

FRENCH VIEWS ON EUROPEAN UNION¹

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FRENCH opinion was prepared to give an enthusiastic welcome to the idea of a union of the Continent of Europe. It is an old Christian and humanist ideal which, ever since the sixteenth century, has been upheld by France more than by any other nation.

Mr Winston Churchill, in one of his speeches at the recent Congress of Europe at the Hague, generously recalled the fact that the first plan of this kind, *Le Grand Dessein*, was drawn up in the seventeenth century by Sully, Henry IV's loyal minister, a few years after the king's death. The idea was later taken up again by the Abbé de St-Pierre in the eighteenth century, by Napoleon and Proudhon in the nineteenth century, and by Briand a few years ago. But it was above all Paul Valéry, who, just after the First World War, pointed out the new and decisive reasons which made union of the Continent of Europe an absolute necessity. Europe had lost her former pre-eminence, which derived from things of the mind and spirit: 'The classification of the habitable regions of the world tends to become such that the different areas of the globe are ranked solely in relation to sheer physical size and statistical facts and figures—population, surface area, raw materials'. From this angle, Europe was no more than 'a headland of Asia'. This development was the result of our own dissensions, not of historical necessity. 'The wretched Europeans preferred to play at Armagnacs and Burgundians rather than to assume throughout the world the great role that the Romans were able to assume and to retain for centuries in the world of their day. Their numbers and resources were as nothing compared to our own; but they found in their oracles more just and logical ideas than are contained in all our political theories.'

If we had listened to these prophetic words, if we had known how to answer the anguished appeal of Chancellor Brüning, speaking as the voice of a bewildered Germany on the eve of being submerged by the wave of Brown Shirts, in short, if we had been able to organize Europe before Hitler's accession to power, it is likely that the course of history would have been changed. Once Nazi Germany had been crushed it should have been clear to everyone, although twenty years earlier only a few far-sighted people had been able to perceive it, that Europe, whose regression was still further accentuated, could only recover her equilibrium by becoming united.

ADVANTAGES TO BE EXPECTED. At the present time, all Frenchmen interested in public affairs expect the reorganization of our continent to

¹ Translated from the French by Anthea Mills.

bring the following advantages, as should have been discerned as early as the end of 1944.

(1) Liberated France (it was then evident) would not recover her former strength; she would no longer play her traditional role in the affairs of the world; even the shaping of her own destiny seemed about to be decided by others. This state of affairs had a deeply discouraging effect on public opinion, and the younger generation, refusing instinctively to accept such degradation, turned to seek this lost greatness where they hoped to find it, in foreign countries. According to their social background, their ideas and aspirations, they dreamt either of the Russian steppes or of the skyscrapers of Manhattan.

In order to restore public confidence and to put a stop to this yearning for other countries, we had to show the rising generation that there was a job to be done worthy of their ambitions and to give them their place in a really great community, no longer attainable by one nation, but only by a free association of peoples.

(2) It is common knowledge that in France the values of civilization are accorded great importance. These values, which were evolved by the Western peoples and which in return became the foundation for the prestige and authority of Europe, are now threatened. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century they have always been acknowledged and have spread throughout the whole world and become universal, but now they have been rejected by Russia and seem, rightly or wrongly, to have become corrupted in the United States. In the very lands which gave them birth it becomes more difficult every day to defend them against the new forms of civilization which draw strength from the numbers and discipline of those who live under them. A united Europe would be able to throw aside the complexes which have paralysed her since the liberation and would rediscover the creative forces which animated her for four centuries.

The leaders of French opinion hold that these two general sociological arguments are as decisive as the more concrete ones which have been put forward all over the Continent in favour of a United Europe.

(3) Our divided continent feels that it is fighting in the position of the Curiatii. Each State is too weak to talk on equal terms with its great rivals, particularly with Russia. It is probable that if a beginning had been made at the end of 1947 in outlining a union of the Continent, Beneš and Jan Masaryk would have resisted Communist pressure, the *putsch* of Prague would have been avoided, and the Iron Curtain would not have fallen between Bohemia and the West. Conversely, Italy's success in the spring of 1948 in surmounting the test of the elections was partly due to the fact that she was able to count on the support not only of the United States but also of Great Britain and France.

France knows that after the liberation her destiny hung by a thread. At that time, Russia and the extreme left enjoyed great prestige. De Gaulle, moreover, was opposed to a Franco-British *rapprochement* and would him-

self have hastened catastrophe if his great authority had not enabled him to control the impatience of the Communists. We only narrowly missed disaster. France is well aware that every precaution must be taken to avoid a recurrence of this contingency.

European reorganization may also be looked on as a means of defence against possible American interference. The United States have certainly given evidence of their generosity and political wisdom in treating with Europe as a whole and not with each of its component States. They have thus renounced any idea of establishing protectorates as they might have done. Nevertheless, they have kept up continuous pressure to secure the participation of American interests in European affairs. This was evident in June 1948 at the time of the negotiation of the bilateral agreements. The States concerned were able to resist, thanks to their united front. In future this unity should be permanent and organic. Let me quote Valéry again; summing up our quarrels he showed foresight in saying: 'Europe clearly aspires to be governed by an American commission'.

The same considerations apply to the overseas dependent territories. The colonial Powers are no longer in a position to assert their authority over their dependent peoples; the latter have developed a longing for emancipation, while their rulers have grown weak. If the big nations unite they will recover their power, their prestige, and their cohesion; and the separatist movements will at once be weakened.

I should be making a grave omission if I failed to mention in this paper, in all frankness, the sorrow and amazement felt by the French when they found to their detriment, on the morrow of victory, that no sense of common interest existed among the Allies. The Americans undermined French authority in Indochina, and that of the Dutch in Indonesia, by lavishing encouragement on the natives and giving them arms. The English profited by our mistakes to throw us out of Syria and Lebanon. Every Frenchman thinks that these actions were not only morally inadmissible but that they constituted a serious mistake, the consequences of which will adversely affect the whole Western community. The Americans, however, quickly recognized their error and stopped giving support to the rebels in South-East Asia. The only country to profit by their policy was Russia. It is not for a Frenchman to prejudge the future effects of British policy towards the Arab League; at all events it is certain that the first condition for agreement between our two countries is that we should be given a formal assurance as regards North Africa, where we must have a free hand.

(4) European reorganization would lessen the risk of war. Europe would no longer be open to foreign penetration, and this would lessen competition between the two great Powers. As an area destined to become a battlefield in any new war, Europe would affirm its desire for peace, and by demonstrating its spirit of conciliation it would dissipate the mutual suspicion which now poisons the international atmosphere. Finally, in the last resort, its military strength would, if necessary, command the respect of any aggressor.

There has been much talk in France of the creation of 'an International Third Force', by analogy with our internal political situation where a 'Third Force', composed of Socialists, M.R.P., and a section of the Radicals, is able to withstand both Communists and R.P.F. This phrase is confusing, since all Frenchmen know that relations with the United States are on quite a different footing from those with Russia. There can be no question of preserving an equal balance between the two great Powers. But, by asserting its own individuality and proving that its policy is not directed by the United States, Europe might overcome the prejudices of Russia, now tangled in a complex of suspicion.

(5) It is unnecessary to insist on the economic advantages which are probably appreciated in much the same way by French and English.

The increase in the size of the market will help to remedy the fundamental disequilibrium of international trade which has been encouraged and developed by the existence of so many small economic units. Similarly, the enlargement of the channels of trade will permit the development of research services and the increase of mass production, at least in those branches of industry where the law of increasing returns still operates. Lastly, the advantages of unification will be particularly significant in the reconstruction period, since they will make it possible to avoid duplication which to begin with involves waste, then vain competition and, later on, crises. Socialists and Liberals have been equally struck by the fact that, at a time when wealth can only increase within the framework of a large-scale economic area, each European State has set up at its frontiers a veritable Chinese wall, constituted less by the time-worn practice of customs duties than by import and export licences and exchange controls.

Frenchmen have also realized that European union can indirectly bring other advantages. They know that the formation of such a union is the condition made by the Americans for continuing to help them. Not only their future prosperity, therefore, is at stake, but the maintenance of their standard of living and their chances of recovery.

(6) Finally, most Frenchmen are now beginning to understand that the German problem which, rightly or wrongly, seems to them one of the most serious problems of our time, can only be solved by looking at Europe as a whole. I shall deal later with this question on which French views definitely diverge from those of the English.

WHY HAS THE IDEA OF A UNITED EUROPE TAKEN SO LONG TO SECURE ACCEPTANCE? Most of these advantages, which are now familiar to all intelligent Frenchmen, should have been realized directly after the liberation. It is, however, a fact that for some years no one has thought much about Europe as a whole, and the idea has been accepted with difficulty. Only a handful of men were aware of the problem in the spring of 1946, and we had to wait for the summer of 1947 to obtain the agreement of some political leaders. Progress did not become rapid until the beginning of

1948, and we had to wait for the Congress of Europe at the Hague, in May 1948, which was attended by French statesmen and the most influential journalists, before the last resistance was overcome and the idea received popular support. Why this delay?

The idea of a United Europe was slow to emerge, because until quite recently it came up against three obstacles: the German obstacle, the American obstacle, and the Russian obstacle. It is an unfortunate fact that Germany used this ideal as a cover for her aim of dominating Europe. Thus for four years the idea was vitiated through its adoption by collaborators thinking to find in it an excuse and justification for their acts. It fell into bad odour and only recovered its savour when sponsored by the oldest and most indomitable enemies of Hitler: Churchill, Smuts, and de Gaulle.

But the removal of the German obstacle did not affect the equally serious obstacle of the attitudes of the two great Powers. The Yalta agreement, which we are now beginning to realize was the gravest political blunder since Munich, had divided the world between the United States and Russia. We thought therefore that these two Powers would never allow the formation of a third Power. Fortunately we were wrong as regards the United States; or rather, the Americans were probably quick to realize how great a mistake Roosevelt had made. Europe, divided, poor, and driven to desperation, would inevitably have succumbed to Communist pressure. The West would have been swallowed up. It was then that General Marshall made his historic offer of 5 June 1947, and radically altered the international situation. The United States, far from being opposed to the unification of Europe, asked, even required, that it should be carried through. The march forward had begun.

On the other hand, Europe, supported by the United States, met with the continual hostility of the Russians, who calculated that the poverty and isolation of the Western nations was a powerful asset to them. This hostility became still greater after the Marshall offer. European union was an obstacle to Russian ambition, and all the more so when it was sponsored by the United States. There is no doubt that it was Soviet opposition, and, as a necessary corollary, that of the Western Communists, that was for so long the main obstacle. The prestige of Russia, the almost holy terror she inspired in her allies, were such that after the liberation no political leader could have considered adopting an attitude which might annoy the Kremlin. In France, the three-party system, so long as it was in being, prevented the matter from even being raised. The M.R.P., spell-bound by the extreme left, stuck close to the Socialists, and the Socialists stuck close to the Communists. A frown from Thorez or Duclos at that time was dreaded almost as much as even Stalin's displeasure.

Gradually, however, the political leaders came to understand that the Russians and the Communists would oppose not only certain particular policies but any measure of recovery with which Russia was not directly associated and which did not increase her prestige and authority. But they

could not help realizing that Marshall Aid was indispensable. In the end, the brutality and clumsiness of Soviet actions completed the change in the situation. The way in which the Eastern countries were brought to heel, the assassination of Petkov, the dismissal of King Michael, the formation of the Cominform, the *putsch* of Prague, Jan Masaryk's suicide, and the daily arrival of left-wing democrats passing through the Iron Curtain in flight from oppression, convinced even the most ardent Socialists that no compromise was possible with the Stalin régime.

The way is now completely clear, at least since the beginning of 1948. Nevertheless, months have been lost.

The delay is undoubtedly due to the fact that the conception of a United Europe, although familiar to many of us now, has not yet acquired driving force. A new and unaccustomed notion, it has not yet penetrated our sub-consciousness. For Frenchmen it is simply one idea amongst many others; and so, when some technical problem comes before us we do not at once realize that often it can be solved only in a continental setting. Until we revolutionize our way of thinking we shall be prevented by our automatic mental reactions from finding revolutionary solutions.

France, with England, must lead the way, but our country, like its ally, wielded until recently such power and made decisions of such importance in international affairs, that it hesitates to forge links with other countries involving a sacrifice of sovereignty, without taking account of the fact that it no longer possesses the financial and military power to settle questions unilaterally. Public opinion is still imbued with an instinctive spirit of nationalism. The delaying action exerted by professional diplomats is particularly marked. In fact, diplomats—possibly the case is not confined to France—are unimaginative men who allow themselves to move with the times while walking backwards.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that French political leaders, who are better informed than the general public and less hide-bound than the diplomats, were the first to commit themselves to the cause of European unity, and went further than others. All the well-known names in French politics can be quoted: the President of the Republic, M. Vincent Auriol; the President of the National Assembly, Edouard Herriot; Pierre-Henri Teitgen, François de Menthon, Paul Coste-Floret, who are former M.R.P. Ministers; Léon Blum, André Philip, Pierre-Olivier Lapie, Socialists; Bastid, Mitterand, and Edouard Bonnefous from the *Rassemblement des Gauches*; Laniel, from the P.R.L.; Pléven, Capitant, and Michelet from the Gaullist group. Special mention should be made of Paul Reynaud and Paul Ramadier. Paul Reynaud put forward the boldest proposal made at the Hague Congress—the immediate election by universal suffrage of a European assembly, each deputy to represent a million inhabitants. Paul Ramadier, who was president of the Political Commission of the Hague Congress, proposed on 18 August 1948 that the French Government should take the initiative in recommending the formation of a European assembly,

and secured the concurrence of the French Government on the same day.

The French governmental changes, which in other respects are so depressing, can therefore no longer cause a change in policy since the leaders of all parties are of one mind. It is worth mentioning here that even M. Bidault, who with one short interruption carried the burden of Minister of Foreign Affairs from the liberation until July 1948, and followed throughout that period a cautious policy of maintaining the balance between East and West, revised his attitude at the last moment and at the Five Power meeting at the Hague in July 1948 put forward an initial proposal for a European assembly.

There is no longer any observable difference in attitude between the Socialists and the parties to their right. The reason why the Socialists held back longer than the others was because they were unwilling to antagonize the Communists and Russia or to embarrass the British Labour Party, which showed reserve towards a move coming from Mr Winston Churchill. But now they are completely independent of the extreme left and the U.S.S.R. and they attach such importance to the European cause that they consider it impossible to remain passive any longer. Thus the Co-ordinating Committee for European Unity enjoys the active support of many Socialist leaders.

GENERAL VIEWS. At the beginning many informed Frenchmen believed that European union could be established little by little, in empirical fashion, through the alignment of the policies of the different nations and through diplomatic agreements which would gradually become more far-reaching and more precise.

This idea has now been generally given up. The programme has become more ambitious. European union must have a juridical basis, it must be given a constitution and take the form of a federal State, with the legislative power belonging to European assemblies one of which, it is surmised, must sooner or later be elected by universal suffrage. The plan drawn up by the International Committee of the Movements for European Unity and adopted by the French Government represents the first stage on a road which must clearly be a long one; to begin with, the assembly will be purely consultative and will consist of delegations from the national parliaments.

How can this attitude be explained? It is a recognized fact that the French are ideologists and jurists with a long tradition of written constitutions. If they are to believe in European union they need to know its structure, and they naturally transpose their national institutions on to the continental plane. But their attitude also has a positive basis. They have seen how slow are the workings of the empirical method, that is, the customary diplomatic procedure, and have no difficulty in discovering the underlying causes.

If every problem has to be settled round the conference table, the union

of Europe will never be accomplished. The convening of meetings, the discussions, the ratifications waste too much time. The economic problems, in particular, involve numerous, frequent, and complicated decisions which cannot wait on the slow procedure of diplomatic negotiation. The difficulties arising from the varying régimes in each country and the complexities of economic controls can be surmounted only if a new procedure is evolved.

Last but not least, diplomacy uses the method of unanimity: that is, a convention only binds those who have signed and ratified it. But the interests of the eighteen countries of Europe are very divergent. It follows that there the method of diplomacy involves inevitable delays, compromises and set-backs which prevent any rational organization of the Continent. In short, it means the system of treaties and that of the *liberum veto* which paralysed the old Diet of Poland and now nullifies the work of the United Nations. It is not by following these pitiable examples that we shall build the new Europe.

The system of the majority vote must therefore be adopted, subject to care being taken that the small States by forming coalitions do not systematically block action by the bigger nations and, conversely, that the latter do not establish a virtual protectorate over their neighbours. There should thus, according to the classic rules of the federal State, be two assemblies at the head of Europe, the consent of both being necessary for all decisions: a lower chamber whose members would be elected by universal suffrage, the number of representatives of each country being in proportion to its population (for example, one deputy to a million inhabitants), and a much smaller upper chamber in which all the States would be equally represented. This scheme was accepted by the Congress of the European Parliamentary Union at its meeting at Interlaken in September 1948. It would be unwise to say that many Frenchmen as yet hold such precise views as those just outlined, but undoubtedly logical considerations will lead them towards a system of this type.

In these circumstances it may seem astonishing that the Reynaud proposal for the election of a European assembly by universal suffrage only received a tiny number of votes at the Congress of Europe at the Hague, even from the French delegation. This lack of success was due to a whole series of reasons:

(1) The federalists, although representing the most extreme opinion, voted against the proposal, not only through personal dislike of M. Paul Reynaud, who in their eyes represents out of date capitalism, but also because his proposal was placed in a setting of centralized parliamentary government which they could not accept.

(2) The M.R.P. and the Socialists fight shy of elections at the moment because they know that the majority in Parliament no longer corresponds to the majority of opinion in the country. Every election brings added strength to the Gaullists and a parallel weakening of the parties forming

the government majority. It was this fear which caused the Departmental elections due in October 1948 to be postponed until March 1949.

This pre-occupation is not an edifying one. In fact, however, the attitude of the Socialists and M.R.P. at the Hague was probably wise, since an electoral campaign for a European assembly would certainly be fought on false issues. In France, so little importance is as yet attached to the European problem by the masses and political passions are so lively that the candidates would be standing not for or against Europe, but for or against General de Gaulle. In these circumstances, M. Paul Reynaud's main objective, to introduce the French masses to European problems, would not be achieved.

(3) The proposal was rejected by all those prudent people who, though approving it in principle, feared that such a revolutionary decision would do more harm than good to the cause of European Union. The plan would, in fact, have roused the suspicion of Foreign Offices and Governments and especially of the different parliaments which would have been afraid of finding themselves faced with a dangerous competitor.

(4) Above all it should be said that the French realized that the British delegates were absolutely opposed to the idea; if they had voted for the election of an assembly by universal suffrage it would have cut them off from Great Britain. Now, all Frenchmen know that concerted action on the part of our two countries is indispensable if European union is to be achieved. France is therefore resolved to make considerable concessions if they will serve the common cause, but naturally she assumes that Great Britain in return will accept the need for a minimum of European institutions.

It is true that the Commonwealth does not possess any basic institutions. There is no Imperial assembly, and the English are naturally inclined to think that a European union could be established on the model of the Commonwealth. But the two positions are not comparable. The Commonwealth is the result of the relaxation of old ties which were once very close; Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and parts of South Africa were peopled by men coming from the British Isles, and they have retained the same language and customs. They all feel themselves part of one and the same family, inheritors of one and the same tradition; there is no need to sign documents or seek arbitration between father and son or between two brothers.

The problem of Europe appears in a very different light. True, we all share a common civilization. But the nations of Europe have for centuries been sovereign States, jealous of their independence, and their national feeling and politics have continually led them to oppose each other as rivals, over frontier quarrels and in wars. It is not easy to abolish such a past, and it cannot simply be erased by an effort of good will on all sides. Common institutions are therefore needed to put the seal on our unity, and the system of majority rule seems unavoidable if we are to decide between

opposing views which, in the absence of some system of arbitration, would be irreconcilable.

But although Frenchmen are united in desiring strong institutions, there are serious differences of opinion on the nature of those institutions. This point was touched on in connexion with the opposition to Paul Reynaud's proposal at the Hague. The question is important and is little known in England because it is peculiar to France.

While it is true that there is no serious difference of opinion between left and right, from the Socialists to the P.R.L., fierce opposition has developed between parliamentarians and federalists. The politicians, and with them the majority of Frenchmen, see in the European problem a fundamental question, but one which, in their eyes, should be resolved in accordance with traditional constitutional principles; for the federalists, on the contrary, the constitution of Europe should be integrated with a series of very far-reaching reforms. Political and even economic life should be decentralized and based on the region, the Department, the parish, and even the individual factory, and power should be removed from the chambers now elected by direct or indirect universal suffrage, and given to assemblies reflecting more comprehensively the diversity of social life. Not only should individuals be represented in them but also the trades and professions, voluntary social institutions, universities, spiritual congregations, etc. This corporative theory is advocated by men coming from the most diverse backgrounds. An alliance has sprung up between elements coming from the Catholic and Conservative right, anxious to resurrect the tradition of corporate bodies which was broken at the Revolution, and left-wing anarchists some of whom come from the ranks of Communism.

The existence of this body of dissenters raises grave problems and has already caused much friction. For most republicans their attitude is unpleasantly reminiscent of Fascism. The federalists deny this and say that Fascism is the very opposite of their ideas, since the Fascist corporations were dominated and fashioned by the State which should, in their view, have issued from the corporations. This reply certainly contains an element of truth, but it is nevertheless a fact that the society of which the federalists dream is unpleasantly close to the French *ancien régime* and to the Portugal of Salazar. However this may be, the federalists carry on a lively propaganda for the constitution of a social and professional European assembly and are angry at their failure at the Hague when all their amendments were rejected one after the other.

The federalists are not very numerous, but they are the people who have until now campaigned with the greatest ardour for the idea of European union. At the same time they are very energetic in defending their own ideas and are not afraid of keeping up the aggressive spirit of their followers by attacking the parliamentarians, particularly those of the right, and even ridiculing them. So far they have always been in a minority, but there is some reason to fear that an alliance may be formed between them

and the Gaullist movement, which is becoming increasingly anti-parliamentarian. If this alliance became a fact, great conflict would be inevitable. But a victory of such an alliance would be fruitless, since the movement is peculiar to France, and the only result would be to isolate France and thereby to slow up the progress of European reorganization.

CONCRETE PROBLEMS. What, in the French view, should be the limits of Europe? At all events Russia will be excluded. This statement, though apparently simple, needs elaboration, as its meaning has altered with the passage of time.

Until the Marshall offer and its rejection by Stalin, certain politicians preserved a cautious attitude towards the idea of European union because they did not believe that the U.S.S.R. could be excluded from such an organization. All the geography text-books tell us that Europe extends as far as the Urals. If Russia were invited to take part she might be tempted to accept. It would be too absurd to open the gates of the sheep fold and let in the wolf. After the Marshall offer had been rejected by the U.S.S.R., the attitude generally taken up, even in the most determinedly anti-Soviet circles, was that the association would be open to all, but it was assumed that Russia would not wish to join. Thus the Communists and the U.S.S.R. would have no grounds for protest. It was a dangerous game, however, since Russia was quite capable of reversing her policy as she has so often done. To-day, however, these risks no longer exist. Public opinion has hardened, and it is generally agreed in France that only democratic nations which respect the rights of man can be admitted into the union.

Some politicians, rightly, it seems, look at the problem from a wider angle. They say that even if Russia returned to a régime of liberal institutions she would carry too much weight in the federation for it to be possible to accept her as a member. An association of nations, if it is not to degenerate into a disguised protectorate, implies a certain balance of forces between the participating States; it is in any case out of the question for one of the associated States to be more powerful than all the others put together.

This difficulty does not arise with the States of Eastern Europe now under Russian control. The French consider therefore that if these countries should regain their independence they should recover their place at the family board and that this place should be reserved for them. Everyone is agreed on this. France has long possessed close cultural ties with the eastern countries. Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Roumania have been ever faithful allies to France. Objectively speaking, it is also pointed out that if these countries felt that they had been abandoned by Western Europe they would finish up sooner or later by allowing themselves to be absorbed into Russia. Lastly, from the economic point of view, Europe will not find its equilibrium until the industrial countries of the Continent can freely exchange their manufactured products against the

foodstuffs of the agricultural countries. The interests of West and East therefore complement each other in the most harmonious way, and it is to be hoped that this circumstance will lead the satellites of the U.S.S.R. to turn their eyes more and more towards the West. Russia also, if she can bring herself to realize that she is not threatened, might be induced to yield to the pressure put on her by her present protégés, and a bridge might be built between the two worlds.

Similarly Spain could not be admitted to membership of the federation until her dictatorship had been abolished.

The German problem is more complex. There is no doubt that the great bulk of French opinion is very suspicious of a nation which has invaded their country three times in seventy years and has shown ever-increasing brutality and cruelty. The English must understand the extreme sensitiveness of the French on this point; they underwent four years of an occupation which was alternately cynical and hypocritical, and they cannot forget the shooting of hostages, the torturing, the deportations, and the long-drawn-out agony of the patriots penned up in Büchenwald, Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, and Ravensbrück.

The French have, therefore, an instinctive repugnance against association with their enemies of yesterday whom they suspect of having unavowed ambitions. They are also afraid that with the size of her population, and the discipline and hard-working qualities of her labour, Germany may succeed in dominating Europe under cover of the federation. Despite the crushing of the Third Reich, Hitler's programme would thus be realized thanks to the action of the victors.

Nevertheless, the French understand that European union cannot be constructed without Germany. They also have an obscure feeling that it is not possible to hold down a great nation by sheer force. This policy failed after 1918 at a time when France's international authority and military power were incomparably greater than they are now. Even Poincaré's obstinacy could not prevent the gradual whittling away of the Treaty of Versailles. A return to the old policy is made all the more impossible by the fact that the rivalry between East and West is leading Americans, British, and Russians to compete for German friendship.

The realists therefore have to admit that there is only one solution to the German problem: to include the former Reich in the proposed European federation. However, the mixed feelings of the French lead many of them to ask that several German States should be formed, each completely independent and without any special juridical or economic links, and directly attached to the European federation. This is the thesis put forward by General de Gaulle and by several politicians close to him, particularly Professor Capitant. On the other hand, the left, particularly M. Léon Blum, favours a liberal policy very close to that of Britain. True, the left, like the right, fears a revival of pan-Germanism; but they ask if the imposition on Germany of a régime which she does not want would not

be just the course most calculated to feed German nationalism. Already the system of military occupation has done much harm with the friction it involves and the bitterness it arouses. Since these two policies are mutually contradictory, a courageous choice must be made between a policy of coercion and one of confidence. We shall not be able to prevent the re-emergence of a certain measure of German unity. The more quickly we accept this risk, and with good grace, the greater will be our chance of seeing the Germans themselves set up a democratic and decentralized Germany.

The writer of this paper, although not a Socialist, has defended these ideas for more than two years. He is, however, obliged to admit, quite objectively, that they have not yet made any deep impression on public opinion. It is particularly striking to see that M. Léon Blum always puts forward his ideas in cautious and veiled language and that the question has never yet been tested at public meetings. Those who defend this liberal position would indeed be caught between the simultaneous fire of Gaullists and Communists. Moreover, it is not certain that even the Socialist Party is agreed on this policy. Time, however, is working for it. Every day more Frenchmen come to realize that in the present state of the world the German danger by itself no longer exists, but only the risk of Russo-German collusion, and that everything must be done to avoid such a catastrophe.

As regards the other countries of the Continent no serious problem exists, and there is general agreement in thinking that the greater the number of member States in the European union, the more prosperous, powerful, and better-balanced it will be. No one, however, overlooks the difficulty of obtaining the agreement of so many States on such a revolutionary programme. For various reasons it seems that the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland in particular will remain aloof for a long time.

Even if certain countries did remain outside, this should not be an insurmountable obstacle. To start with, a more restricted group could be formed, if necessary, and other similarly inclined States could join in later. But if the group is to have any useful effect it must include at the start the most highly civilized nations, whose fidelity to democratic institutions has been tested, who trust each other, and whose economic potential is high. This is explained in the memorandum drawn up by the International Coordinating Committee and adopted by the French Government on M. Paul Ramadier's suggestion. The initiative should be taken by the signatories to the Brussels Pact, that is Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Great Britain, and France. This plan seems worthy of consideration by reason of its prudence and responsible character.

It would, however, be dangerous to start from too narrow a basis. For this reason the projected economic union between France and Italy has been greeted with reserve. The average Frenchman, in spite of his liking for individual Italians, is more reserved in his attitude towards Italy as a country; he cannot forget the unworthy stab in the back of June 1940. The

French, also a Latin people, are aware of their faults and know that they can only acquire the political stability they lack by uniting themselves with northern peoples of cooler temperament. Therefore they feel some apprehension at the idea of union with Italy; marriage between cousins german is not advisable. Moreover, a Franco-Italian bloc would be economically unbalanced. Italy would absorb part of the coal we produce, and which even now is not enough for our own needs. She would not be able to make up any of our deficits. On the contrary, she would send us cars and Mediterranean products (fruit, wines, etc.) which we normally export ourselves.

To sum up, the idea of Franco-Italian economic union seems destined to bring much disappointment. Italian participation in the Brussels group, on the other hand, would have many advantages; it would increase the size of the combined market and bring a useful diversification of production and consumption.

Europe, however, cannot be self-sufficient. The density of its population, its climate, its poverty in natural resources, have for long led it to develop trade relations with the rest of the world. It became dependent on foreign countries for most of its raw materials and part of its foodstuffs, making up the deficit in its balance of payments by exporting manufactured goods. Europe cannot therefore follow a policy of self-sufficiency. On the contrary, it must try to preserve and tighten up the links binding it to its overseas territories.

France attaches much importance to her overseas dependencies and does not envisage having to choose between Europe and what used to be called her empire. She anticipates the British attitude to be similar to her own. Naturally, such an extension of Europe would cause difficulties. There is no problem in the case of Algeria, Guiana, the Antilles, and Réunion, which from the administrative point of view rank as ordinary French Departments like Corsica, the Rhône, or the Pas-de-Calais. A similar régime will probably be evolved for those African territories which are too backward to become members of the European federation in their own right.

The Indo-Chinese federation, Tunisia, and Morocco, however, will have to be given special treatment. These territories, perhaps with limited rights, might be directly represented in the federation. They would also form part of the combined economic area. France would retain some political responsibility, but in her commercial relations with them she would give up any régime of preference which would be contrary to the basic principles of free exchange.

France hopes, therefore, that Holland, Belgium, and Great Britain will adopt a similar policy. She realizes that there are special difficulties in the case of the Dominions. As sovereign States it will be for them to decide freely whether they shall become members of the federation or not. But France believes it to be right and necessary that Great Britain should give

up her system of trade preferences, and that free trade should be established or rather re-established. This seems to be in the general interests of the community. It may seem to imply a considerable sacrifice on the part of Britain. It should, however, be remembered that the privileges to be given up were only established after the Ottawa Conference and are therefore comparatively new. They allowed Britain to remedy the ill-effects of the great economic depression and the spread of protection, but they would have no justification in a large prosperous area of trade where goods would circulate freely.

PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES. In the course of this paper many difficulties have been encountered: for instance, what methods should be adopted in the economic field?

It is clear that as soon as one passes from general statements and the advantages which will accrue to the whole continent, to detailed schemes designed to be put into force quickly, difficulties surge up *en masse*: technical difficulties due to differing systems of economic control and to price disparities, and political difficulties arising from the opposition of interested parties.

It must, in fact, be understood that the organization of Europe will only bring real progress if it results in far-reaching structural changes, with each country specializing in those products which it is best qualified to produce. All the member States will be on an equal footing, but within each of them certain sections will profit by the extension of markets while others will be hard hit, and often even expropriated and obliged to change the nature of their activities altogether. There will therefore be sharp opposition which it will only be possible to overcome if there is real popular support for the movement and if a strong federal organization can succeed in overcoming national interests. But, as indicated earlier, such an organization can only be set up if parliaments and governments alike are willing to relinquish their traditional responsibilities. This first revolutionary step will not be easy.

For the moment, the chief obstacle is the political and financial unsettlement in France. We are the first to realize this; the present state of our country does not encourage our neighbours to associate with us. Similarly nothing can be done towards freeing trade so long as some States are a prey to inflation. Let me in conclusion, however, give an assurance that the malady from which France is suffering will not prove incurable.

20 October 1948.