


# The post-war European idea and the first European movements (1945–1949) — Full text

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## Introduction

The Second World War had devastating consequences for Europe. The human losses were extremely severe, and people were shocked to discover the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime. The economies of several European countries were left in tatters: industrial and agricultural infrastructures had been destroyed, towns and cities had been razed to the ground by bombing raids, means of communication had been damaged and there were shortages of foodstuffs.

Soon relegated to second fiddle on the international stage by the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as two new superpowers, Western Europe realised that its recovery would come through unity, through the pooling of its economic resources — where necessary with US financial, technical and military support — and through the creation of jointly run, efficient institutions.

Given the rise in influence of the United States and the Soviet Union and their increasing rivalry, the countries of Europe, exhausted by the global conflict, were faced with three fundamental questions. The first was economic: how could material damage be repaired and economic activity revived on the old continent? The second was political: how could they prevent the return of a conflict that had laid the continent and the world to waste? The third was cultural: how could the survival and renaissance of European civilisation be ensured in the face of the increasing threats represented by the ideological schism and confrontation between the victorious American and Soviet blocs? Western Europe hoped to reclaim its place on the international stage by uniting the peoples of Europe.

Pro-European movements, some of which originated in the Resistance, moved into action and vigorously promoted the idea of European unification. The ideal of a united Europe, which had already been popularised by certain elite circles during the interwar period, rapidly gained ground in the wake of the Second World War. Thousands of young people dreamed of a united Europe, sometimes even of a unified and peaceful world. While reconstruction was an immediate priority in the post-war period, many people advocated the creation of an autonomous European entity. In order to avoid the world being divided into two antagonistic blocs and to prevent the inevitably ensuing war, it seemed essential to establish a third European pole. In this context, there were calls for Western countries to adopt a neutral stance in the face of American materialism and Soviet totalitarianism. However, non-alignment, which became increasingly difficult to implement as the Cold War intensified, was soon defended only by the pacifist and internationalist movements.

With regard to the form that European unification might take and the procedures that might be involved, ideas often diverged according to political and ideological affiliation. While some favoured a federation led by a federal authority — or even a European government — others preferred a simple association of sovereign states.

In 1946, various supporters of European federal unity, aware of the need to promote the European ideal in political circles and among the general public, founded the Union of European Federalists (UEF), bringing together some 50 federalist movements. Within national parliaments, particularly those of the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Italy, the number of supporters of federalism was progressively increasing.

In 1947, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, founder of the Paneuropean Union in the early 1920s, decided to unite these members of parliament in the European Parliamentary Union (EPU). Being organised more efficiently, they could now bring pressure to bear on national governments.

Several international congresses (Montreux, Gstaad, The Hague, etc.) were also held to push for European unity. In the light of the successful outcome of the Hague Congress in May 1948, the International Committee of the Movements for European Unity, which had organised the congress, decided to take things further, and in October 1948 it changed its name to the European Movement (EM). The support of the general public in building a united Europe took on a fundamental importance.

### **I. The Resistance and the European idea in the light of the New European Order championed by the Nazis**

Prior to the vigorous campaigning for European unification by pro-European movements and federalist activists from 1945 onwards, the Resistance had also been actively involved in promoting the European idea during the Second World War, while the Nazis, for their part, had been keen to establish a 'New European Order'.

Right from the outbreak of the conflict, the rapid German military victories over the continental European democracies had been fuelling an intense propaganda campaign in support of the idea of a German Europe. The Reich wanted to organise its newly conquered territories along the lines of a united Europe, a *Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft*, which would put an end to traditional national antagonisms once and for all. Hitler's Germany did not hesitate to present itself as the champion of European unification and of the New European Order.

Official propaganda exalted the values of Western civilisation, which it claimed it was defending against Bolshevism and Anglo-American imperialism. However, the Nazi strategies envisaged the continent being reorganised into a vast European economic and commercial area entirely at the service of the German economy. German geopoliticians particularly hoped to make the fertile plains of Central Europe the breadbasket of the Reich and, at times, envisaged the forced Germanisation of the subjugated peoples. The Nazis' plans were dependent upon the existence of a German race, to consist of Alsatians, Austrians, Luxembourgers and Swiss Germans, as well as the Germans themselves. It would also include the *Volksdeutschen* who, in Europe, could claim to have had German ancestors even if they had since lost all contact with their original culture. This first group would then be joined by parent populations that were judged to be Germanic and easily assimilable, such as the Scandinavians, the Flemish and the Dutch.

In contrast to these peoples and to those from the allied and satellite countries (Croatia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Italy), the Slavs from Poland, the Baltic States and the Soviet Union were portrayed as 'subhuman', destined to be eliminated or displaced and enslaved according to the needs of the Reich. The Jews and the Gypsies, who were considered stateless, were condemned to be exterminated. It was in this way that Nazi Germany envisaged the creation of living space for the Reich, under the exclusive control of a reunited and purified Germanic race, as the result of methodical selection carried out by race experts. The German strategies also envisaged linking up a united Europe with the African colonies of the defeated states into a self-governing Eurafica controlled by the fascist powers of the Axis

— Germany and Italy — and their satellites.

These discourses on the New Europe, quite apart from reasons of immediate economic opportunism, helped German leaders gain the confidence of certain collaborators in the defeated and occupied European countries. For example, in 1941, a grand exhibition was held in Paris entitled 'European France', which championed the slogan 'a strong France in a strong Europe'. The exhibition, which received more than 600 000 visitors, highlighted the country's agricultural wealth so as to promote its role in the New Europe under German control. This was followed by other travelling exhibitions, one of which was entitled 'Bolshevism against Europe' and illustrated the crusade being carried out by the Reich and its allies against communism and for a united Europe. After the war, communist movements were able to make skilful use of this Nazi concept of Europe and of collaboration to discredit the European ideal, which it considered reactionary.

The racist New European Order that was promoted during the war by the Nazis had not discouraged keen supporters of European unity. On the contrary, some resistance groups, inspired initially by patriotic sentiments, had gradually been forced to think more at a European level. They believed more than ever in the need to build a democratic Europe. This is what inspired the militant anti-fascists and federalists Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi to draft their manifesto for a free and united Europe. Written on Ventotene, a small island in the Tyrrhenian Sea to which they had been exiled and placed under constant surveillance, the Manifesto was secretly broadcast in the summer of 1941. In this original text, Spinelli compared the union of Europe to the formation of a state. He saw the European Federation as a pillar of world peace. In 1943, Spinelli founded the Italian European Federalist Movement in Milan.

In late 1942, the fortunes of war turned more and more in favour of the Allies. The German debacle in Russia and the entry of the United States into the war against the Axis forces in December 1941 effectively changed the course of events and strengthened the confidence of the Allies in ultimate victory. The various governments-in-exile, sensing that German defeat was in sight, concentrated their minds more keenly on their future as part of a reorganised post-war world. From that time on, the major world powers occupied the international stage on their own, with the small European countries feeling excluded. For their part, they were most alarmed about American plans to simplify the geopolitical map of Europe. Those plans envisaged in particular the elimination of small countries deemed to be factors for international instability. American and British financial experts also reviewed the possibility of establishing a new international monetary system and the revival of world trade under Anglo-American leadership.

The small countries, which had no intention whatsoever of abandoning their sovereignty, immediately stepped up their mutual contacts and developed alliances and regional groupings in order to defend their interests more effectively, both in the new international economy and as part of the UN. The fight for the rights of small nations became a foreign policy objective for these countries. During the winter of 1942–1943, the Polish General W. Sikorski proposed a comprehensive plan for European regional federations. An economic union consisting of the countries bordering the North Atlantic was also under consideration. But the only concrete achievement of that period was the creation of a customs union between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in the immediate post-war period. The Benelux monetary agreement was signed on 21 October 1943 in London. It laid down a fixed exchange rate between the Belgian franc and the Dutch guilder and established a bilateral clearing

mechanism. The Belgian-Netherlands-Luxembourg Customs Convention was signed on 5 September 1944. It established a tariff community and envisaged, in the long term, the creation of an economic union between the three countries.

At the same time, transnational contacts between various resistance movements were formally established and culminated on 20 May 1944 in the adoption in Geneva of a Manifesto of the European Resistance. In this anti-fascist declaration, which bears the signatures of Léon Blum, Pastor Willem Visser 't Hooft and Altiero Spinelli, the resistance movements urged the creation of a federal union between the peoples of Europe. The text declared that the objectives of the Resistance could be attained only if all countries agreed to abandon the dogma of the absolute sovereignty of states and to accept integration into a federal organisation, which alone would be capable of ensuring the peaceful participation of the German people in European life. The Manifesto also argued the case for the establishment of a government that would be accountable to the peoples of the member states of the federation, for an army subject to the federal government and excluding all national contingents, and for a supreme court competent to rule on issues relating to the interpretation of the federal constitution and to resolve any possible disagreements between member states of the federation. Finally, the Geneva Declaration called for the implementation of universal values such as democracy, social justice and respect for human rights.

A Provisional Committee for the European Federation was also set up to act as a liaison office. On 7 July 1944, the participants in the Geneva international conference approved a new draft declaration of European resistance fighters which, disseminated in secret, secured majority support. In London, some intellectuals and politicians in exile were also thinking about the Europe of the future and drew up various plans for a European federation.

## **II. The influence of Christian culture**

Some Christian democrat groups were talking about European unity long before the Second World War. Some leaders lamented in particular the disappearance of the spiritual unity of Europe that had apparently existed in the Middle Ages. Others had been active in the pro-European movements of the 1920s. As a result, the Austrian intellectual and political writer, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, founder of the Paneuropean Union in 1923, mobilised Europe's intellectual and political elites in support of European integration. Deliberately setting himself above partisan schisms, in 1930 he proposed a draft pan-European pact and founded the Paneuropa movement, which was immediately joined by a good many conservative, liberal and Christian democrat politicians from a number of European countries. As their predecessor, he was a source of inspiration for the post-war federalists.

In the aftermath of the war, conservative circles were in a state of confusion. While many Christian democrats had fought for the Resistance, some Catholics had shown themselves to be extremely tolerant at times towards the fascist regimes in power in Italy, Austria and Slovakia. Some had even been drawn into collaborating with the German occupation forces. Furthermore, while the activities of the Resistance may have contributed to the birth of a strong feeling of European solidarity and a sense of Western civilisation's common Christian roots in the face of Nazi barbarism, they did not automatically lead to the idea of a supranational European political entity being established in the post-war period. The international strategy adopted by the Vatican at the end of the war entailed above all a systematic defence of Western Christian civilisation against the advance of communism. However, the Catholic Church approved the European federalist idea, provided that it did not

promote subversive ideas. Yet, on 11 November 1948, Pope Pius XII — a Roman steeped in German culture — expressed his fear of a moral and spiritual decadence in Europe and officially declared his support for the federalist movement. However, his support for the European cause was also based on an idealisation of the Christian Middle Ages, as illustrated by the elevation of Saint Benedict to the rank of ‘Patron Saint of all Europe’ in 1947, on the 14th centenary of his birth. Pius XII also sent a personal representative to the European Congress held in The Hague in May 1948. The Catholics supported European unification on economic, political and military grounds. The rural Catholic population and the conservatives, however, had reservations about abandoning the primacy of sovereignty too quickly. The growing threat of communist expansion confirmed the Christian democrats’ view that only a united and strengthened Europe within an Atlantic Alliance would be able to thwart Soviet ambitions. This aspiration was reinforced by the pro-European policy led by Christian statesmen (R. Schuman, K. Adenauer, A. De Gasperi, J. Bech, P. van Zeeland, J. Luns) and was also at the root of the expression ‘Vatican Europe’, which was used by some of their political rivals.

### **III. The impact of the Zurich address**

After the Conservatives’ defeat in the 1945 British elections, Winston Churchill, former Prime Minister and hero of the war that had just ended, turned into a keen supporter of Franco-German reconciliation. As leader of the Opposition, he made a united Europe his principal foreign policy objective. On several occasions during his visits to Europe and America, he expressed his views on the future of Europe. On 19 September 1946, at the University of Zurich, he gave a speech on European unity that caused a sensation. Churchill was actually the first eminent politician to take sides in a debate that until then had been the rather introverted battleground of a few activists. Momentarily free from any electoral constraints, Churchill aimed his speech specifically at world leaders.

In his speech, Churchill rehearsed well-worn arguments, but this time he gave them an unprecedented impact. By advocating Franco-German rapprochement and proposing ‘a kind of United States of Europe’ (but without the involvement of Great Britain), Churchill set the scene for a future federation of non-communist Western European nations. He declared himself in favour of a European third way, which might find its niche between the USA and the USSR. He also advocated the creation of a Council of Europe.

Winston Churchill’s Zurich speech may be deemed to be the true starting point for the tide of opinion in favour of a united post-war Europe. Indeed, at the same time, several militant associations were being formed across Europe, and they directly benefited from the impact of the Zurich speech to emerge from their media isolation.

### **IV. The emergence of the pro-European movements**

In 1945, at the time the United Nations (UN) was being formed, the idea of world federalism was becoming popular in America and Europe. The profound desire for peace united the peoples of the world and gave an impetus to certain national elites. The World Federalist



Movement advocated the introduction of world citizenship and a union of all democratic countries. In this respect it differed from the European federalists, who were striving for the creation of a Western European regional federation, while not rejecting the world perspective in the longer term. Supporters of total federalism believed that a federation of states must also be accompanied by a radical transformation of economic, social and cultural structures. The federalists wanted to establish a structure governed by the 'principle of subsidiarity', devolving to the regions and to the federal institutions those powers that could not be exercised legitimately or more effectively at national level.

Pro-European and federalist movements campaigned ever more actively in favour of European unification. Closely associated with financial circles and demonstrating allegiance to a particular political viewpoint or, on the contrary, seeking to mobilise the general public as a whole, these movements, some of which originated in the Resistance, came together to create the Liaison Committee of the Movements for European Unity on 20 July 1947 in Paris. It comprised the Independent League for European Cooperation (ILEC), led by former Belgian Prime Minister Paul van Zeeland, the Union of European Federalists (UEF), led by Henri Brugmans of the Netherlands, and Winston Churchill's United Europe Movement (UEM). The task was soon complicated, however, by personal and ideological differences. Hence the decision taken in Paris on 10 and 11 November 1947 to replace the Liaison Committee with an International Committee of the Movements for European Unity (ICMEU), which had its headquarters in London.

### **A. The Union of European Federalists (UEF)**

The Union of European Federalists (UEF) was officially founded on 15 and 16 December 1946 at the Paris headquarters of the French movement 'La Fédération'. The UEF immediately set about coordinating the activities of some 50 national federalist movements already in existence: Europeesche Actie, Europa Union, Federal Union, Movimento federalista europeo, etc. Among the most prominent figures were Henry Frenay, Eugen Kogon, Henri Brugmans, Alexandre Marc and Altiero Spinelli. The UEF quickly attracted almost 100 000 members. However, between 1947 and 1949, growing ideological opposition divided the movement. Loyal to the theory of a federal society, the integral federalists believed that the creation of European institutions had to go hand in hand with constitutional reform, moving towards greater regional decentralisation and corporatism. In this respect they clashed with those who refused to see the movement transformed into a political party and sought primarily to change public opinion in order to exert effective pressure on national parliaments and governments.

The UEF immediately launched several public campaigns in support of a constituent assembly mandated to draw up a European federal union pact. However, the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) in August 1954 widened the doctrinal rifts within the movement. A more pragmatic group wanted to continue the policy of raising popular awareness, with the aim of forcing governments to relinquish even more of their sovereignty. In contrast, an all-or-nothing group questioned the legitimacy of national governments and refused to put their trust in them. Finding themselves in a minority, the pragmatists left the movement and founded the 'Action européenne des fédéralistes' (AEF), or European Federalist Action, in November 1956. The UEF then became the European Federalist Movement (EFM). Subsequently, the federalists called consistently for the deepening of the European Communities. The development of the Gaullist arguments for intergovernmental cooperation during the 1960s led to the reunification of the Union of European Federalists in December 1971.



## **B. The united Europe of the socialists and the Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe (MSEUE)**

After the Liberation, the socialists updated their plans for a united Europe, which many of them had supported secretly through the Resistance during the war or even as far back as 1930 following in the footsteps of Aristide Briand and his celebrated plan for a European Federal Union. However, the socialists could not accept that the European idea be reduced merely to the restoration of a medieval Christian West. As a result, they condemned the threat of a 'Vatican Europe', described as a plot hatched by the Holy See, with the complicity of the European Christian democratic parties, to restore the foundations of a Christian Europe based on the medieval Holy Roman Empire. The socialists took the view that only democratic socialism offered an alternative to unbridled capitalism and totalitarian communism and that the immense difficulties associated with economic reconstruction could be resolved by compliance with the principles of justice, law, freedom and human dignity. They believed that a united Europe offered the advantage of efficiently slowing down the expansion of fascism and communism, while ensuring a lasting peace by interposing a third credible international force between the USA and the USSR. Some socialists advocated a united socialist Europe, as opposed to a Europe based on the interests of private capitalism under American influence. Others were more of the opinion that the various federalist and democratic movements must work together.

The Movement for the Socialist United States of Europe, whose President was André Philip, was born in Montrouge, near Paris, in June 1946, out of the will to create a socialist Europe independent of the USA and the USSR. It endeavoured to link up with the former internationalist tradition of the socialist parties, and its initial objective was to create a socialist programme for a united Europe. However, after the start of the Cold War, this ideological stance gradually gave way to a more cooperative approach, which led the movement to devote itself further to European integration. In 1947 it also changed its name to the Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe (MSEUE); this reflected its belief that Europe must first be created before the fight began for it to be socialist.

Its organisers praised European unification, but they could not envisage a united Europe without Germany and also without the participation of Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, particularly since they believed that those countries were more imbued with the socialist spirit than the Six that formed the 'mini-Europe'. With regard to economic issues, the MSEUE called for central planning of Europe's basic industries and investment, in order to enable underdeveloped European and overseas countries to achieve economic progress.

In the context of the Cold War, where tensions were increasing daily, most socialists came to give active support to the Marshall Plan for aid to Western Europe in 1947. The establishment of communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe finally led to many socialists distancing themselves from doctrinaire positions and actively supporting European integration based on the Western alliance, although they frequently remained divided over the way in which this was to be achieved and the degree of sovereignty that they were ready to concede.

## **C. The Nouvelles équipes internationales (NEI)**

The Nouvelles équipes internationales (New International Teams — NEI), officially founded

in June 1947 at Chaudfontaine, near Liège, was openly inspired by Christian democracy. It counted among its ranks such eminent Europeans as Robert Schuman, Georges Bidault, Alcide De Gasperi and Konrad Adenauer. The NEI was founded on the initiative of the French Popular Republican Robert Bichet, who was very quickly supported by the Belgian Désiré Lamalle and the leader of the Belgian Christian Socialist Party, Auguste de Schryver. The NEI was a fairly flexible association of individuals whose aim was to establish a Christian Democratic International. The movement was, nevertheless, accessible to non-Catholics if they accepted the guiding principle of social democracy.

Originally, the NEI was first and foremost conceived as a way of blocking the road to communism, and as a response to the Cominform, created by Stalin in October 1947 with the aim of ensuring regular contact between European communist parties. However, the NEI quickly saw European integration as the best way of defending the Christian values of Western Europe when faced with the Soviet bloc in a Cold War context. The NEI focused more on the social rather than the economic aspect of European integration, in this way remaining loyal to the Christian socialist doctrine that proclaims the primacy of the individual human being. The NEI carried out an intensive campaign aimed at the general public and particularly at young people. In 1965, it renamed itself the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD).

#### **D. The European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC)**

The European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC) was a European study and pressure group with liberal roots, created in autumn 1946 on the initiative of the former Belgian Prime Minister, Paul van Zeeland, and the Pole Joseph Retinger. Their aim was to create a transnational group — initially called the Independent League for European Cooperation (ILEC) — comprising European economic and political officials who wanted to defend the economic interests of the continent through the establishment of a European common market.

The League rapidly became a movement of European industrialists and financiers, although it did not turn into an employers' group. It also gradually opened up to trade union involvement. On numerous occasions, it served as a bridge between European economic circles, political circles and high-level administration. As it was not a mass movement, the ELEC preferred to seek expert advice for the issues of interest to it and to defend them directly before the European decision-makers. After its formation, the ELEC developed many projects concerning monetary integration, the organisation of transport, the harmonisation of social security systems and the establishment of a European energy policy.

#### **V. The first federalist congresses**

In the late 1940s, federalist initiatives followed on from each other in quick succession. Several congresses (including those in Montreux, The Hague and Gstaad) gave fresh impetus to federalist ideas. Many plans were drawn up along the lines of the European Constitution devised by the federalists Alexandre Marc and Altiero Spinelli. They envisaged a Europe in which states would be represented by a senate, while a European assembly, elected by universal suffrage, would exercise legislative power and scrutinise the activities of the European government. Economic policy, currency and defence issues were among the areas of competence that they proposed to delegate to federal institutions, with health, education

and the arts remaining in the hands of national, or even regional, authorities. The European Movement was created on 25 October 1948 and had its inaugural session in February 1949 in Brussels, at which it called for the adoption of a European charter of human rights and adopted the statute for a European court.

#### **A. The Congress of the Union of European Federalists in Montreux (27 to 31 August 1947)**

Federalist ideas, which sought to reduce state sovereignty, were debated between 27 and 31 August 1947 at the first Union of European Federalists (UEF) Congress, held in Montreux, Switzerland. The participation of several eminent figures and delegations demonstrated that there was a keen interest in federalist ideas. Sixteen countries were represented in Montreux, together with some 40 activist groups. The Montreux Congress also served to reaffirm the principle of regional federalism in contrast to the internationalist arguments which were very fashionable at that time. The resolution on general policy adopted by the Congress called for the creation of a European federal government. The participants also urged the convening of a mass event involving all the forces active in Europe. Less than a year later, this took the form of the Hague Congress.

#### **B. The Congress of the European Parliamentary Union in Gstaad (8 to 10 September 1947)**

The desire to turn federalist ideas into reality inspired some members of parliament to create pro-European groups within national parliaments. For example, in February 1947, British MPs formed the Federalist Group of the House of Commons. Three months later, Winston Churchill became leader of the United Europe Movement, which assembled senior British politicians and businessmen who advocated a fairly flexible European confederation modelled on the British Commonwealth. Then, on 19 June 1947, on the initiative of the Union of European Federalists (UEF), French MPs formed the French Federalist Parliamentary Group. Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands soon followed suit.

In July 1947, at a conference held in Gstaad, Switzerland, these pro-European parliamentary groups met for the first time under the name of the European Parliamentary Union (EPU). This event was the result of an initiative undertaken by Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, the charismatic founder and organiser of the Paneuropean Union in the interwar years. In October 1946, he had sent a questionnaire to more than 4 000 Western European members of parliament about the establishment of a European federation within the framework of the United Nations. He received many positive replies, and that quickly led him to consider setting up a cross-party parliamentary committee in each House, responsible for appointing a European Congress that might act as a precursor to a true Council of Europe, for which Coudenhove had been calling for nearly 30 years.

Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi organised the first EPU Congress from 8 to 10 September 1947, once again in Gstaad. One hundred and fourteen members of parliament and senators from ten European countries debated the most effective ways of promoting European federalism. They decided to act through federal parliamentary groups and to draw up a draft European constitution that was either federal or confederal in nature and would provide for an executive, a legislature and a judiciary, as well as a common European currency.

### **C. The Congress of Europe in The Hague (7 to 10 May 1948)**

Between 7 and 10 May 1948, a great international Congress of Europe took place in The Hague, under the honorary chairmanship of Winston Churchill. The International Committee of the Movements for European Unity had invited nearly 800 eminent figures from most Western European countries, including politicians (members of parliament and ministers), leaders of employers' organisations and trade unions, journalists, and intellectuals. Seventeen countries were represented, and observers from Eastern Europe and the USA also attended. The largest delegations came from France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany. This was an ambitious Congress which set itself three objectives: to demonstrate the existence, in all free countries of Europe, of a body of public opinion in support of European unity; to discuss the challenges posed by European unity and propose practical solutions to governments; and to give new impetus to the international publicity campaign.

Most of the plenary sessions of this 'States-General' of Europe were chaired by Anthony Eden and Paul van Zeeland. The work of the Congress was divided among three committees: an Economic and Social Committee, a Political Committee and a Cultural Committee. Throughout the debates, two different ideological trends were evident: the French, Belgians, Italians, Dutch and most of the trade unionists took the federalist line, whereas the British and the Scandinavians declared themselves unionists, in favour of European rapprochement administered by governments and parliaments.

The Economic and Social Committee called for the progressive abolition of quantitative barriers to trade, for currency convertibility, resource planning, labour mobility, coordination of economic policies and the promotion of full employment. The Political Committee spent much time discussing the creation of a European Assembly elected by universal suffrage. It called on the European states to pool some of their sovereign rights and their resources and made the case for a united Europe open to Germany. The Cultural Committee called for the adoption of a Charter of Fundamental Rights, a Supreme Court, and the creation of a European centre for children, youth and culture. Several aspirations voiced at the Hague Congress became reality in the following months: the European Centre for Culture, the College of Europe, the Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights.

### **VI. The European Movement**

Given the success of the Hague Congress, the organising body — the International Committee of the Movements for European Unity — decided to take the experiment one stage further and became the European Movement (EM) on 25 October 1948. It aimed to coordinate the activities of the various existing international organisations and to represent them in their relations with governments. The EM was a private organisation comprising 26 national councils, including 11 national committees of exiles from Central Europe and Spain. All came under an international council, executive bureau and secretariat. The EM aimed to look at the political, economic, technical and cultural problems posed by European union and also to inform and mobilise public opinion in favour of European integration. Its first honorary presidents were Léon Blum, Winston Churchill, Alcide De Gasperi, Paul-Henri Spaak, Robert Schuman, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and Konrad Adenauer.

The six founding movements were the European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC), the Liberal Movement for a United Europe (MLEU), the Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe (MSEUE), the Nouvelles équipes internationales (New International Teams — NEI), the Union of European Federalists (UEF) and the Centre for Federalist Action (CAF). They were later joined by the European Parliamentary Union (EPU), the European Association of Teachers (AEDE), the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Association of European Journalists (AEJ) and the International Federation of European Houses (FIME). The European Movement soon adopted a flag bearing a green ‘E’ on a white background.

It was ideologically very active and organised many events on specific themes. From 25 to 28 February 1949, the first Brussels Political Congress defined individual, family and social rights which might be guaranteed in law by a European Charter of Human Rights. It also reviewed procedures for the appointment of delegates to the European Consultative Assembly and adopted the statute for a European Court.

Two months later, in April 1949, the Westminster Economic Conference discussed monetary issues and laid the foundations for a future European Payments Union. The Congress participants were in favour of the pooling of basic industries and also discussed the setting up of a European Economic and Social Committee.

In December 1949, the European Conference on Culture in Lausanne resulted in the establishment of the European Centre for Culture and the College of Europe in Bruges.

In July 1950, the Rome Social Welfare Conference drew up a plan for the harmonisation of European social security systems and proposed the creation of a European Commissariat for Labour and Population, as well as a European fund for reconstruction and development. Other international conferences followed, successively examining the integration of Germany into a united Europe, the relations between the Europe being built and the Commonwealth, and the situation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The EM pursued an intensive publicity campaign, particularly through the European Youth Campaign.

To ensure that its views were heard, the European Movement International provided a stream of information aimed at political, economic, social and cultural leaders. The general public was not overlooked: public debates were held and a great many publications funded, including the monthly journal *Nouvelles de l'Europe*. Therefore, despite experiencing ideological, human and material difficulties, in the early 1950s the European Movement constituted a tremendous moral force that enabled the European idea to move on to the next stage of initial practical achievements.