

Memorandum from Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi on the European flag (Gstaad, 27 July 1950)

Caption: In this memorandum, dated July 1950, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, President of the Paneuropean Movement and Secretary-General of the European Parliamentary Union, proposes the adoption of his movement's flag as the flag of the Council of Europe.

Source: Archives historiques du Conseil de l'Europe - Historical archives of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex. <http://info.coe.int/archives/hist/flag/default.asp>. Le drapeau - The Flag, 2191.

The European Flag, Memorandum presented to the Council of Europe by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, President of the Pan-European Movement, Secretary General of the European Parliamentary Union. Gstaad: 27 July 1950. 3 p.

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The European Flag – Memorandum presented to the Council of Europe by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, President of the Pan-European Movement, Secretary General of the European Parliamentary Union (Gstaad, 27 July 1950)

The question of the flag of the Council of Europe, to be discussed by the Second Session of the European Consultation Assembly, ought to find a definitive solution by giving Europe a symbol of its unity.

To be adopted by public opinion, the flag should comply to the following conditions:

- 1) It should be a symbol of our common civilization;
- 2) It should present a European emblem;
- 3) It should not provoke any national rivalry;
- 4) It should represent a tradition;
- 5) It should be beautiful and dignified.

The flag that has been representing ever since 1923, the idea of a United States of Europe, complies to these five conditions: a golden sun on a blue background, with a red cross in the middle of the sun.

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This flag combines three symbols: the Sun, the Red Cross the Blue Sky.

Thus it unites the symbols of the Greco-Latin civilization and of Christianity, the two basic elements of modern Europe.

The Sun is the eternal symbol of light, of spirit, of progress, of prosperity and of truth.

The Red Cross is being recognized by the whole world, by Christian and non-Christian nations as a symbol of international charity and of the brotherhood of man.

The Cross has been, since the fall of the Roman Empire, the great symbol of Europe's moral unity. It is but natural that this symbol should figure within the European Flag - just as it appears on the flags of Switzerland, of Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and other European nations.

The crushing majority of European Christians will not admit the cross being removed from the European flag - while the none-Christian minority cannot oppose this symbol, inseparable from our history and civilization; as the Christian minorities in the Near East do not oppose the national symbols of the Crescent and the Star of David.

The Blue Sky, the natural background of the Sun, is a symbol of peace. Blue is the bound to be the basic color of the European Flag, since all other colors have at present a special meaning: the red flag = Bolshevism; the green flag = Islam; the yellow flag = quarantine; the black flag = mourning, the white flag = capitulation.

The Emblem

Europe should have an Emblem, connected with its flag, to serve as an instrument of propaganda – as the Soviet-Star serves Bolshevism and the Swastika served Hitlerism.

Such a European Emblem constitutes the center of the flag of the U.S.E.: the red-cross on the golden (yellow) sun. Without colors, it is a cross in a circle.

This design has been found, as a pre-Christian symbol of world-harmony, on Celtic and Germanic monuments.

National Neutrality

The flag of the U.S.E. has no national character, since it has no resemblance with any national flag. Thus it avoids the dangers of misinterpretations that would arise if letters of the alphabet were used as elements of the European Flag. The letter E, for instance, meaning "Europe", might also be read for "England"; the letter F, meaning "Federation", for "France"; the letter D, meaning "Democracy", for "Deutschland"; the letter U, meaning "Union", for "U.S.A" or "USSR" with all the fatal consequences of such interpretations.

Tradition

The red cross that constitutes the center of the flag, has been undoubtedly the first European Flag at the time of the Crusades.

Combined with the sun on a blue background, it has become the most ancient symbol of the European idea. Since 1923 this flag has been adopted throughout Europe, as a symbol of the Pan-European Movement. Acclaimed by the first Pan-European Congress in Vienna in 1926, this flag has floated over the roofs of Geneva, to great acclaim in 1929 the European Initiative of Aristide Briand, the Honorary Chairman of the Pan-European Union.

After the war, the European Parliamentary Union, that has launched the idea of a European Parliament elected by the national parliaments, has adopted this flag in December 1947, by an unanimous vote of its Council.

Beauty and Dignity

The evident beauty and dignity of this flag have never been contested.

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All these reasons recommend the adoption of this flag by the Council of Europe.

Should the Council choose another symbol of its present structure of an association of sovereign nations, our flag will, under all circumstances, continue to be the symbol of the struggle for a European Federation - up to the birthday of the United States of Europe.

Gstaad, 27 July 1950

R. Coudenhove-Kalergi.