concrete unification policy. Joseph Stalin blocked any kind of federation in Eastern Europe (so sys-

tematically that such plans passed out of memory there); at the same time, every step toward unification in Western Europe threatened to deepen the division of the continent between East and West. This made it questionable whether the peace could be secured through unification initiatives. Many shrank back from making substantive decisions, including the British government under Winston Churchill—and that was decisive given the power relations among Hitler’s opponents in Europe. Furthermore, France under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle enmeshed itself in demands for separating the territories on the left bank of the Rhine along with the Ruhr District from the German federation, something for which his British allies had little enthusiasm.

Churchill was however the first European politician of rank to put the theme of European unification back on the agenda of international politics after the war. In July of 1945, just after his hard-won victory over Hitler, Churchill had been sent into the opposition following elections in Britain. In the winter of 1945–46, he then began to worry about an expansion of the Soviet domain beyond the “Iron Curtain.” In a spectacular speech in the town of Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946, he warned for the first time publicly about the “expansive and proselytizing tendencies” of the Soviet Union and international communism.7 In order to avert the danger of such expansion, he thought it was now necessary to embark upon the unification of those European countries that had remained outside the Soviet sphere. He regarded the federation of such countries as the prerequisite not only for the economic recovery of Europe but also for the stabilization of democracy. In another speech, this time before students in Zurich on 19 October 1946, he therefore asserted that “we must build a kind of United States of Europe” based on “a partnership between France and Germany.” He saw Great Britain among “the friends and sponsors of the new Europe” rather than among its members. For Churchill, the island nation was to play a highly-active role in Europe’s creation.8

In order to mobilize public opinion, Churchill commissioned his son-in-law and close political ally Duncan Sandys to organize a non-partisan group of representative figures who were to promote European unification ideas in Britain. Sandys’ efforts soon bore fruit: On 16 January 1947, he was able to present a provisional “British United Europe Committee,” that included among its members not only conservative MPs (including Robert Boothby) but also Labour politicians.

and trade union representatives (Gordon Land, George Gibson, Victor Gollancz), representatives of the Liberal Party, church officials and even scholars such as Bertrand Russell and British federalists such as Frances L. Josephy. It was the case however that the executive committee of the ruling Labour Party spoke out against the endeavor as it neither wanted to promote Churchill’s idea of creating a Western bloc nor give the opposition leader a platform for domestic political successes. Therefore, the activities of the group, which constituted itself definitively on 14 May 1947 as the “United Europe Movement” (UEM), developed predominantly in the conservative and liberal milieu.9

Parallel to the UEM, an “Independent League of European Co-Operation” (ILEC) was organized by Paul van Zeeland, a former Belgian prime minister, and Józef Retinger, a long-time colleague of Polish Prime Minister in exile Władysław Sikorski; this organization, working in Belgium, Luxembourg, Great Britain, and France, sought to build on the European customs union committees of the 1920s and 1930s. On 7 March 1947, they were able to announce the formation of a provisional central committee on the international level. The group brought together influential economists, bankers, and managers who were worried about the hindrances to the rebuilding of Europe posed by national economic boundaries. By no means did they all share Churchill’s fear of Soviet expansion. Yet, given that they pushed for a rapid start to economic integration without taking Soviet reservations into account and that they were just as little decided as to the particular method of integration as was the British opposition leader, they were predestined for cooperation with Sandys’ group. Many politicians such as former director of the International Labour Office Harold Butler and later British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan were active in both organizations simultaneously.10

In the wake of the Churchill speech, Coudenhove-Kalergi, the founder of the Pan-European Movement, once again became active in European politics. Initially, he suggested to Churchill that the Pan-European Union be revived “under our joint leadership.” After the Briton had responded with reluctance, Coudenhove organized a poll in November of 1946 among Western European members of parliament. Over four thousand deputies were asked to decide, either positively or negatively, on the question of whether they supported “a European federation within the framework of the United Nations.” This was intended to show the general attitude towards unification in the countries of Western Europe and to put pressure on the governments to begin initiatives for creating a Western Europe at last. Those deputies in agreement were called upon to set up non-par-

tarian committees in the parliaments that were to gather for a European Congress in Geneva in June of 1947.\textsuperscript{11}

This action clearly demonstrated that the idea of a federation that excluded Eastern Europe from the beginning and hence that deepened the already-emerging division of Europe was not yet particularly popular in the winter of 1946–47. Only a few deputies were willing to identify themselves with such a conception. By the end of April of 1947, Coudenhove had received 660 answers of which 646 were positive—but that was hardly more than an eighth of those who had been asked. The ambitious plans for a congress had to be postponed for the time being. Similarly, the efforts of René Courtin, co-publisher of \textit{Le Monde}, to establish a committee in France parallel to the UEM remained without success. In most cases, French adherents of Europe balked at the risk of being associated with Churchill’s West-bloc conception.\textsuperscript{12} The voices advocating a unification even without Soviet approval did gradually become more numerous, but overall, the negative reactions to Churchill’s initiative predominated by a wide margin.\textsuperscript{13}

Most Europeans saw a unified Europe as a “Third Force,” which under the leadership of a Britain ruled by the Labour Party would mediate between the US and the Soviet Union, thus avoiding a division of Europe. The adherents of the organized federalist movement, who in December of 1946 constituted themselves as the “Union Européenne des Fédéralistes” (UEF), were hoping for a Europe structured ultimately along social-democratic lines, one that could maintain its autonomy \textit{vis-à-vis} the US as well as the Soviet Union. According to their program declaration passed on 15 April 1947 in Amsterdam, “We do not want a moribund Europe, marked out as a victim for ambitions of every kind, and governed either by pseudo-liberal capitalism that subordinates human values to the money power, or by some totalitarian system seeking, by fair means or foul, to exalt its idea of justice over the rights of man and communities. What we want is a Europe which shall be an open society, friendly to both East and West, prepared to co-operate with all.”\textsuperscript{14}

This changed only after the Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan on 2 July 1947. The many adherents of a Europe that constituted a “Third Force” now came to the conclusion that European unification could only realistically begin in the West. In general, the conviction grew that in view of European reconstruction and the integration of the western parts of Germany—both of which were to be promoted

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 435–441.
by the Marshall Plan—there was not much time to lose. On 16 July 1947, Courtin was able to announce the founding of a “Conseil français pour l’Europe unie,” which understood itself as the French counterpart of Churchill’s UEM. Leading representatives of the French Socialists declared themselves willing to join in—figures such as Robert Lacoste, Francis Leenhardt, André LeTrocquer, and Prime Minister Paul Ramadier. Among those representing the Christian Democrats were Paul Coste-Floret, François de Menthon, and Pierre-Henri Teitgen; left liberals were represented by Paul Bastid and René Mayer, Independent Republicans by Paul Reynaud, the social-liberal UDSR by Édouard Bonnefous, chairman of the Foreign-Affairs Committee of the National Assembly. Among others belonging to the council were Michel Debré as representative of the Gaullists, Emmanuel Monick as governor of the Bank of France, trade union leaders, representatives of the churches, as well as prominent journalists and scholars (Raymond Aron, Paul Claudel, André Siegfried, and Edmond Vermeil among others). The honorary chairmanship was assumed by Édouard Herriot, the long-time prime minister of the Third Republic.15

Coudenhove’s poll now had much greater resonance. After he had in April of 1947 once again reminded the deputies who had not replied, the number of positive responses reached 1,735 by the end of September. Altogether, some forty-three percent of the deputies asked had thus spoken out in principle in favor of a “European federation,” among them sixty-four percent of Italian deputies, fifty-three percent of Dutch deputies as well as fifty percent of both French and Belgian deputies. However, only twenty-six percent of British MPs responded positively along with a mere twelve percent of Scandinavian deputies.16 After federalist parliamentarians had begun to organize themselves in France, Belgium, Italy, and Greece, Coudenhove-Kalergi was able to hold what was not a “pre-parliament” but nevertheless a gathering of 114 active deputies from ten countries at his residence in Gstaad. This group founded a “European Parliamentary Union” (EPU) and decided to work toward calling a European Constituent Assembly.17

For Duncan Sandys, it was now a matter of not only strengthening the unification movement in the various countries but also of keeping it under control. He was convinced that the movement could be successful only if it initially concentrated on the functional cooperation among the governments. Only then could

15 Ibid., pp. 622–625.
16 Ibid., pp. 437–441.
British participation be ensured. He feared that without the UK, France would not dare to enter into a European Community alongside a strong West Germany. Consequently, British participation in the work of unification was for Sandys much more indispensable than it was for his father-in-law.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore, in the run-up to the establishment of the “Conseil français,” he invited the other Europe groups to form a “liaison committee” of the European movements. This took place on 20 July 1947 in Paris over the course of a luncheon on the Champs Élysées. Along with the UEM, the French Council, the ILEC, and the EPU, the European federalists around the Dutchman Hendrik Brugmans and the Frenchman Alexandre Marc were represented.\textsuperscript{19}

**The Struggle for the Congress**

The federalists were convinced that the time was ripe for a federalist reorganization of the peoples of Europe. Hence, they envisioned the summoning of an “estates general of Europe” that against national governments and parliaments was to develop into the constituent assembly of a United Europe. Based on a comprehensive mobilization campaign, the various societal groups were to be represented: “One might for instance envisage eight basic categories or ‘estates’: (a) employers, (b) workers, (c) farmers, (d) middle class, executives and professionals, (e) intellectual and religious groups, (f) consumer’s organizations (co-operatives), (g) political and parliamentary bodies, the judiciary etc., (h) youth movements.” This “sensational assembly” was not only to “impress public opinion” but also to create “standing committees” for working out the pending legal, social, economic, and cultural questions, among others; and “the heads of these committees would form the nucleus of a future European government.”\textsuperscript{20} Versailles was envisioned as the meeting place of this revolutionary manifestation.

To Sandys, these plans for a corporative federalism were dangerous pipe dreams that would discredit the European unification movement and ruin the chances of British participation. Even before the UEF leaders could begin organizing their initiative, he therefore came to an agreement with the leadership of the ILEC in late September of 1947 for the preparation of a very different type of congress: a “conference of between 500 and 800 prominent Europeans” that would meet “during the first weekend after Easter” in order to pressure and encourage the European governments to take the first steps toward the unification of Europe.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pp. 659–666.
\textsuperscript{20} Note by Hendrik Brugmans, 24 Sept. 1947, in: Lipgens and Loth (eds.), *Documents IV*, pp. 41ff.
Pieter Kerstens, a Dutch senator and former economy minister who was working to establish a branch of the ILEC in his country, agreed to provide the funds necessary for such a congress. Accordingly, The Hague was chosen as the site of the meeting. The federalists were invited to participate as co-sponsors of the congress and for that purpose also to join the liaison committee.  

This invitation presented dangers for the federalists: On the one hand, there was the danger of accepting it and entering into an alliance with high-ranking conservative politicians and economic leaders: “...[T]o go to the Hague under the auspices of a union vaguely outlined by Churchill instead of calling the Estates-General—did this not involve running the risk of losing not only the benefit of numbers but also the creative and revolutionary dynamism which the federalist doctrine brought with it?” Yet, if they persisted in their own plans for a congress, they would not only split the European movement but also run the “risk of courting rapid destruction or of becoming a sect.”  

What proved decisive in the end was the greater realism of the British project: It would definitely be implemented and would have significant resonance; on the other hand, it was unclear how the “Estates-General” could be financed and whether it would have the sought-after effect given the competing project undertaken by establishment forces. It was especially Brugmans who for this reason advocated acceptance of the invitation. Marc and the Italian federalists around Altiero Spinelli were in principle against it but kept a low profile. On 15 November 1947 the central committee of the UEF decided to participate in the congress in The Hague and to agree to the expansion of the liaison committee into a “coordinating committee.”  

In the vague hope of perhaps still being able to “transform” The Hague Congress into an “Estates-General of Europe,” the federalists accepted a situation in which they were a minority in the coordinating committee, possessing a quarter of the votes; the UEM and the French Council and the ILEC, all of whom were in agreement programmatically, each had the same number of votes. The federalists had to concede the chairmanship to Sandys and a secretary’s post to Retinger. Perforce, they also accepted the provisions for the organization of the congress

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that Sandys presented at a further meeting of the committee on 13 and 14 December 1947. It was “to demonstrate in striking fashion the powerful and widespread support which already exists for the European idea; to produce material for discussion, propaganda and technical studies.” It should therefore be put together in as representative a way as possible; the decision about the invitations was to be reserved for the coordinating committee, however. It was decided that the event would be called “Congress of Europe”; the presidency of the congress was offered to Churchill.26

In practice, the decision on invitation policy meant that Sandys and Retinger collected suggested names, decided who would actually receive an invitation, and then also registered the acceptances. Regarding the number of delegates per country, Sandys prevailed with a formula that would be moderately representative: fifteen delegates per country plus two more for each million residents. This meant a total of 104 delegates for France, 118 for Great Britain, 33 each for Belgium and the Netherlands, and so forth. Countries whose governments denied entry to representatives of the coordinating committee and which did not authorize the necessary visas for their citizens to participate in the congress were only to be represented by small observer groups.27 This meant that Western Europe would gather as comprehensively as possible. At the same time the self-exclusion of the Soviet Union and the countries dominated by it would be reinforced once again.

As to organizational implementation, the coordinating committee had a large Dutch bank set up a representational office. Kerstens collected so much in donations that the over seven hundred participants could be offered not only a free stay in The Hague but also payment of all their travel costs as well. Given the still-precarious conditions in war-torn Europe, this was a noteworthy achievement that was very decisive for the success of the endeavor. When a gap in the financing of the Congress did nonetheless appear, Sandys had Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands introduce him to the board of directors of Phillips, which then helped out with a very generous donation. In late January of 1948, the date of the congress was definitively set for 7 to 10 May of that year; Retinger as secretary could then send out the official invitations.28

Sandys, Retinger, and Brugmans too sought out prominent persons in the various countries to convince them to participate. In most cases, they were successful: “We’ve done really great work,” as Retinger was able to report to former

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27 Appendix A of the draft by Sandys, 11 Dec. 1947. As “Appendix B,” Sandys immediately attached a list intended to provide examples of possible members of the British delegation.
28 Niess, Europäische Idee, pp. 181ff.
The Struggle for the Congress

Romanian Foreign Minister Gregor Gafencu as early as the end of 1947: “Of the great statesmen (but this is still confidential) the following have given us their support: Mister Churchill and Sir Stafford Cripps from Great Britain, Monsieurs Herriot and L. Blum from France, Messrs. van Zeeland and Spaak from Belgium, as well as Sforza from Italy. The Dutch government with its prime minister at the head will receive us where our sessions will take place: in the historic Riddarhusaal.”

Paul Ramadier and Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi also agreed to participate. In the western German occupation zones, the organizers managed to gain the acceptance of the governor of North Rhine-Westphalia, Karl Arnold, and the mayors of Hamburg and Bremen, Max Brauer and Wilhelm Kaisen; likewise Konrad Adenauer, who was chairman of the CDU in the British Occupation Zone; Martin Niemöller of the council of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD); Gustav Heinemann as justice minister of North Rhine-Westphalia; as well as Thomas Dehler, Heinrich von Brentano, and Walter Hallstein as chairman of the South German Rectors Conference.

Likewise, there was success in gaining the participation of the Christian-Democratic “Nouvelles Équipes Internationales” (NEI); from February of 1948, it was another of the invited organizations on the coordinating committee. Conversely, all the efforts of the federalists failed to bring aboard the “Comité international pour les États-Unis socialistes d’Europe” (EUSE). After a visit to London, Henri Frenay of the French branch of the committee lamented that British members of the EUSE “fell into a kind of trance as soon as one mentioned the name of Churchill, and that was an end of any possibility of rational discussion.” With a vote of nine to seven, the executive of the committee decided against participation in The Hague Congress. For his part, Coudenhove-Kalergi refused to ratify the agreement of July 1947 on forming the liaison committee and then repeatedly issued new conditions for his participation, ones that in principle amounted to having him take over the leadership of the project and control its programmatic

direction. Only in early April of 1948 did he become willing to participate in the congress without preconditions, that is, after most of the substantive decisions had already been made. His contribution to the direction of the congress was correspondingly marginal.33

More serious than the refusal of the socialist committee or the long hesitancy of Coudenhove and his parliamentary union was the opposition of the executive committee of the British Labour Party. Leaders such as Morgan Phillips, Hugh Dalton, and Denis Healey were decided opponents of British participation in a supranational Europe. Hence, they saw in the congress a very dangerous project that additionally constrained the freedom of action of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and, furthermore, gave impetus to the Conservative opposition. At a conference of Socialist parties of all the countries participating in the Marshall Plan, held in London on 21 and 22 March 1948, the decision was made not to accept the invitation of the coordinating committee; forty Labour MPs who had already decided to take part in The Hague Congress were called upon to withdraw. In order to preserve the solidarity of international Socialism, the party executive committees of the French SFIO and the German SPD also banned their office-holders from participating.34

Not all Socialist or Social-Democratic European politicians were influenced by the bans. Some twenty-three of the forty Labour MPs held fast to their acceptance of the invitation, among them Ronald W.G. Mackay, the initiator of the “All-Party Group for European Unity” in the House of Commons, who in the meantime was also playing a leading role in the European Parliamentary Union as Coudenhove’s deputy. Léon Blum, Paul Henri Spaak, Carlo Schmid, and Max Brauer stayed away from the congress; conversely, Paul Ramadier and Wilhelm Kaisen took part—in open revolt against the decisions of their party leadership. Yet, they could not prevent the gathering from taking on a liberal-conservative flavor. The Hague Congress ended up not being as representative as Sandys—with good reason—had striven for it to be.35

Nevertheless, the gathering—which opened on the afternoon of 7 May 1948 in the presence of Princess Juliane and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands—had great political weight. In the end, some 722 delegates had accepted the invitation; there were additionally about two hundred fifty guests and observers from the press. France sent the largest delegation, with 185 members; along with Ramadier, the contingent included Édouard Bonnefous, Édouard Daladier, Edgar Faure, André François-Poncet, Edmond Giscard d’Estaing, Pierre-Olivier Lapie, François de Menthon, François Mitterrand, and Paul Reynaud. Some 147 delegates came from Britain, among them Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan. Italy was not so prominently represented, however: Due to the formation of a government after the elections of 18 and 19 April, De Gasperi and other leading politicians had needed to bow out. The representatives of Portugal, for whom twenty places were planned, stayed home after António Salazar had expressed his displeasure. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia were only represented by exile politicians. Spain had to content itself with the role of an observer; this was exercised by four delegates led by the philosopher and former minister Salvador de Madariaga. One delegate each came from Iceland and Turkey.36

In accordance with the political goals that Churchill had specified, the Germans were invited as delegates with full status. Given that discussions about that had once again come up in the coordinating committee, their invitations were delayed. For many of those who were invited, there was thus no longer sufficient time to arrange the required exit permits from the occupation authorities or come up with foreign currency; in the end, the German delegation thus numbered only fifty-one. The Germans were pleased that in his opening address, Churchill explicitly greeted them as necessary partners in the construction of Europe and when for the first time since the end of the war they were able to appear on the international stage on a par with others once again. In the discussions of the congress, however, they were mostly restrained due to their awareness of continued dependence on the decisions of the occupying powers. Instead, the Germans used the opportunity to make contact with prospective partners. For example, after the opening ceremony, Adenauer met with Churchill for the first time and found himself “treated with conciliatory kindness by him.”37

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delegation, Adenauer got to know Walter Hallstein, who would later become his closest colleague in the area of European politics.38

Churchill’s opening address was followed by speeches by Ramadier, Coudenhove-Kalergi, Brugmans,39 and van Zeeland. Right after Churchill spoke, there was an attempt by the federalists to pull the event more strongly in the direction of an “Estates-General” by reading a “preamble” that aimed for the creation of a “European Assembly where the live forces of all our nations shall be represented.” The efforts were rejected. Denis de Rougement, who had made the proclamation of such a target for the congress a condition for his participation in the preparations, was able to read the text as edited by him only as a “Message to the Europeans” after statements by Sandys, de Madariaga, and Ramadier. After some thirty participants objected to the demand for a common defense, the signing of the message by all delegates—which had initially been conceded to the federalists—did not occur.40

On the other hand, the administration of the congress ensured that Churchill was by no means able to dominate the gathering. The members of the coordinating committee had arrived five days before the opening of the congress and had agreed in detail about the course of events.41 The reports on political, economic, and cultural questions, which the committee members had been working on since the beginning of the year in groups of differing composition, were not simply put up for a vote. Instead, they were discussed intensively in the corresponding committees of the congress during the whole second day of talks and then once again on the evening of the third day, while undergoing substantial change once again. Immediately after his return from The Hague, Eugen Kogon, who had been recruited as a German participant by the UEF, recorded in his Frankfurter Hefte: “The participating Socialists, Christian Socials, Syndicalists, and Progressives were successful in decisively preventing Churchill—whose significance for the unification of Europe was by the way acknowledged by everyone—and his mostly

wealthy and arch-conservative followers from being able to give the congress their imprint.”

The negotiations of the Political Committee were characterized by disputes regarding the aims, methods, and tempo of European unification. Indirectly, the question of British participation was thereby present too, although many were not at all aware of it. In a framework draft for the Political Resolution of the congress that he had drawn up in late 1947 and had circulated among the committee members, Sandys had called for the congress to speak out for “the ultimate goal of European unity” but in so doing the congress was only to “explain in extremely general terms the various forms which this unity might be expected to flow from it.” As the institution for promoting the unification process, he wanted to call for a “European Council” that would consist of “a system of regular conferences between European Ministers (...) with the object of developing as far as possible a common European point of view, and a permanent international secretariat” that would study current European problems and present proposals to the council.

In the report submitted to the delegates after the vote in the coordinating committee, the supranational dimension of the “Political Union” to be created was more clearly addressed, being undertaken at the prompting of the federalists: “Sooner or later,” incremental political integration “must involve the renunciation or, to be more accurate, the point exercise of certain sovereign powers.” The report cited “the creation of a complete federation with an elected European Parliament” as the final goal of the development. The European Council was now termed an “Emergency Council” that was to be “responsible for directing joint action to secure not only economic recovery and military defence but also to preserve democratic freedom.” Beyond that, the Council was to “plan the further stages of the political and economic integration of Europe.” Added to this was the call for creation of a “European Deliberative Assembly” that was “to give valuable support and advice to the European Council.” Its members would initially be sent by the national parliaments; “later, a system of popular election should be instituted.”

Under the influence of Mackay, the idea of a European Assembly came to be the centerpiece of the catalogue of demands during negotiations within the committee. This entity was “to advise upon immediate practical measures designed progressively to bring about the necessary economic and political union of

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44 Ibid., pp. 333–338.
Europe” and to develop plans “to examine the juridical and constitutional implications arising out of the creation of such a union or federation...” The call for setting up a European Council was dropped. Instead, it was declared “that the time has come when the European nations must transfer and merge some portion of their sovereign rights.” The demand by the Italian federalists for the immediate transformation of the European Assembly into a constituent assembly was rejected by a large majority. Also, only a few delegates were enthusiastic about a motion by Reynaud to call for the direct election of the assembly right from the beginning. Mackay correctly warned against provoking the British as well as the French government with such a proposal: It would only reduce the chances of actually being accorded an assembly charged with working out a draft constitution capable of winning a majority. The resolution was finally passed on the night of 9 to 10 May. Of over three hundred delegates that had worked together on the Political Committee, fewer than a dozen voted against it.

On the Economic and Social Committee, the liberal integration conceptions of the ILEC, which had been in charge during the preparations, ran into criticism from the Socialists and the trade union representatives. Hence, the goal of the sought-after “economic union” perforce remained somewhat vague. It was nevertheless stated that in regard to European reconstruction, “there is no hope of recovery if each country simply strives to rebuild its national economy by the old methods,” but that “progress in this direction will only be achieved if it is accompanied at every step by a parallel policy of even closer political union.” The measures called for were incremental elimination of trade and tariff barriers; a common, if not lower, external tariff; budget stabilization; convergence of prices and wages; free convertibility of currencies and in the end, a currency union; likewise, common planning for the development of agriculture and basic industries as well as coordination of budget and credit policy along with social legislation.

By endorsing the principles of the social-welfare state, the majority of the commission accommodated criticism from the left. Hence, the professional, economic, and social organizations of the individual countries were called upon “to study together ways and means of increasing production still further and rationalizing distribution while improving social conditions and ensuring a fair distribution of the product of economic activity.” The promotion of the free movement

45 Political resolution of The Hague Congress, ibid., pp. 345–347. The oft-reprinted translation in Europa-Archiv 3 (1948), pp. 1443ff., is of the penultimate draft, not the version that was passed.
of labor was to be linked with securing “the standards of wages, social security, living conditions of employment”; the economic policies of the individual countries were to be coordinated “so as to secure full employment.”\textsuperscript{49} The majority of the delegates did not want to commit themselves to concrete measures such as supranational control over the movement of capital or an Europeanization of Ruhr industry. Nor was there a majority for promoting the participation by workers and their organizations in the European entities. The protest by union representatives against this rebuff could only be contained—after prolonged negotiations that dragged into the wee hours of 10 May—by having the committee establish a “post-Congress Economic Committee” that was to “work out a compromise policy for Europe incorporating the best features from Capitalism and Socialism.”\textsuperscript{50}

The Cultural Committee was presented with a report that Denis de Rougement had developed in contact with authors such as Étienne Gilson, Ignazio Silone, and Salvador de Madariaga. He spoke of a “common heritage of Christian and other spiritual and cultural values and our common loyalty to the fundamental rights of man” that were to be valid for the members of a “European Union.” Passages that were all too federalist were removed from the proposal at the last minute after intervention by Retinger. In concrete terms, there was a call for the establishment of a “European Cultural Centre” that would “promote an awareness of European unity” independently of any governmental supervision and that would “provide a meeting-place for leaders of thought.” Further, there was a call to create a “European Institute for Childhood and Youth Questions” that would “encourage exchanges between the young people of all classes in Europe.” Lastly, the draft included the creation of a “Supreme Court with supra-state jurisdiction to which citizens and groups can appeal, and which is capable of assuring the implementation of the Charter.”\textsuperscript{51}

The debate on the cultural report “unfolded in the usual confusion,” as de Rougement sarcastically commented. Whereas the writer Charles Morgan wanted to leave cultural affairs wholly in the hands of the national governments, others called for the immediate creation of an entity to carry the work of the Congress forward. A Captain Cheshire from the Movement for Moral Re-Armament wanted to have the return to God anchored in the document and attacked the draft as

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{51} Resolution of the Culture Committee, German translation in \textit{Europa-Archiv} 3 (1948), pp. 1445ff.; on the origins, de Rougement, “Campaign,” pp. 339–341. Unfortunately, de Rougement does not indicate what exactly the corrections were that he had to make after a meeting on 26 April 1948 in London.
“anti-Christian.” Lastly, Bertrand Russell spoke emphatically for the proposed cultural center: It would help the people of different countries maintain close contact and learn to understand the viewpoints of others. His authority contributed to the unanimous passage of all the substantive proposals of the report.52

**A Milestone**

Some committed federalists were so disappointed at the direction the Congress was taking that they wanted to depart under protest shortly before it ended. Sandys had to bring in van Zeeland as a mediator to avoid such an open break. It is possible that the reading of the “Message to the Europeans” was the price he had to pay for it—he himself had initially wanted to strike it completely after objections had been raised to an endorsement of European defense.53 Marc then succeeded in pushing through a press declaration of the UEF in which the Congress was criticized for being insufficiently representative and for “half-measures” in its decision-making.54 At the second annual conference of the UEF from 7 to 11 November 1948 in Rome, Brugmans had to accept severe criticism for his willingness to cooperate with the UEM.55

The disappointment of the radical federalists over the lack of a breakthrough to a European constituent assembly should not take away from the fact that the initiators of the Congress in The Hague had actually succeeded in putting European unification on the agenda of Western European politics. Agreement among more or less representative delegations from nearly all the countries of Europe on a common program allowed Sandys to bring together the various European organizations in a common “European Movement” that was officially constituted on 25 October 1948—with Léon Blum, Winston Churchill, Alcide De Gasperi, and Paul-Henri Spaak as prestigious honorary presidents. At the same time, the high-ranking politicians who had been among the participants in the Congress now approached their respective heads of government in order to make it clear that concrete initiatives for summoning the European Assembly were expected

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52 Ibid., p. 342.
54 Declaration of 20 May 1948 in Lipgens and Loth (eds.), *Documents IV*, p. 56.
55 Ibid., pp. 57–78.
of them.\textsuperscript{56} Given the resonance that the Congress enjoyed in large segments of the European public, the governments could not off-handedly deny this request.

A few weeks after the Congress in The Hague, Winston Churchill expressed his confidence in its success: “This Europe Conference will be acknowledged by historians as a milestone in the development of our continent toward unity.”\textsuperscript{57} It was in fact in The Hague that the transnational societal consensus on which the later European Communities would rest had become palpable for the first time. In light of the convoluted paths to “more Europe” that would be embarked upon in subsequent decades, it is noteworthy that this initiative had been primarily organized by British politicians and that it aimed for a much greater Europe than the “Europe of the Six” that subsequently came into being. This consensus was unavoidably imprecise as regards the institutional configuration of a united Europe. Very clearly, however, it included acceptance of the partial amalgamation of national sovereign rights, the social-welfare configuration of the Community, and the stabilization of the democratic order in the participating countries.\textsuperscript{58} After The Hague Congress, this consensus did not simply vanish. Instead, it developed in critical analysis of the experience of concrete European politics, which in turn came to be influenced by it.

\textsuperscript{57} Recorded by Sandys in a memorandum for the coordinating committee, quoted in Niess, \textit{ibid}., p. 219.
\textsuperscript{58} The characterization of Sandys and the committee majority as “unionists,” which stems from the radical federalists, is misleading.