

Debates at the Council of Europe (16 August 1949)

Caption: On 16 August 1949, the Members of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe debate future changes to the political structure in Europe.

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Debates at the Council of Europe (16 August 1949)

Changes in the Political Structure of Europe

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — We now come to the following item in our Agenda:

“Consideration of any necessary changes in the political structure of Europe to achieve a greater unity between the Members of the Council of Europe and to make an effective European co-operation in the various spheres specified in Article I of the Statute.”

In accordance with the decision taken by the Assembly at its previous Sitting, we will now proceed to a General Debate on this item.

Before, however, opening this General Debate — which will be the first Debate on the substance of a question in this Session of the Assembly — I believe that I should draw your attention to the provisions of Article 27 of the provisional Rules of Procedure:

“The discussion of a question shall involve two Readings, namely, a general discussion and an examination of the text in detail.

“The general discussion shall deal with the question at issue as a whole and with the principle involved.

“The examination of the text in detail shall take place on the Report of the competent Committee. It shall not begin less than two days after the distribution of the Report.

“After the examination has been concluded, only explanations of vote may be made before the final vote on the Resolution.”

The Assembly will, no doubt, be of the opinion that this text should be interpreted in its widest sense. By this I mean that in the General Debate on the whole question under discussion — which under the Rules of Procedure constitutes the first Reading — any member of this Assembly will have the opportunity to lay on the Table the text of his proposed Resolution and to speak in support of it, or merely to give his opinion of the item in the Agenda without submitting a written text. Any member of this Assembly, even if he does not intervene in the Debate may also submit a written Resolution.

It seems, however, to be in accordance with the spirit of Article 27 of the provisional Rules of Procedure that proposed Resolutions should only be accepted during the general discussion.

Proposed Resolutions will accordingly be accepted by the Bureau, from the opening until the end of the general discussion — i.e. to-morrow up till the end of the afternoon Sitting — and they will be referred to the Committee for examination.

Does the Assembly agree with this interpretation of Article 27 and with the observance of this rule henceforth in our Debates?

[...]

M. PHILIP (*France*) (Translation). — Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: what has brought us together at Strasbourg on this occasion is not merely the hope of achieving an ideal which dates back a long time in the traditions of our Continent, but also our consciousness of a situation of extreme urgency. It is the fact that public opinion in all our countries now realises that the economic and political unification of Europe has become a matter of life and death for us all, and that unless we make rapid progress towards that unification we shall very soon find ourselves in what may become a tragic situation.

When we come to debating economic matters, we shall have an opportunity of studying the need for that

unification in greater detail.

To-day I merely propose to remind you of certain principles which I regard as essential. Europe has emerged ruined from this war — more completely ruined than after the first World War — with destructions to be repaired, with foreign investments lost, and with a new problem demanding solution, namely: the radical transformation of the commercial relations between Europe and the rest of the world. Europe, which was once the workshop of the world, which received raw materials and sent them out as manufactured products, is now witnessing the industrial development of new countries. It is finding increasing difficulty in obtaining essential raw materials. It is encountering even greater difficulties in procuring the necessary outlets for its traditional exports. It cannot establish its economic equilibrium until it can find outlets for new kinds of exports, those of which the world is in need, namely, machinery and half-processed goods, which are in demand in all the countries that are undergoing industrialisation.

For that purpose, it is necessary for Europe to transform the whole structure of its economic life. It has reached the stage where it can no longer play its part in international competition, where it can no longer raise its level of production, except by creating new industries or developing types of industry which cannot be profitable for it because of the large capital investments that they involve. It must also produce for a large market, so as to enable the necessary reductions in cost price to be effected.

In other words, the economic unification of Europe, whether we seek to attain it by liberal measures — by the lowering of customs duties and quantitative restrictions — or, on the other hand, by the systematic co-ordination of capital investments and organs of production, has become for us an urgent necessity, in fact, to speak plainly, a necessity of our existence.

You know how we are all situated. Since 1947, we have only been able, by our exports, to pay for 15 per cent of the goods brought into our Continent from trans-Atlantic countries. At this moment it is the Marshall Plan, the generous and intelligent assistance of our friends, the United States, which enables us to maintain the equilibrium of our commercial balance. But that cannot go on for ever. It is essential that by 1952 — we have only two or three more years — we should have been able to create the conditions for a new commercial equilibrium for Europe. Otherwise, when the effects of the Marshall Plan have ceased to be felt, we shall find ourselves again confronted with the necessity of restricting importation of essential raw materials, which means, a reduction in output and a lowering of the standard of living of the peoples, in which the working classes will be the main sufferers.

We have, therefore, barely two or three years in which to lay the foundations of a true economic unification of our Continent.

The first thing we are conscious of is that the attempts which have been made so far have progressed neither very far nor very rapidly along this path.

The Organisation for European Economic Cooperation asked the various countries to present their long-term programmes and to give their ideas concerning the reorganisation of their economy between now and 1952.

The reports submitted make terrifying reading. It appears that, under the cloak of European unification, there are actually being created economic autarchies more separated and distinct from each other than they ever were before the war — national planning schemes which divide the nations, instead of uniting them.

Then O.E.E.C. set to work. First of all it tried to devise a scheme of co-ordination of production plans. It worked on steel and oil refining, and it was confronted with national resistance of such an order that after eight months the results were nil.

Then liberal methods were tried, including the progressive abolition of customs' duties and quantitative restrictions, which were the subject of recent negotiations concerned with the abolition of quantitative restrictions and the multilateralisation of drawing rights. As you know, the results in this case also were limited and even — it must be said — absurd.

When we come to the economic Debate we shall be able to discuss together the question as to which method is to be chosen: that of the freeing of currency or that of the co-ordination of production. It must be realised from the beginning that O.E.E.C. has alternated between these two systems and has not obtained any results from the one or the other.

The obvious conclusion is that this European economic unification, the foundations of which at least we must lay during the next two to three years, if we wish to avoid the disaster which threatens us all, will not be achieved either by conversations between experts or by negotiations between national sovereign States. Nothing will be accomplished unless we are able to set up a certain number of economic organisations, themselves co-ordinated by a European political authority capable of taking decisions by majority vote.

It is not a question of serving only national interests. It is a question — and this is our rôle, this is what we must insist upon at the beginning of our work — it is a question of European economic problems, European cultural problems and European scientific problems, as they affect the interests of our Continent as a whole. No positive results can be obtained unless we bear this in mind.

I would like to make a general declaration on the subject of our immediate action in the Assembly.

It is true that we are here as members of national delegations, in the sense that we are members of national Parliaments, and that we represent electoral wards in our respective Parliaments. For my part, however, as Member for Lyon, while I am in the French Parliament I speak as a French deputy, representing and defending the general will of the French people and not the limited interests of my constituency. Here, although we come from national constituencies, when we address the Assembly we do not speak for French, Italian and British delegations but as representatives of Europe, who are discussing problems in the general interest of and in the name of all the peoples of Europe.

Later on, when we come to the Debates on Rules of Procedure and methods for setting up Committees, we shall divide according to our different political tendencies. So far, we have very wisely refrained from forming political groups. It would certainly be dangerous to transfer to the European plane national political divisions, which have nothing to do with the problems with which we are here concerned. When the economic Debate has taken place, we shall be able to see how far our ways of thinking differ, and there will come a moment when we shall know whether it is possible to form ourselves into groups according to our spiritual affinities and ways of thinking. Until then, let us beware of forming groups, and let us do nothing which will tend to a division into national delegations. We are not here to represent our various countries in an International Conference; we are here as Representatives of Europe, trying to consider and solve problems in the interests of Europe as a whole.

We are nevertheless, very conscious of the fact that if we are to accomplish this task, we must rapidly increase to some extent the powers of our Assembly. We must without delay let the Committee of Ministers know that we do not consider it proper that an Assembly such as this should be put in the position of a schoolboy raising his hand in class, and be obliged to ask for permission before discussing a subject. It is essential that there shall be some modification of the Statute, which will enable the Assembly itself to decide on the questions it wishes to discuss. The Assembly should also be able to establish its Committees so that they are not necessarily limited to the duration of a Session, but can continue their work in the period between Sessions, so as to be in a position to submit Reports to the next meeting of our Parliament. In fact, any authority which our Assembly acquires will depend on its capacity for carrying out serious and sound technical work.

As we come to the various problems, one by one, we shall find, for example, that there is the problem of European transports, the problem of electricity, the problem of the ports. For each of these economic and technical problems we shall be led to advise the creation of European supranational organisms and institutions, and it is essential that it should be laid down from the beginning that these various institutions must be directed by a political authority.

It is imperative that the Committee of Ministers shall not be merely an assembly of diplomats, using that right of veto which has already done too much harm in international assemblies for any of us to wish to introduce it on a permanent basis here, but it shall become a real political authority ruling by a majority, taking decisions and effectively responsible to the political Assembly which we form and which is, after all, the nucleus, we hope, of what will become a European Parliament.

I do not wish, for the moment, to enter into further details. I do not feel that it is necessary here to begin a theoretical discussion between the supporters of unionism and the supporters of federalism, or of this or that form of organisation. I will limit myself to saying what, however, I believe must be said at the beginning of our deliberations — that is, that if we wish to create Europe, if we wish to unify it as a common market, this Europe which can only survive if it is united and which will otherwise be overwhelmed by the gravest disasters and crises in less time than many people imagine, it is necessary, as a point of departure, that we should confirm that the goal towards which we wish to move, and that as rapidly as possible, is the creation of a European political authority of a supra-national character.

One last word, Gentlemen. This Europe that we wish to set up does not begin as a federation of Western Europe, it is a federation of all the free peoples of Europe. If there are some who are not among us to-day, it is not the fault of the peoples. If there are some who are absent from us here, it is because beyond the Pyrenees and beyond the Elbe there are political regimes existing which do not respect the rule of law or the fundamental liberties of the individual. We must ourselves, nevertheless, affirm here from the beginning that our doors remain open to those who are, for the present, absent from among us. It would perhaps be a good thing, when we are discussing our Rules of Procedure, to leave here and there a symbolic vacant seat for the Representatives of some of the peoples of Europe who should be sitting here but are prevented by certain historical circumstances of the moment from doing so. They will, we hope, one day regain sufficient freedom and national independence to enable them to come and take the seats which are theirs by rights, and which we are reserving for them.

This, Gentlemen, is what I wished to say at the opening of our discussion. In the present international situation we hear rather too often of the two giants, the two great Powers which dominate the world, as if they alone existed. And, in fact, as things are to-day this is almost true, since, divided, we are nothing but the dust of States, incapable of bringing our influence to bear on the affairs of the world. But a Europe united, politically and economically, conscious of her destiny and determined to strive for unity, may still play a great rôle in world affairs and bring to the peoples everywhere a message they still may need.

M. KRISTENSEN (*Denmark*). — We are here because of the weakness of Europe. It is useful to remind ourselves of that at the very beginning. The idea of European unity is a very old one, but the reason it has been sponsored by so many different circles of people within European countries after the last war is that our countries have not been able to manage their own affairs to the full extent. We have not been able to provide for our military security without aid from outside. We have not been able to provide for our economic reconstruction without aid from outside. That was mentioned by M. Philip.

Therefore, it is necessary for European countries to strengthen their own position because, in the long run, we cannot be satisfied with a state of affairs in which European countries are dependent on aid from outside to the present extent. It is essential that we should unite the military, political, economic and cultural forces of the European countries to which we belong. That is one of the most important means of enabling us to become a more stable part of the world than we are to-day.

If that unity is to be effective, there is one condition which must be fulfilled. We cannot be satisfied only with the negative condition that we are weak to-day. There must be also a positive condition. That positive condition which must be fulfilled is that we must remember that there is a common background among the European countries to which we belong, and among some others, and that we should be able to unite to a greater extent than we have united so far.

If we are to do that, it will be necessary sooner or later to form a new political structure in Europe. It will be necessary that sovereign Powers, to some extent at least, should be transferred from the individual countries

to some common European authority. This Assembly should be transformed into a real European Parliament, with real and decisive powers, at least in some fields. The Committee of Ministers should be transformed into a real European Government with decisive powers, at least in some fields.

We have reached a stage in history where it is essential that, to some extent, national feelings must be subdued in favour of the wider aspects of political affairs. But when all that has been said, I find it necessary to add that I think that it is too early to decide, or even to discuss at length, how far and how fast we should proceed in this matter, because we do not know enough about each other. We do not know all each other's problems. To subdue national feelings is a very different thing from speaking about them.

When we proceed to economic and other practical matters, we shall find it very difficult to subdue national feelings to the necessary extent. We do not know enough of each other's problems.

I should like to make a small digression and to suggest that the Bureau and the Secretariat of this Assembly should publish a small book about each of our countries. They should give details of the leaders of the groups present here and of the affairs of the country. They should tell us about the political parties of each country and discuss their points of view on political, national, economic, religious and other matters. We should be told which newspapers belong to the various parties, and so on. We should be given information about the economic structure of each country, and about its production, commerce and trade. Other details should include information about the burning problems of each country and about any national minorities within each country. We should also be told whether there are any national minorities in one country which really belong to another country.

Such a guide would be most useful. It is essential that we should have some knowledge of each other's problems before we proceed further.

It is also necessary for us to know how strong is our ability to unite our minds, because we cannot unite Europe until we have united our minds. We must be willing not to press our own views too strongly, so that we can get unanimity, or something like it.

We do not know enough about all this. Therefore, I do not think that it would be useful to have a lengthy discussion on the future structure of European political organisation, because we should be speaking too vaguely and in the air. I think that it would be useful in this first Session of the Assembly to confine ourselves, as far as possible, to two specific topics.

Europe is watching this Assembly. People are looking for guidance and are asking, "What are the people at Strasbourg doing? Are they speaking of realities or losing themselves among generalities?" I think it would be a good thing if we confined ourselves as much as possible to concrete topics, at least in this first Session.

That is why I want to say a few words now about the Statute of the Council of Europe. I have submitted a Proposal that there should be set up a Committee to study the Statute with a view to making an amendment. It was decided by the Bureau that this subject should be dealt with as part of the general subject we are discussing to-day. The Statute is virtually made by the Governments of our different countries, that is to say, by Foreign Ministers and their civil servants. The Statute as a whole is, therefore, made by the Committee of Ministers. When the Assembly met last week, we found ourselves confronted with a *fait accompli* — a Statute which we had not made ourselves.

It is necessary, in my opinion, for the Assembly to consider the Statute before it is finally established, although it would not be right if we were to start a war between the Assembly and the Committee of Ministers. Many of us here feel that too much power is given to the Committee of Ministers and too little to the Assembly, but, as I say, it would be an unhappy event if we were to start a war between the two parts of the Council of Europe. We should discuss matters between ourselves in order to arrive at a proper solution.

There are some parts of the Statute which need to be amended. May I mention Article 4, which states that the Committee of Ministers may invite other countries to become Members of the Council of Europe? I and

my colleagues think that this should not be done without the approval of the Assembly, and that the Article should be amended to this effect.

There is another point; we have been discussing our Secretariat, I think it is absurd, as others have said, that the Secretariat should be responsible only to the Committee of Ministers. We ought to have a Secretariat of our own, elected by and solely responsible to the Assembly.

I have mentioned those two points, but I am sure there are more. When I say it is too early to decide detailed Amendments of the Statute, I should add that we should try to benefit by all the experience which we can obtain during this first Session. The Committee which is set up to study these points should not report during this Session. It should be allowed to carry on its work following the close of the Session and report to the Assembly before the beginning of the next Session.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — I would remind you that all Recommendations and proposed Resolutions must be handed in, in writing, to the Bureau before the Closure of the Debate.

M. CAPPI (*Italy*) (Translation). — Our work is being enacted under the sign of Minerva who, as we know, is the goddess of wisdom and reason. But I would like you to forget another characteristic of this goddess which is that of having sprung, adult and perfectly armed, from the brain of Jove.

I mean — and our most fervent federalist friends will bear me no ill-will — that the more noble the aim which we pursue, the more rational should be our methods of work. Rationality must, however, not be our motto. This means that we must not only adapt our means to the aim we pursue, but also our aim to the means. We must therefore measure and determine the stages of our work, within the limits of our possibilities.

Wisdom teaches us that politics — and we are engaged in politics in the most sublime sense of the word — is the art of the possible. Indeed, if we wish great historical events to be abiding and fertile, they must ripen in spirit and in fact, that is to say, they should be justified by circumstances. If some attempts fail because they are too hasty, if they are followed by bitter disappointments, these disappointments might be used to our disadvantage by the many sceptics and opponents to our idea of a united Europe.

After these preliminary considerations, I shall take the liberty of submitting you three simple remarks.

In the first place, in order that a union, and particularly a union of the peoples, may be accomplished and survive, all causes for disputes between Member States must be eliminated. To this end, it seems to me that the Member States of the Council of Europe should create a board of conciliation or arbitration, whose decisions should be compulsory, and whose task would be to ensure a peaceful solution of all the disputes which might arise. The idea of disarmament should be constantly borne in mind, though it could, naturally, only be a measure of a general character.

Secondly, I wonder whether the principle of a union or federation of States, implying, as a direct result, the obligation to renounce part of their sovereignty; I wonder, as I said, whether this principle is now generally accepted by the twelve Member nations of the Council, and whether it is really deeply rooted in the conscience of these nations. Alas! it seems to me that an affirmative answer to this question would err on the side of excessive optimism.

It is true that an undoubted trend towards federalism does exist, but, in my opinion, this is largely due to two interdependent reasons — the economic chaos and the fear of an aggression — which compel the peoples to try to unite their strength in order to resist better a possible attack.

But these reasons are not enough. Before the clauses of any union are laid down on paper, such a union must exist first and foremost in the mind, in this *affectio societatis* which the Roman jurists considered as indispensable to any association.

Finally, two practical inferences may be drawn from the above premises: the Council of Europe should undertake actual propaganda to ensure the diffusion of the federal idea, and its penetration into the depths of popular conscience; it should also try to unite the peoples by means of conventions and special economic, social and legal agreements.

To some enthusiastic followers of the federal idea, the activities of this Council will certainly appear too limited since they might divert attention from the supreme aim of a perfect federation, in the true sense of the word. However, such is not my view, although I think that we cannot reach this goal without admitting the influence of moral and religious factors. I believe, on the other hand, that special agreements may be very useful, as they would create the habit of common thought and action. They may also help us to think in terms of the community, and sometimes of the identity, of our interests.

In fact, these agreements may be compared with threads which, though fragile and loose for the moment, may at some time be fused and transformed into a closely woven web, which will form the connecting tissue of a closer and more general union.

Such, in brief, are my suggestions. I hope they will not be ascribed to half-hearted faith in the future of the European Union. On the contrary, they are the result of my eager desire to see this union accomplished, steadily though progressively, by gradual and rational steps, which must lead us to our final goal; that is to say, to the full achievement of the ideal for which we have met here.

It is a sublime ideal and, if it is accomplished, it may bring about substantial changes in the tormented and sometimes cruel history of mankind.

In other words, our desire is to witness the union of all peoples, which alone means peace. Not an inert and inoperative peace, but, so to say, an active and even combative peace in which all the treasures of intellect, all the vital impulses which God bestowed on man, would serve to fight against the miseries and adversities of nature, with a view to achieving progress and goodness rather than the destructive action of evil. We must defeat, and no longer disseminate, hatred and death.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — I call upon Lord Layton.

Lord LAYTON (*United Kingdom*). — M. Philip opened this Debate with an eloquent appeal that we should speak for Europe and represent the European point of view. He clearly and forcefully insisted on the need for unification. I have nothing to add to what M. Philip said on this subject, for it represents the views of us all, and I have no doubt will be expressed by other people. But the question which is constantly put to all of us, is, in fact: what can this Assembly do? I should like very briefly to address myself to this issue.

M. Kristensen rather depreciated the discussion of the future political structure of Europe, but I do not think that it is possible or wise to avoid this issue. Two opinions on it will certainly be disclosed in the course of this Debate. One is that we should now go forward boldly towards federation. The other is that we should be content, for the present at all events, with the evolutionary method, and proceed step by step to build upon the forms of co-operation which have already been called into being.

Should we start by making a blueprint of a future Government of Europe, or should we start in some less ambitious way?

The case for the first of these courses is a strong one, Europe badly needs a ray of hope. People will accept sweeping changes in desperate times. To offer to the ordinary men and women of Europe, who have suffered so much, the prospect of becoming citizens of a continental community, which would guarantee them liberty and security, would come with all the impact of a dramatic appeal.

It will also be urged on the technical side that there are grave weaknesses in any union which falls short of federation. It will be argued with much force that unless a European political institution is set up, deriving its authority direct from the people, with taxing power, with authority to take decisions binding on the Member

States and with a civil service responsible to European Ministers, Europe cannot develop its full potential strength. But here in Strasbourg we have to recognise that such a Proposal will encounter serious resistance. We must also realise that in creating such an institution for Europe, we have no precedent to guide us. It is true that in the common heritage, of which the Statute speaks, we have a very great asset, but we are also old established nations with strong national traditions, with different methods of administration and government, and with very varied notions of the technical working of democracy.

It is true that these self-same European peoples have become fused into a single nation in the United States; but when they crossed the Atlantic, emigrants of the 19th century stepped into a well-established form of government and society. It is a very different proposition to remodel fully grown organisations into a common pattern.

There are other features, too, which make the task of federating Europe unlike anything which has preceded it. We are debarred by the Statute from discussing the subject of defence. I may, however, remind you that common defence has been a basic function of practically every federation which has ever existed. Yet most of the nations represented here are part of a larger defence group. Any blueprint of a Western European federation would have to take into account and make clear what its relations would be to the group of nations associated in the Atlantic Pact.

Similar questions present themselves in several other directions. Indeed, if we look at a list of the more general functions exercised by a federation, we shall find that not all of them are appropriate to all the nations represented here. In short, we have to decide what are the appropriate functions of a European federation and to what countries they should apply. On this point, I would only express the view that the larger the number of nations in a federation the fewer are the functions that can be federalised, and *vice versa*.

The other major problem which I mention, but do not discuss in this Debate, is the complication created by the special association between several of the countries of Western Europe, including Great Britain, with the Dominions and with other overseas territories.

Now, I have raised these points, not to prove that the development of federation in Western Europe is an impossible ideal, but to emphasise that the form which European unity will ultimately take must inevitably follow an entirely new pattern, and not just be copied from the pattern that has developed elsewhere in quite other circumstances. The political genius of Europe is faced with the greatest challenge that it has ever had to meet.

It would be impossible to work out this new constitutional device in the short time available here at Strasbourg. I am, therefore, strongly in favour of the suggestion that we should set up a Committee charged with the duty of examining the possibilities frankly and fearlessly, and without shirking any of the major difficulties, and of drawing up a Report for the second Session of the Assembly of this Council of Europe.

But this is by no means all that we can do. Indeed, if we did nothing but put such a study in hand we should be standing still, and the net effect on the public of this first Session would be very disappointing. The other and more immediate part of our task is to press on with and develop the co-operation that we have already started. Last Friday I suggested to the Assembly that the achievement of political solidarity must precede economic integration. We can do something well worth while in this direction here and now. Let me briefly mention some examples which arise out of our Agenda.

In the first place, at some stage in our proceedings we should try to define the democratic conception which is our common political background. All our Governments are committed in general terms by their ratification of the Statute. But the democratic heritage of Europe demands a fuller definition than is included in that Statute, and this definition must, of course, be one to which all parties can subscribe.

Six months ago the European Movement attempted to formulate such a Statement. From this Statement I will quote only three sentences. The Statement summarises the essential characteristics of the true spirit of

Europe as:

“Love of freedom, hostility to totalitarianism of every kind, the humble and conscientious search for truth, and above all respect for the human personality and of the individual as an individual.”

It follows that, as the Statement goes on:

“A political institution or an economic and social system is never an end in itself; it is merely a means of creating favourable conditions in which the human personality can develop and expand.”

Finally, in the Europe of to-day this means in practice that our collaboration must be on the basis of a mixed economy. It is not a question, says the Statement, of choosing between

“liberty and authority, nor between a free and collective economy, but of creating a synthesis of the two, which far from being in opposition to one another, can be combined for constructive purposes.”

There may be differences as to whether there should be more whisky or more soda in the mixture, but if we can agree that the European idea regards both liberty and discipline, freedom of initiative and collective action, as good in themselves, we should be able to avoid head-on collisions as regards ideologies, and to treat questions as they arise on their merits.

Purely paper declarations, however, are rightly discredited. Our statement will have force only if it is converted into action, and the most immediate and practical way of doing this is by the adoption of a Charter of Human Rights, coupled with a definite method of enforcement. This will come up for discussion at a later date, and I only impress its importance, first for the sake of the individual European citizens who may benefit from it; secondly, as a means of strengthening the resistance in all our countries against insidious attempts to undermine our democratic way of life from within or without, and thus to give to Western Europe as a whole greater political stability; and thirdly, as the acid test of whether countries should be admitted to this Council of a democratic Europe.

There is only one other aspect of our problem to which I now propose to address myself. The extremely rapid development of co-operation in the last 18 months is a notable page in European history, and we must all pay tribute to those who have initiated it and carried it through. But it has two weaknesses. One is the confusing number of bodies that have come into existence — many of which appear to overlap or to be ill-co-ordinated. Even the best-informed find it difficult to follow what is going on.

The other weakness is that too many of these activities are carried on by experts and civil servants — many of them the ablest that we have got — in a setting remote from the public, and therefore not based on the national will. Much of the planning of O.E.E.C. for example (which may directly affect the prospects and livelihood of millions of the population) is known to and understood by only a small circle of specialists. So long as this is the case, its roots are shallow, and if this gap is not bridged there is a danger that these paper plans may be blown away by some political breeze.

This Assembly itself is the first step towards mobilising the opinion of the people themselves in support of the work which has begun. Means must be found of establishing contacts between the framers of policy and those who have to carry out those policies in the fields, factories and workshops of Europe. I hope that this Assembly will be able to suggest to the Committee of Ministers ways of simplifying and knitting together this great co-operative effort and to ensure that it takes a firm root in the minds and hearts of the people.

The process must, of course, include the establishment of appropriate relations between this Assembly and all the various activities that have already been initiated. This concept that our immediate task is to develop existing co-operation is in no conflict with the proposal to think out during the coming year the form of organisation most fitted to the complex situation of Europe. On the contrary, if public opinion can be made more conscious of what is going on and come to appreciate its purpose and its value, it will be the best possible way of preparing public opinion to consider and accept a more complete form of European

consolidation.

Mr. Vice-President, if we can succeed in launching an enforceable Bill of Rights and if as a result of our deliberations the existing schemes of co-operation are simplified, given a new impulse and brought into closer contact with the life of the people; and if, in the remoter future a study is initiated of the type of government appropriate to Europe's special needs, this first Assembly will have fully justified itself, for it will have given the world the best possible assurance that Europe is in earnest and means business.

THE PRESIDENT (Translation). — I call upon M. Maccas.

Mr. MACCAS (*Greece*) (Translation). — Mr. President, first of all I wish to thank the Committee of Ministers for having complied with the Assembly's request to institute this General Debate.

In fact, without a political Debate, without political conclusions, without discussion of what we are, what we should be, what we can be, I greatly fear that the Assembly would only progress by trial and error, that it would involve itself in misunderstandings which would cause its work to be held in less esteem.

We would, perhaps, no longer be a Parliament, but neither would we be an anteroom.

The nations which demanded this Assembly's creation, as well as the urgent requirements of Europe, which also contributed to the establishment of our Assembly, expect something else from us. It is on this something else that we must agree at the outset of our work.

We must first decide what we cannot be, what we are not.

We are not soldiers. We are not a headquarters, nor an offensive or even defensive body. If we want peace we want it to be complete and indivisible, and, if we want to establish justice and democracy, we want it established without another war.

Neither can we duplicate the rôle of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, especially since this organisation, up to the present, instead of planning its work and directives on a basis of solidarity, co-ordination and mutual dependence, has, on the contrary — as M. Philip recently emphasised — sunk into autarchy, and set up watertight compartments between the requests from the different Governments, without making any attempt at possible co-ordination between these requests.

If this state of affairs should continue, Europe runs the risk of economic disintegration and general ruin.

Neither are we diplomats. Diplomats apply established international conventions; they cling to the theory that events never change, and regard them as entirely crystalised. Diplomats are accordingly conservative by definition.

The acknowledgement of these facts shows, on the other hand, what we should be, or should become. Situations are never static. Evolution is the breath of life itself. We are here to observe this evolution in the life of Europe and to find solutions to problems as they arise.

We are the engineers responsible for directing the new currents in such a manner as to prevent inundations caused either by the dissatisfied masses or by unsolved problems which, without our intervention, would overwhelm established institutions.

With us, on the other hand, Europe can and must become — as M. Herriot has already said — a continuous creation, a living, moving coherent and flexible organism.

How shall we achieve this? By European federalism or by mere co-operation among European countries?

I am not a doctrinaire. If I am, in principle, a federalist, if I signed the Interlaken Manifesto last year, it is

because I consider that the virtual elimination of distance and the industrial development of modern States have transformed European countries into mere provinces in exactly the same way as, in olden days, the collecting together of families and tribes led to the creation of the ancient cities, and later, in the long process of time, out of the union of these cities were born the countries of to-day.

To-day, we can no longer think, act, live or hope anything from the future if we do not break down our national barriers, and shake up our national organisations.

The reason is that life to-day only recognises much larger units — in the future this will be increasingly the case — formed under the influence of a common conception of life and a common civilisation.

As the great historian Toynbee and the famous journalist Lippmann have strongly emphasised, we live, act and agree by and for a common civilisation.

Finally as European civilisation exists, Europe also must exist as a unity and we ourselves must be the expression of this united Europe.

But here, Mr. President, arises the serious problem of national sovereignty.

I am quite clear that even if they are only the result of more prejudice, we must avoid any conflict between this problem and this principle. On the contrary we can already approach the conception of the solidarity of sovereignties and the delegation of sovereignty.

I believe that, in this way, we may to a certain extent develop the idea of a common sovereignty, either under pressure of necessity, danger or even of familiarity.

One must also ascertain where the line is to be drawn between national and European game-preserves. This line cannot be drawn in any final form. European interests will increasingly expand at the expense of national interests.

But we are, at present, concerned to find out and to confirm to what extent we can draw this line to-day, by delegating or co-ordinating our respective national sovereignties.

If you ask what matters fall within the European sphere, I believe that we should give the first place to expression of our duty to humanity.

When confronted with major national calamities — an earthquake, a famine, an epidemic, a question of the survival of children or refugees, as unfortunately is at present the case in my country — it is certain that, vis-à-vis these innocent victims of a catastrophe for which they are not responsible, European solidarity should find expression in a general form.

The next matters, in my views, to be included in European affairs, are expressions of our democratic, social and cultural responsibilities.

We should regard our citizens as free men for whom the advantages of a uniform code of rights and duties should be secured. We should similarly regard the mass of workers as a single entity, similarly entitled to a decent standard of living.

Thirdly, our students and school children should all be considered as a single team, active in the field of intelligence and cultural rivalry.

Finally, we should look upon tourists as a single army engaged in peaceful inter-penetration and as an instrument of civilisation.

Further, at least some expression of our economic responsibilities should be included in the field of

European interest.

In this way by supervising and checking the application of the Marshall Plan, we should be ensured that our requirements are no longer dealt with on the basis of parallel policies but that our efforts are harmonised by converging lines of policy.

Working on these lines, under the principal heads already mentioned, we can accordingly federate; and it is incumbent on our Assembly to prepare the way by drafting conventions and bringing its whole influence to bear on Governments to accept and ratify them.

What means of action are open to us? There are two.

Either we make a gentleman's agreement to submit our Resolutions to our respective Parliaments in the form of draft laws which, on adoption by national Parliaments, would form the basis of bilateral or multilateral Agreements.

Or, if this method is considered inadequate, we must boldly make certain Amendments to the Statute of the Council of Europe.

Personally, Mr. President, I intend to propose three Amendments, including one to Article 15 of the Statute, which reads in sub-paragraph b); "in appropriate cases, the conclusions of the Committee may take the form of Recommendations to the Governments of Members..."

I consider that this Article should be amended by specifying that "the conclusions of the Committee of Ministers may, if necessary, take the form of Recommendations to Governments and to national Parliaments."

Then, in my opinion, two paragraphs should be added to Article 20. First paragraph: "If, at two consecutive Sessions, the Consultative Assembly adopts the same Recommendation, the relevant Resolution of the Committee of Ministers shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Representatives voting", instead of by unanimous vote as has hitherto been necessary. That is to say, if this year and next year, we submit the same Recommendation, the Committee of Ministers acting by a two-thirds majority (i.e. eight out of twelve members in the present circumstances and no longer by a unanimous vote) must communicate this Recommendation to the Governments.

Next I propose that the following paragraph be added to Article 20: "If, at two consecutive Sessions, the Consultative Assembly adopts the same Recommendation by a four-fifths majority of Representatives voting, the relevant Resolution of the Committee of Ministers shall be compulsory. If, during two consecutive Sessions, the same Recommendation is voted by an increased majority of 81 votes out of 101, the Committee of Ministers will then be obliged to transmit this Recommendation to the Government of which the members are the Representatives."

I naturally reserve the right to expand these three Amendments in Committee. However, now and in future, I emphasise that in this way we may hope that we shall no longer be a mere laboratory for producing Recommendations, the future of which is problematical and depends on the Committee of Ministers, but we shall be the antechamber of our national Parliaments. This rôle is one which is more worthy of, and more in conformity with, the mandate that we have received from our Parliaments.

Thus, while respecting our national sovereignties — since in the last analysis it is they who will finally decide the question — this system brings us somewhat closer to federalism, since our Recommendations, made in the spirit of federation, will inject that spirit into our respective Parliaments.

I conclude by quoting a hope, recently expressed in a resounding statement by President Robert Schuman, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs: "The Continent shows signs of organising itself and the time will come when, as the result of a far-reaching disturbance, the successes obtained will acquire the value of an

example. Then divided Europe will become Europe, united, coherent and able to play the part of the liberator.”

Need I add, as a Greek, that no one will welcome this happy day, this historic date, more than I. My country is subjected to geographical and political pressure from another world, which is organised according to a conception of life which is not ours, and where there exist expansionist tendencies, which none of us feel or share. My country is suffering terribly, but successfully, thank God, in resisting this pressure.

So if this stifling atmosphere were relieved by the light of a united Europe, if it were relieved by the kindly influence of this Europe, that would mean relief for you, it would mean unity for Europe, and for Greece a great joy.

But in order that this light may shine we must have a strong ideology. There must be faith, because only faith can move mountains and cross all barriers.

[...]