

Winston Churchill, Universität Zürich, 19 September 1946

«I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe. This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the western world. It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics.

It is the origin of most of the culture, the arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern time. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and the glory which its three or four million people would enjoy. Yet it is from Europe that have sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations in their rise to power, which we have seen in this twentieth century and even in our own lifetime, wreck the peace and mar the prospects of all mankind.

And what is the plight to which Europe has been reduced? Some of the smaller States have indeed made a good recovery, but over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gape at the ruins of their cities and their homes, and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror. Among the victors there is a babel of voices; among the vanquished the sullen silence of despair. That is all that Europeans, grouped in so many ancient states and nations, that is all that the Germanic races have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide. Indeed but for the fact that the great Republic across the Atlantic Ocean has at length realised that the ruin or enslavement of Europe would involve their own fate as well, and has stretched out hands of succour and of guidance, but for that the Dark Ages would have returned in all their cruelty and squalor. Gentlemen, they may still return.

Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were generally and spontaneously adopted by the great majority of people in many lands, would as if by a miracle transform the whole scene, and would in a few years make all Europe, or the greater part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to recreate the European Family, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe. In this way only will hundreds of millions of toilers be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which make life worth living. The process is simple. All that is needed is the resolve of hundreds of millions of men and women to do right instead of wrong and to gain as their reward blessing instead of cursing.

Much work, Ladies and Gentlemen, has been done upon this task by the exertions of the PanEuropean Union which owes so much to Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and which commanded the services of the famous French patriot and statesman Aristide Briand. There is also that immense body of doctrine and procedure, which was brought into being amid high hopes after the first world war. I mean the League of Nations. The League of Nations did not fail because of its principles or conceptions. It failed because these principles were deserted by those States who had brought it into being. It failed because the governments of those days feared to face the facts, and act while time remained. This disaster must not be repeated. There is therefore much

knowledge and material with which to build; and also bitter dear bought experience to stir the builders.

I was very glad to read in the newspapers two days ago that my friend President Truman had expressed his interest and sympathy with this great design. There is no reason why a regional organization of Europe should in any way conflict with the world organization of the United Nations. On the contrary, I believe that the larger synthesis will only survive if it is founded upon coherent natural groupings. There is already a natural grouping in the western hemisphere. We British have our own Commonwealth of Nations. These do not weaken, on the contrary they strengthen, the world organization. They are in fact its main support. And why should there not be a European group which could give a sense of enlarged patriotism and common citizenship to the distracted peoples of this turbulent and mighty continent? And why should it not take its rightful place with other great groupings and help to shape the onward destinies of men? In order that this should be accomplished there must be an act of faith in which millions of families speaking many languages must consciously take part.

We all know that the two world wars through which we have passed arose out of the vain passion of a newly-united Germany to play the dominating part in the world. In this last struggle crimes and massacres have been committed for which there is no parallel since the invasion of the Mongols in the fourteenth century and no equal at any time in human history. The guilty must be punished. Germany must be deprived of the power to rearm and make another aggressive war. But when all this has been done, as it will be done, as it is being done, then there must be an end to retribution. There must be what Mr. Gladstone many years ago called „a blessed act of oblivion“. We must all turn our backs upon the horrors of the past. We must look to the future. We cannot afford to drag forward across the years that are to come the hatreds and revenges which have sprung from the injuries of the past. If Europe is to be saved from infinite misery, and indeed from final doom, there must be this act of faith in the European Family and this act of oblivion against all the crimes and follies of the past.

Can the free peoples of Europe rise to the height of these resolves of the soul and of the instincts of the spirit of man? If they can, the wrongs and injuries which have been inflicted will have been washed away on all sides by the miseries which have been endured. Is there any need for further floods of agony? Is the only lesson of history to be that mankind is unteachable? Let there be justice, mercy and freedom. The peoples have only to will it, and all will achieve their hearts'desire.

I am now going to say something that will astonish you. The first step in the recreation of the European Family must be a partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral and cultural leadership of Europe. There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany. The structure of the United States of Europe, if well and truly built, will be such as to make the material strength of a single state less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause. The ancient states and principalities of Germany, freely

joined together for mutual convenience in a federal system, might take their individual places among the United States of Europe.

I shall not try to make a detailed programme for hundreds of millions of people who want to be happy and free, prosperous and safe, who wish to enjoy the four freedoms of which the great President Roosevelt spoke, and live in accordance with the principles embodied in the Atlantic Charter. If this is their wish, if this is the wish of the Europeans in so many lands, they have only to say so, and means can certainly be found, and machinery erected, to carry that wish to full fruition.

But I must give you a warning. Time may be short. At present there is a breathing-space. The cannons have ceased firing. The fighting has stopped; but the dangers have not stopped. If we are to form the United States of Europe, or whatever name it may take, we must begin now.

In these present days we dwell strangely and precariously under the shield, and I will even say protection, of the atomic bomb. The atomic bomb is still only in the hands of a state and nation which we know will never use it except in the cause of right and freedom. But it may well be that in a few years this awful agency of destruction will be widespread and the catastrophe following from its use by several warring nations will not only bring to an end all that we call civilisation, but may possibly disintegrate the globe itself.

I must now sum up the propositions which are before you. Our constant aim must be to build and fortify the strength of the United Nations Organization. Under and within that world concept we must recreate the European Family in a regional structure called, it may be, the United States of Europe. And the first practical step would be to form a Council of Europe. If at first all the States of Europe are not willing or able to join the Union, we must nevertheless proceed to assemble and combine those who will and those who can. The salvation of the common people of every race and of every land from war or servitude must be established on solid foundations and must be guarded by the readiness of all men and women to die rather than submit to tyranny. In all this urgent work, France and Germany must take the lead together. Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America and I trust Soviet Russia-for then indeed all would be well-must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe and must champion its right to live and shine. Therefore I say to you: let Europe arise!»

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S SPEECH

Zurich University

19 September 1946

I wish to speak to you to-day about the tragedy of Europe. This noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth, enjoying a temperate and equable climate, is the home of all the great parent races of the western world. It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics.

It is the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science both of ancient and modern times. If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, to the prosperity and glory which its three or four hundred million people would enjoy. Yet it is from Europe that have sprung that series of frightful nationalistic quarrels, originated by the Teutonic nations, which we have seen ever in this twentieth century and in our own lifetime, wreck the peace and mar the prospects of all mankind.

And what is the plight to which Europe has been reduced? Some of the smaller States have indeed made a good recovery, but over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, care-worn and bewildered human beings gaze at the ruins of their cities and homes, and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril tyranny or terror. Among the victors there is a babel of jarring voices; among the vanquished the stilled silence of despair. That is all that Europeans, grouped in so many ancient States and nations, that is all that the Germanic Powers have got by tearing each other to pieces and spreading havoc far and wide. Indeed, but for the fact that the great Republic across the Atlantic Ocean has at length realised that the ruin or enslavement of Europe would involve their own fate as well, and has stretched out hands of succour and guidance, the Dark Ages would have returned in all their cruelty and squalor. They may still return.

Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were generally and spontaneously adopted, would as if by a miracle transform the whole scene, and would in a few years make all Europe, or the greater part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is to-day. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to re-create the European family, or as much of it as we can, and provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe. In this way only will hundreds of millions of toilers be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which make life worth living. The process is simple. All that is needed is the resolve of hundreds of millions of men and women to do right instead of wrong and gain as their reward blessing instead of cursing.

Much work has been done upon this task by the exertions of the Pan-European Union which owes so much to Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and which commanded the services of the famous French patriot and statesman, Aristide Briand. There is also that immense body of doctrine and procedure, which was brought into being and high hopes after the first world war, as the League of Nations. The League of Nations did not fail because of its principles or conceptions. It failed because their principles were deserted by those States who had brought it into being. It failed because the Government of those days feared to face the facts, and act while time remained. This disaster must not be repeated: There is therefore much knowledge and material with which to build; and also bitter dear-bought experience.

I was very glad to read in the newspapers two days ago that my friend President Truman had expressed his interest and sympathy with this great design. There is no reason why a regional organization of Europe should in any way conflict with the world organization of the United Nations. On the contrary, I believe that the larger synthesis will only survive if it is founded upon coherent natural groupings. There is already a natural grouping in the Western Hemisphere. We British have our own Commonwealth of Nations. These do not weaken, on the contrary they strengthen the world organization. They are

in fact its main support. And why should there not be a European group which could give a sense of enlarged patriotism and common citizenship to the distracted peoples of this turbulent and mighty continent and why should it not take its rightful place with other great groupings in shaping the destinies of men? In order that this should be accomplished there must be an act of faith in which millions of families speaking many languages must consciously take part.

We all know that the two world wars through which we have passed arose out of the vain passion of a newly-united Germany to play the dominating part in the world. In this last struggle crimes and massacres have been committed for which there is no parallel since the invasions of the Mongols in the fourteenth century and no equal at any time in human history. The guilty must be punished. Germany must be deprived of the power to rearm and make another aggressive war. But when all this has been done, as it will be done, as it is being done, there must be an end to retribution. There must be what Mr. Gladstone many years ago called "a blessed act of oblivion". We must all turn our backs upon the horrors of the past. We must look to the future. We cannot afford to drag forward across the years that are to come the hatreds and revenges which have sprung from the injuries of the past. If Europe is to be saved from infinite misery, and indeed from final doom, there must be an act of faith in the European family and an act of oblivion against all the crimes and follies of the past.

Can the free peoples of Europe rise to the height of these resolves of the soul and instincts of the spirit of man? If they can, the wrongs and injuries which have been inflicted will have been washed away on all sides by the miseries which have been endured. Is there any need for further floods of agony? Is it the only lesson of history that mankind is unteachable? Let there be justice, mercy and freedom. The peoples have only to will it, and all will achieve their hearts' desire.

I am now going to say something that will astonish you. The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany. In this way only can France recover the moral leadership of Europe. There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany. The structure of the United States of Europe, if well and truly built, will be such as to make the material strength of a single state less important. Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause. The ancient states and principalities of Germany, freely joined together for mutual convenience in a federal system, might each take their individual place among the United States of Europe. I shall not try to make a detailed programme for hundreds of millions of people who want to be happy and free, prosperous and safe, who wish to enjoy the four freedoms of which the great President Roosevelt spoke and live in accordance with the principles embodied in the Atlantic Charter. If this is their wish, they have only to say so, and means can certainly be found, and machinery erected, to carry that wish into full fruition.

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I must now sum up the propositions which are before you. Our constant aim must be to build and fortify the strength of U.N.O. Under and within that world concept we must re-create the European family in a regional structure called, it may be, the United States of Europe. The first step is to form a Council of Europe. If at first all the States of Europe are not willing or able to join the Union, we must nevertheless proceed to assemble and combine those who will and those who can. The salvation of the common people of every race and of every land from war or servitude must be established on solid foundations and must be guarded by the readiness of all men and women to die rather than submit to tyranny. In all this urgent work, France and Germany must take the lead together. Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America, and I trust Soviet Russia -- for then indeed all would be well -- must be the friends and sponsors of the new Europe and must champion its right to live and shine.

DISCOURS DE M. WINSTON CHURCHILL

à l'Université de Zürich

le 19 septembre 1946

Je voudrais vous parler aujourd'hui du drame de l'Europe. Ce noble continent, qui comprend dans son ensemble les régions les plus riches et les plus favorisées de la terre, jouit d'un climat tempéré et égal. Il est le berceau de toutes les grandes races du monde occidental. Il est la source de la foi chrétienne et de la morale chrétienne. Ici ont eu leur origine les principales réalisations de la culture, des arts, de la philosophie et des sciences, dans l'antiquité aussi bien que de notre temps.

Si l'Europe s'unissait un jour pour partager cet héritage commun, il n'y aurait pas de limite au bonheur, à la prospérité et à la gloire dont pourrait jouir sa population de trois ou quatre cent millions d'âmes.

C'est cependant en Europe qu'est née cette série de terribles guerres nationalistes, déclenchées par les nations teutoniques au cours de leur ascension à la puissance, que nous avons vu en ce XXe siècle, et même dans notre propre génération, ruiner la paix et les espérances de toute l'humanité, et à quel état lamentable a été réduit l'Europe. Il est vrai que certains des petits pays se sont relevés rapidement, mais dans la plus grande partie de l'Europe, une masse frissonnante d'êtres humains, tourmentés, usés par les soucis, affamés et hébétés, regardent, atterrés, les ruines de leurs villes et de leurs foyers, et surveillent le sombre horizon dans la crainte de voir surgir une nouvelle forme de tyrannie ou de terreur.

Parmi les vainqueurs, on entend une Babel de voix. Parmi les vaincus, on ne trouve que le morne silence du désespoir, et c'est tout ce à quoi sont arrivés les Européens, groupés en tant de nations et d'Etats, c'est tout ce à quoi sont arrivés les races germaniques, en s'entre-déchirant et en semant la ruine. Si cette

grande République de l'autre côté de l'Océan Atlantique ne s'était enfin rendu compte que la ruine ou la réduction en esclavage de l'Europe entraînerait sa propre destruction, et ne nous avait tendu des mains secourables et directrices, les âges sombres seraient revenus, dans toute leur cruauté. Et, Messieurs, ils peuvent encore revenir.

Et pourtant, il existe un remède qui, s'il était généralement et spontanément adopté par la grande majorité des peuples dans de nombreux pays, pourrait, comme par un miracle, transformer entièrement la situation, et rendre toute l'Europe, ou au moins la majeure partie de l'Europe, aussi libre et aussi heureuse que la Suisse de nos jours.

Quel est ce remède souverain? Il consiste à reconstituer la famille européenne, ou du moins, autant que nous en pouvons reconstituer, et à lui fournir une structure qui lui permette de vivre et de croître en paix, en sécurité et en liberté.

Nous devons créer un genre d'Etats-Unis d'Europe. De cette façon seulement, des centaines de milliers de travailleurs pourront recouvrer les simples joies et espoirs qui rendent la vie digne d'être vécue. La marche à suivre est simple. Tout ce qu'il faut, c'est que des centaines de millions d'hommes et de femmes décident de faire le bien au lieu de faire le mal, et méritent, comme récompense, qu'on les bénisse au lieu de les maudire.

Beaucoup de travail a déjà été fait dans ce sens, par les efforts de l'Union pan-européenne, qui doit tant à Aristide Briand, patriote et homme d'Etat français célèbre, qui s'est dévoué à sa cause. Il y a aussi cette immense organisation qui a vu le jour parmi tant de beaux espoirs, après la première guerre mondiale, je veux parler de la Société des Nations.

La Société des Nations n'a pas échoué à cause de ses principes, ou de ses conceptions. Elle a échoué parce que ces principes ont été abandonnés par les Etats qui l'ont fait naître, et parce que les

gouvernements de ces États ont craint de regarder la vérité en face et d'agir pendant qu'il était encore temps. Il ne faut pas que ce désastre se reproduise. Nous avons donc beaucoup d'expérience pour nous aider à rebâtir et aussi beaucoup d'épreuves douloureuses que nous avons payées cher.

J'ai été très content de lire dans les journaux, il y a quelques jours, que mon ami le Président Truman avait exprimé son intérêt et sa sympathie pour ce grand projet. Il n'y a aucune raison pour que l'organisation régionale de l'Europe se heurte, en quelque façon, à l'organisation mondiale des Nations Unies. Au contraire, je crois que cette synthèse plus grande des nations ne peut survivre que si elle est fondée sur de larges groupements naturels.

Il existe déjà un groupement naturel dans l'hémisphère occidental. Nous autres, Britanniques, nous avons notre propre Commonwealth des nations. Ces groupements n'affaiblissent pas, mais au contraire renforcent l'organisation du monde. En fait, ils constituent son principal soutien. En pourquoi n'existerait-il pas un groupement européen qui donnerait un sens de patriotisme plus large et de citoyenneté commune aux peuples éperdus de ce puissant continent? Et pourquoi ce groupement ne prendrait-il pas la place qui lui revient parmi les autres grands groupements, et n'aiderait-il pas à modeler un avenir glorieux pour l'humanité?

Pour que ceci puisse être accompli, il faut un acte de foi, auquel devraient s'associer en toute conscience des millions de familles, de langues diverses.

Nous savons tous que les deux guerres mondiales par lesquelles nous sommes passés ont été causées par le vain désir d'une Allemagne nouvellement unifiée de jouer un rôle prépondérant dans le monde. Dans ces luttes homériques, des crimes et des massacres ont été commis, qui sont sans parallèle depuis l'invasion des Mongols, au XIVe siècle, et n'ont d'égal à aucune époque de l'histoire humaine.

Il faut que les coupables soient punis. Il faut que l'Allemagne soit privée de la possibilité de réarmer et de faire à nouveau une

guerre d'agression. Mais quand tout cela aura été fait, comme ce sera fait, comme on est en train de le faire, il faut en finir avec la loi du talion. Il faut qu'il y ait ce que M. Gladstone a appelé, il y a de nombreuses années, un acte d'oubli salutaire. Nous devons tous tourner le dos aux horreurs du passé et regarder vers l'avenir. Nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre de trainer, au cours des années à venir, les haines et les vengeances nées des blessures du passé.

Si l'Europe doit être sauvée d'une misère infinie et, en fait, de la destruction définitive, il faut qu'il ait cet acte de foi dans la famille européenne, et cet acte d'oubli envers tous les crimes et les actes de folie du passé.

Les peuples de l'Europe peuvent-ils s'élever à cette hauteur d'âme, d'instinct et d'esprit humain? S'ils le pouvaient, les torts et les blessures qui ont été infligés seraient effacés de tous côtés par les souffrances qui ont été endurées. Est-il encore besoin d'autres flots d'agonie? La seule leçon de l'Histoire doit-elle être que l'humanité ne peut rien apprendre? Que règnent la justice, la pitié et la liberté. Les peuples n'ont qu'à le vouloir, et tous atteindront leur désir le plus cher.

Je vais maintenant vous dire quelques chose qui vous surprendra: le premier pas vers la reconstruction de la famille européenne doit être une association entre la France et l'Allemagne. C'est ainsi seulement que la France pourra reprendre sa direction culturelle et morale de l'Europe. Il ne peut y avoir de renaissance de l'Europe sans une France spirituellement grande et sans une Allemagne spirituellement grande aussi.

La structure des Etats-Unis d'Europe sera telle qu'elle rendra moins importante la force matérielle d'un Etat quelconque. Les petits Etats compteront autant que les grands, et seront considérés d'après leur contribution à la cause commune. Les anciens Etats et principautés de l'Allemagne, réunis librement pour leur intérêt commun dans un système fédéral, pourraient prendre leurs places individuelles parmi les Etats-Unis de l'Europe.

Je n'essaierai pas d'exposer un programme détaillé. Il y a des centaines de millions de personnes qui désirent vivre heureuses et libres, prospères et tranquilles et qui voudraient jouir des quatre libertés dont le grand Président Roosevelt a parlé, et vivre selon les principes incarnés par la Charte de l'Atlantique. Si tel est leur désir, si tel est le désir d'Européens de nombreux pays, ils n'ont qu'à le dire, on trouvera certainement le moyen et le mécanisme pour amener ce désir à son plein épanouissement.

Mais je dois vous donner un avertissement. Le temps presse. Nous jouissons actuellement d'un moment de répit. Les canons ont cessé de tirer, les combats ont cessé, mais non pas les dangers. Si nous devons constituer les Etats-Unis d'Europe, sous quelque nom que ce soit, il faut commencer maintenant.

A l'époque actuelle, nous nous trouvons assez étrangement, et de façon précaire sous le bouclier. Et je peux dire même, sous la protection de la bombe atomique. La bombe atomique se trouve encore entre les mains d'un Etat, d'une nation qui, nous le savons, ne s'en servira jamais que pour défendre le droit et la liberté. Mais il se peut bien que, dans quelques années, cet horrible engin de destruction soit largement diffusé, et la catastrophe qui suivrait son emploi par plusieurs pays en guerre ne mettrait pas seulement fin à tout ce que nous appelons civilisation, mais pourrait même désintégrer le globe lui-même.

Il faut maintenant que je vous résume les propositions qui vous sont soumises. Notre but constant doit être de créer et d'accroître la force de l'Organisation des Nations Unies. Sous la direction et dans le cadre de cette organisation mondiale, nous devons recréer la famille européenne dans un cadre régional qui s'appellera - peut-être - les Etats-Unis d'Europe, et le premier pas pratique sera de constituer un Conseil de l'Europe. Si, tout d'abord, tous les Etats de l'Europe n'acceptent pas ou ne sont pas à même de faire partie de cette Union, nous devons néanmoins continuer à

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rassembler et à organiser ceux qui y consentent et qui le peuvent.

Le moyen d'épargner aux hommes de toutes les races et de tous les pays la guerre et l'esclavage devra être fondé sur des bases solides, et il devra être créé par la volonté de tous les hommes et de toutes les femmes de mourir plutôt que de se soumettre à la tyrannie. Et de ce travail urgent, la France et l'Allemagne doivent prendre la direction ensemble. La Grande-Bretagne, l'Empire britannique, la puissante Amérique, et j'en suis sûr, la Russie soviétique - car alors tout irait bien - doivent être amis et garants de la nouvelle Europe, et doivent défendre son droit à la vie.

Je vous dis donc: - Debout: Europe!