

"Institutions et conditions" dans Esprit (Novembre 1948)

Légende: En novembre 1948, la revue française Esprit publie une intervention de Léo Hamon, conseiller de la IVe République française, qui assigne différents objectifs à une future fédération européenne.

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Institutions and conditions

The European Federation, until recently a mere pipe dream, has become a key idea in less than a year.

How is this new idea likely to affect Western Europe? It may provide a solution to some of our economic problems (we now accept that our individual national economic structures are too small to be viable) and, more importantly, it may bring an end to those flaws which have allowed the moral message we gave to the world to be negated. That message now sounds hollow and the peoples of Europe have lost their sense of purpose. Most significantly though, the European Federation is expected to guarantee peace through the creation of a third world power, one able to play the role of mediator or at the very least able to reconcile disputes between the two existing world powers.

What does the idea of a European Federation mean in practice? It means that the collective solidarity of our nations will no longer be surrendered to the insecurity of alliances between the various sovereign nations, nor will it rely on the maintenance of good relations and even tempers between our diplomats; an idea not founded on institutions likely to hasten its demise, no matter what form it may take. We must build a constitution in Western Europe which provides the Federation with the power to govern and defines its sphere of influence. That sphere of influence must include security, the way diplomacy is conducted and indeed everything required to promote economic unity in the member countries.

A federal government needs to consist of two chambers, one made up of representatives of the national parliaments, in numbers corresponding to the size of their electorates, and the other made up of representatives, in equal or similar numbers, of the national governments of each Member State. An executive will be required to oversee communal business and there should be a court of justice to rule in cases of conflict over the respective powers of the federal and national authorities.

What are our particular conditions of entry to this Federation?

People of France! We must accept that we are faced with the choice between a European Federation and the French Union. We are not talking only of European France joining the Federation, but all the countries of the Union, not as colonies for joint exploitation by Europe, but as a constitutional element, as an 'invited power'.

Men of peace! We want Europe to be an instrument of peace and not a force for aggression, and we must strive, I repeat, to appease and not to augment the conflict between the two existing world powers. And if the circumstances are such that we must protect ourselves, then we will not shrink from that task: Europe will be ready to raise its shield, but never to raise its sword.

Democrats! In the end, if we are to build the Europe we all desire, then we must concentrate our efforts on creating social justice and economic democracy within it. Without this, the building of a European Republic would be, in our opinion, a pointless exercise.

Europe cannot exist without its working classes — their support comes at a price and will be given only to those who have their interests at heart; social justice is no less important than freedom and, as regards peace, we believe nothing of substance can be created without the people; in other words, without freedom and social justice. This is the inevitable price which must be paid for their support.