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THE IDEA OF A UNITED EUROPE, 1918 - 1939

Up to the present time the question of European unity during the inter-war period has been all but absent in Polish historical literature. This is a reflection of the comparatively weak response which, in its time, this issue evoked in Poland. Most attention was absorbed by the business of building and protecting the new state, reborn after a century of bondage, and by the infinite difficulties associated therewith, leaving little time for engaging in more remote affairs. Józef Piłsudski said openly that the interest displayed by the foreign policy of the Polish Republic in a given region or country was in inverse proportion to the distance separating it from Poland. None the less a sense of affiliation with Europe was always strong in Poland, and this was reinforced, whilst the Poles supported and took part in various Pan-European initiatives. The role of Poland and the Poles in the movement for the unification of Europe during the years 1918 - 1939 will be the subject of a separate paper. The questions raised here are of a more general nature, as seen through the eyes of a Polish researcher.

The subject of the present article is the question of European unity in the broad sense—including the realms of politics, the economy, and culture—during the difficult years which followed the First World War. Did the continent, torn apart by antagonisms, divided into different states isolated within their borders, represent a geographical notion simply, the sum of its countries, or did it amount to something more than this? Were decentralizing tendencies dominant, or was perhaps some headway also made by contrary trends, aimed at European unity? What was the overall, predominant trend in development? These are the chief questions we shall be attempting to answer.

The answers will come more easily if we take the period just

before the First World War as our point of observation and reference, taking into account how the question of European unity appeared during 1913 - 1914, and thus providing ourselves with the possibility of comparison. Opinions on this topic are divided. For instance in the interpretation of John Maynard Keynes, the famous English economist, Europe before the First World War is presented as an economically integrated region of peace, order and security, in which the circulation of capital and goods and people's movements would not encounter difficulties.¹

Unfortunately, this assessment is only partly true. Trade flourished in Europe, and those who possessed currencies based on the gold standard could travel without any problems. None the less the European powers were unscrupulous in their rivalry with each other, in the sphere of economics as elsewhere. This was one of the reasons for the outbreak of war.

Other authors emphasized the cultural unity of pre-war Europe. Their view was that this found expression in common trends in intellectual life—in Europe's common artistic styles, philosophical schools, literary movements and so on. But at the same time it was perceived that from a political point of view, Europe at that time was torn apart, and represented a normal geographical notion.²

If Europe was divided by political antagonisms before 1914, then the war served to deepen and aggravate them to a considerable degree. It made a deep gash in life, turning it completely upside-down and causing far-reaching qualitative changes in the political, social and economic spheres. It left a permanent mark on the mentality of the nations.³ Most sinister of all was the sowing of hatred issuing from unscrupulous war propaganda, which was intensified in response to deeply-felt losses and surrenders, blame for which was ascribed to one's opponents in the war. The peace imposed by way of one-sided decisions on the part of the victors

¹ J. M. Keynes, *Les conséquences économiques de la Paix*, Paris 1920, p. 24.

² H. Brugmans, *L'idée européenne 1920 - 1970*, Bruges 1970, p. 38.

³ Cf. P. Renouvin, *Les crises du XX siècle*, vol. I: *de 1914 à 1929*, Paris 1957, p. 129.

in relation to their defeated, but still potentially dangerous enemies, was based on a shaky and changeable balance of power.

War, revolution, and finally the Treaty of Versailles, changed the face of Europe. The most obvious outcome was the fall of the three great monarchies, which had occupied practically two-thirds of the area of Europe. Nine new states arose in their stead, whilst several others considerably extended their borders. Internal changes were equally significant. The former principle of the sovereignty of monarchs was replaced by the right of nations to self-determination.

The aims of different nations were revealed above all in the building of individual, separate states, whose independence was jealously guarded. As a result of the alteration of the political map, the borderlines in Europe, and especially in Central-Eastern Europe, were considerably lengthened—by more than seven-thousand kilometres.⁴ What is more, these borders became much more tightly sealed. Transformed into real tariff walls, they constituted a serious obstacle for the traffic of goods and tourists.

In contemporary literature, much is written about the breaking-up and disintegration of Europe. It was emphasized for instance that, measured in terms of the rest of the world, Europe was becoming a continent of mini-states, half of which were smaller in size than the Honduras republic, whilst two-thirds had smaller populations than the single city of New York.⁵ At the same time the negative consequences of this breaking-up of Europe were discussed, undoubtedly with tendentious exaggeration. It was emphasized that this was at variance with overall development trends, advancements in technology and improvements in communications.⁶

An additional divisive factor was the fact that the newly-arisen states were often at loggerheads with one another. Above all antagonism arose on the one hand between those states which,

⁴ *Versailles—St. Germain—Trianon. Umbruch in Europa vor fünfzig Jahren*, München-Wien 1971, p. 158.

⁵ K. Brockhausen, *Europa 1914 und 1924. Bild und Gegenbild*, Wien 1914, p. 37.

⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 68–69; H. Brugmans, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

backed by the Entente Powers, had satisfied their territorial aspirations, and on the other hand—those states at whose cost this had been achieved. There were plenty of other disputes and clashes of various kinds, too. It could be observed that relations between neighbouring states, even if they were not divided by any very serious territorial disputes, did not settle down happily straight away. It would take years before things balanced out, and the new states learned to coexist with each other.⁷

Also of significance for European unity was another consequence of the change in the shape of the political map. Namely, as a result of the creation of new states, a larger role in Europe began to be played by fettered nations condemned to foreign control. In the majority of cases these were Slavonic nations. The West looked towards these with anticipation, but also uneasiness, underlining the otherness of this part of Europe, just awaking to independent life. In this respect the following is a characteristic view : *“Les peuples slaves sont à la fois des peuples forts et des peuples faibles. Forts, parce que nombreux, courageux, occupent une partie de l’Europe vaste, peu riche, mais capable de s’enrichir. Faibles, parce que sans tradition politique, sans habitude de la discipline et de la cohérence, nullement éduqués (sauf les Tchèques) par un passé de désordres et de désastres dus à leur situation géographique”*.⁸ It was underlined that full “Europeanization” of these nations could only take place gradually, over a number of years. For the time being Europe was even more clearly divided into the “civilized West” and the “backward, Slavonic East”.

An attempt to create a deep split within the continent were the endeavours made to isolate and exclude Soviet Russia from Europe. The proletarian revolution in Russia was greeted with open hostility by bourgeois Europe, though it is worth noting that the degree of ill will was not identical in all countries. There

⁷ A characteristic example in this respect is provided by Polish-Latvian relations. Cf. *Przyjaźnie i antagonizmy. Stosunki Polski z państwami sąsiednimi w latach 1918 - 1939* [Friendship and Hostility. Poland's Relations with Neighbouring States during the Years 1918 - 1939], Wrocław 1977, pp. 85 - 132.

⁸ P. Drieu la Rochelle, *L'Europe contre les Patries*, Paris 1931, p. 105.

was a lack of belief in the durability of the changes wrought by the revolution, a swift return to the old order in the east of Europe was expected. However, there were immediate attempts to keep Russia at bay and shut her off, and especially the influences she was emanating. In practice though, such isolation proved both incomplete and inconsistent. Despite their common fears and common aversions, the helmsmen of the European states did not turn out to be in a position to be able to create a joint and common front against Soviet Russia. Particular state interests and mercenary motives proved to be stronger than anti-communism. The famous anti-Soviet *cordon sanitaire* turned out to be more of a propaganda slogan than an actual reality.⁹ A major contribution to this state of affairs was made by the skilful foreign policy of the Soviet government, which, coaxing and persuading first and foremost in the language of economic benefits, managed to establish political relations with most of the states within Europe. Revolutionary ideas were also imported from Russia into the West. Among other things this found expression in the activity of the parties of the Third International, which initially consisted of almost exclusively European representation.¹⁰ But the fact remains that although it was not possible to completely isolate Russia, the part she played in the life of Europe was a comparatively minor one. Soviet Russia, glancing suspiciously at the rest of Europe, lived within the sphere of her own affairs and objectives, gradually executing social transformations within the context of a single state.

Our image of Europe after the First World War would be very one-sided, however, if we directed our attention only towards those factors which divided and served to disintegrate the continent. One should point out that alongside this existed facts and

⁹ In the opinion of the well-known French historian Jean-Baptiste Duroselle: "[...] *la Revolution d'Octobre a exclu la Russie de l'Europe. Les Occidentaux essaient de constituer autour d'elle un "cordon sanitaire" d'Etats hostiles [...]*" (*L'idée d'Europe dans l'histoire*, Paris 1965, p. 261).

¹⁰ E.g. at the first inaugural congress of the Third International in March, 1919, 21 countries were represented, 16 of which were European countries [*Międzynarodówka Komunistyczna 1919 - 1943. Zarys historyczny* [*The Third International 1919 - 1943. A Historical Outline*], Warszawa 1974, pp. 54 - 55).

phenomena, often unknown previously, which testified to the operation of contrary tendencies, uniting Europe in some sense.

One should start with economic affairs. Despite intense rivalry under conditions of recurring crises, despite autarkic tendencies and tariff difficulties—trade between European countries revealed an upward trend. Natural conditions and close proximity imposed a need for co-operation, which cleared a path for itself notwithstanding the problems. According to Pierre Renouvin's evaluation, for instance, in 1925 economic relations between European countries could be regarded with great satisfaction, the phenomenon of specialization in production was to be found, and trade was on the increase.¹¹

The arising of the League of Nations was also a significant new element. Although we should evaluate this organization in the most critical terms, it did nevertheless also create a forum within Europe for meetings and the exchange of views. Thomas Masaryk, for instance, said, "I am filled with hope by the fact that representatives from all the nations meet at international congresses and conferences in Geneva and Lausanne, and discuss everything jointly. This is an important factor, entirely new. We did not have that before the war [...]"¹² Indeed the most important evidence testifying to the fact that despite the post-war destruction and devastation, Europe was still something more than a simple geographical term—was the movement for European unity, which—especially during the first decade following the war—began to take on considerable proportions. This demonstrated that understanding of the need for unity was making itself felt in the consciousness of many Europeans. In such unity people saw salvation from bothersome difficulties, a means of overcoming the political and economic crisis. What is more, through European unity it was thought to avoid a new war, the danger of which was clearly taken into consideration.

The idea of European unity was not new. It had been part of

¹¹ P. Renouvin, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹² Quoted after H. R. Knickerboecker, *Quo vadis, Europa? Czy Europa się podniesie? [Quo Vadis, Europe? Will Europe Recover?]*, Warszawa 1933, p. 60.

the history of Europe for centuries. Its concepts and form had changed, but the motives by which it was guided had remained unaltered. Dante, Goethe and Hugo, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Leibniz, Kant and many, many others had all been advocates of European unity.

In the 19th century the idea of the unity and solidarity of the nations of Europe began to assume a new expression. It combined inseparably with the struggle of the forces of progress in young Europe with the bastions of reaction and conservatism. Significant in this respect are the words spoken by Victor Hugo at the Congress of Peace in Paris on 21 August, 1849. Hugo said: "*Der Tag wird kommen, an dem Kanonenkugeln und Bomben von Abstimmungen und dem allgemeinen Wahlrecht der Völker abgelöst und durch das echte Schiedsgericht eines großen souveränen Senats ersetzt werden, der für Europa dieselbe Stelle vertreten wird, welche in England das Parlament, in Deutschland der Reichstag, in Frankreich die Gesetzgebende Versammlung einnehmen...! Der Tag wird kommen, an dem sich diese beiden großen Blöcke, die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika und die Vereinigten Staaten von Europa, gegenüberstehen, sich über die Meere hinweg die Hände reichen und die Produkte ihres Handels und ihrer Industrie ihren Kunst und ihrer Genies miteinander austauschen.*"¹³

But despite these prophecies the 19th century did not bring substantial progress in the area in question. The numerous conventions and congresses at which the postulate of unity was raised, met with no response. Whilst it is true that various types of projects for European unity, for a United States of Europe, were born, these did not go beyond the stage of narrow academic discussion. Neither did they exert any influence whatever on the evolution of international political relations. Europe was heading unavoidably for military disaster. Not without foundation were the views of those who pointed to the fact that to a large degree it was Bismarck and his kind, acting in the name of extreme state

¹³ Quoted after D. de Rougemont, *Die Chancen Europas. Berufung und Hoffnung*, Wien 1964, pp. 62 - 63.

egoism, who contributed to the killing of the idea of Europe in the 19th century.¹⁴

It is characteristic that during the war itself, during a period when antagonisms and quarrels between the nations were inflamed to an extreme degree, the notion of the unification of Europe did not in the least fade away, but—quite the opposite—was voiced with increased force. This was no coincidence. In the face of bloody butchery, the death of millions of people, and colossal material destruction—an opposition reaction was born. There began a fevered search for a way out, for ways in which to prevent wars. Groups of intellectuals, at first small, but subsequently growing in numbers, began to display more and more activity in all the countries at war, but especially in neutral Switzerland and the Netherlands. National action committees were called into being at meetings and congresses. The idea revived of *A European Union as a Condition and Foundation for Lasting Peace*.¹⁵ Many brochures and books were published, quoting numerous arguments in favour of the unification of Europe, and expressing belief in its swift accomplishment.¹⁶ In one such book Romain Rolland wrote in 1916: “*Un jour prochain, l’union des nations d’Occident formera la nouvelle Patrie. Elle-même ne sera qu’une étape sur la route qui mène à la Patrie la plus large : l’Europe. Ne voit-on pas déjà les douze Etats d’Europe, ramassés en deux camps, s’essayer sans le savoir à la fédération où les guerres de nations paraîtront aussi sacrilèges que le seraient maintenant les guerres entre provinces ?*”¹⁷

Following the conclusion of the war, under conditions of

¹⁴ J.-B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁵ This is the title of one of many brochures of this type: J. Erni, *Die Europäische Union als Bedingung und Grundlage des dauernden Friedens*, Zürich 1915.

¹⁶ Some of the titles: G. L. Dickinson, *The War and the Way Out*, Hague 1915; A. Capel, *The World on the Anvil*, London 1916; J. Barthélemy, *Démocratie et politique*, Paris 1917. Many more titles in the collection *Les Français à la recherche d’une Société des Nations*, Paris 1920.

¹⁷ J. Rolland Romain, *La route en lacets qui monte*, Genève 1916.

a newly-divided Europe, the intellectual movement for unification was no less strong. The events of the war represented very useful experience and a lesson for the future. In the consciousness of many intellectuals, especially the French, the sense of affiliation with Europe intensified. The destruction of Europe going on was resented. It was understood that questions of war and peace, development and welfare could not be resolved within the borders of a single state, no matter how large it be. This would only be possible in terms of Europe as a whole. The slogan "Europe—my Country" gained in popularity. What is more, a qualitative change had taken place. If before the war the idea of European unity was raised along with other great problems, such as war and peace, and played a subsidiary role—then now it began to turn into an independent political topic. European unity was ceasing to be a means, and becoming an end.¹⁸

The idea of the unification of 400 million Europeans was fascinating. In response to it, the Spaniard Ortega y Gasset wrote that the time would come when Europe would be embraced by a single national idea. He emphasized that faith in this idea was a great deal less utopian than predictions in the 11th century of a unified Spain or France.¹⁹

However, it was realized that the accomplishment of this would only be possible along with the overcoming of a multitude of prejudices and mutual suspicions. As a means of dispelling such complexes, the principle of absolute equality was put forward, of repudiation of the hegemony of any nation whatever, or any state whatever. An all-European parliament—rising above local interests—was to govern this unified Europe of equal rights.²⁰

Much was readily written on the topic of European unity during the 1920s. A dozen or so books were published almost every year, not counting minor brochures, and the multiplicity of

¹⁸ Cf. G. Bonneville, *Prophètes et témoins de l'Europe. Essai sur l'idée d'Europe dans la littérature française de 1914 à nos jours*, Leyden 1961.

¹⁹ J. Ortega y Gasset, *Der Aufstand der Massen*, Stuttgart 1930, pp. 96 - 97.

²⁰ K. Brockhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 - 71.

articles issuing from all European countries.²¹ But this intellectual movement, broad as it was, was characterized—with one exception, which will be discussed below—by the ephemeral nature and lack of concreteness of the views it generally presented. It gave voice to wishes and overall concepts, whereas there were practically no detailed indications whatever as to how to set about putting them into practice in the concrete circumstances prevailing in Europe.

In this respect the aspirations for European unity expressed at the same time by various kinds of economic figures, were different in nature. Here there was less of ravishing ideas and fine words, and more of concrete details instead. For here one was acting in the name of private interest and the tangible profits which were tied up with the hope of one or another kind of union of European states.

The argumentation of the economists was simple and concise. Their fundamental thesis was the assertion that *de facto* Europe already represented a single economic organism. Hence some of these authors, especially German authors, drew the conclusion that injury to one of its elements caused harm to all the others as well. As evidence of this, it was pointed out that the decline in the German economy was having unfavourable repercussions on the economy of the whole of Europe. Not only the currencies of the defeated states were shaky, but also those of the victorious and neutral states.

Before the war the economic and financial equilibrium of Europe rested on two cantilevers: the financial strength of Great Britain and the industrial and commercial dynamics of the German Reich.²² Keynes himself emphasized that Europe's entire economic

²¹ J.-L. Chabot, in his interesting work full of rich material (*L'idée d'Europe Unie de 1919 à 1939*, Grenoble 1978), includes some interesting data on this topic. He writes that around 600 items in all were published during the inter-war period on the subject of European unity—this includes books and longer articles, and the greatest numbers appeared during the years 1926 - 1931 (e.g. in 1930 alone, 29 books and 59 articles appeared). A considerable majority—around 60%—were written in French, German figuring second, followed by English and Italian. The author noted just one book and one article in the Polish language (p. 14).

²² D. Artaud, *La reconstruction de l'Europe 1919 - 1929*, Paris 1973, p. 9.

system was concentrated around Germany. The latter was the first and best economic partner of Russia and Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Austria-Hungary.²³ Hence, too, many authors recommended reinvesting Germany with her former role, as a prerequisite for economic unification in Europe. Whilst the formation of a European tariff union was recommended as the main concrete step along the path towards economic unity.²⁴ Demands for the limiting or abolition of tariff barriers and for the free exchange of goods appear in many works. In this way a basic union integrating Europe was to arise.

Energetic steps began to be taken for its realization. Thus, for instance, Emile Mayrisch of Luxemburg, founder of a steel cartel, established in Paris an "Action Committee for a European Tariff Union", winning over a numerous circle of politicians, economists, industrialists, and financiers. They launched the neatly formulated slogan, "tariff disarmament".²⁵

Apart from the project for a European tariff union, which occupied first place, other plans were also put forward. Francis Delaisi, for example, proposed that agricultural eastern Europe should be united by firm commercial links with industrial Western Europe. Georges Valois came forward with a proposal for making of Africa a vast workshop for 20th-century Europe, whilst Yves le Trocquer had the idea of devising a joint "five-year economic plan" for the whole of Europe.²⁶ Mention should also be made of the Dane Christian F. Heerfordt, author of many works on the unification of Europe, initiator of the idea of a United States of the Nations of Europe, and advocate of the so-called Scandinavian initiative.²⁷ But it is impossible to list them all.

The ideas they put forward, as one can deduce, were loose, as yet unrealizable projects. But some of their lines of thought

²³ J. M. Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

²⁴ "Premier pas vers l'union européenne—l'union douanière européenne"—this is the basic thesis of a book by the Belgian workers' activist V. Voytinsky, *Les Etats-Unis d'Europe*, Bruxelles 1927.

²⁵ H. Brugmans, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 - 50.

²⁶ F. Delaisi, *Les contradictions du monde moderne*, Paris 1932 ; J.-B. Durosselle, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

²⁷ C. F. Heerfordt, *Une Europe nouvelle*, Paris 1926.

contained a modicum of rational sense. Standing out against this background is the plan for a tariff union, more concrete, and easier to realize on a gradual basis. But even this came up against insurmountable obstacles. Along with the economic circles interested in its realization, groups of industrialists afraid of outside competition also voiced their opinion, and these were very much against such a union. And it was to these groups that governments were inclined to lend their support.

The pronouncements in favour of the unification of Europe and the steps taken in this direction thus far referred to, reflect a fairly broad front of action. In order to give a complete picture, we should now describe in somewhat greater detail the most mature and resolute activity, standing out from other initiatives of the kind by virtue of its consistency and tenacity. Namely, the activity of the Austrian aristocrat Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi. He was, simultaneously an initiator and leader of the movement in favour of European unification known by the name of Pan-Europa.

For Coudenhove-Kalergi this was not, as in the case of many others, an occasional, fleeting interest in a voguish campaign. He was committed to the cause of Pan-Europa for many years. He carried on his activity not only under favourable conditions, but also during the period of defeat when war was approaching. Nor did he interrupt such activity during the following years, and he was also active after the war. One might find fault with Coudenhove on a number of counts, and point to the erroneousness of certain of his views, but one cannot deny his sincere and self-sacrificing commitment to the cause of the unification of Europe.

As a relatively young, 29-year-old man, unknown to the general public, in 1923 he came forward with a programme which he included in the book *Pan-Europa*.²⁸ Coudenhove's views represent a definite, uniform whole—they contain a very strong justification for the unification of Europe, and present at the same time a view of how Europe should look.

Coudenhove-Kalergi begins with the assertion that con-

²⁸ R. N. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Pan-Europa*, Wien-Leipzig 1923, p. 168.

temporary Europe is faced with two vitally important problems : a social problem, and the unification problem. The first is rightly considered and worked on, but the second is often forgotten, although it is no less important for the future of the continent. The author writes much about the decline of a Europe "*verschuldet, zersplittert, unruhig, geschwächt ; zerrissen durch nationale und soziale Kämpfe ; schwer geschädigt in seiner Bevölkerungskraft und Industrie ; in einem Wirtschafts- und Währungschaos*" (p. 17). The future of Europe, facing threats from outside as well, is painted by Coudenhove in the darkest possible colours. He sees the greatest danger in a new war, which could mean the annihilation of the continent. The only salvation he sees is in unity : "*Wenn die Befreiung der europäischen Völker*", he emphasizes, "*nicht ergänzt wird durch ihre Einigung—werden die europäischen Staaten binnen kurzem von den wachsenden Weltmächten verschlungen werden*" (p. 21).

The essence of the Pan-Europa manifesto was the creation of a joint European community based on cultural and historical ties. Within this framework, the nations were to enjoy vast autonomy : "*Dieser Ausgleich wird nach innen zu weitestgehender Autonomie—nach außen zu weitestgehender Föderation führen*" (p. 21). Coudenhove came out strongly against nationalism, and against the oppression of national minorities, appealing for tolerance. But he also spoke out against the undermining of the borders established at Versailles. His motto was—don't move the borders, abolish them ! (p. 149).

According to Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas, Pan-Europa was considerably smaller than Europe as it existed within its geographical borders. He excluded Great Britain. He also eliminated the Soviet Union, but not only because the greater part of it lay within Asia. The author's assumption was that Pan-Europa should arise without England, but with her approval, and in close co-operation with her. But he distinctly cut himself off from Soviet Russia, and more than once in his book he uses argumentation based on "the Bolshevik threat". But his attitude was not entirely consistent. Kalergi wanted to establish proper relations with the USSR, chiefly on an economic basis : "*Rußland braucht Europa zu seiner Wiederaufbau*", he wrote, "*Europa braucht Rußland. Des-*

halb ist eine großzügige Verständigung zwischen diesen beiden Komplexen nötig" (pp. 62 - 63).

Something very important for Coudenhove was the defining of an attitude towards the League of Nations. He subjects the latter to some criticism, but does not question the need for its existence. What is more, he defines the Pan-European Union as a regional union, which ought to be accommodated within the framework of the League of Nations (pp. 81 - 89).

The main axis on which the entire construction of Pan-Europa was to have rested, was supposed to have been a Franco-German understanding. This question caused Coudenhove a great deal of worry. Indeed, it must have taken no little courage, and even more imagination, to write about a Franco-German union in 1923, when the unrelenting disputes between France and Germany were reaching their zenith.

Coudenhove-Kalergi passed over the expected difficulties and setbacks in building his plans without too much trouble. The entire book, no doubt largely for propaganda reasons, is full of optimism and belief in the feasibility of the Pan-European Union's plans. By the use of all possible arguments he tried to implant this belief in his readers: "*Die einzige Kraft, die Pan-Europa aufhalten kann, ist: der Wille der Europäer*", he emphasized.

What then did Coudenhove-Kalergi's manifesto represent, in the context of the concrete realities of post-war Europe? Was it just one of many Utopian theories, lacking any significance? Or was it a policy with definite potential and a fair chance of being realized? Certainly the idea itself of unification, or close co-operation, of the European nations was not devoid of rational sense, and theoretically speaking could have been a good thing for Europe. But the general climate prevailing in Europe at the time, and especially in Central-Eastern Europe, did not favour unifying tendencies. The European states acted in their own interests, and were divided by deep rifts and a sense of mutual resentment and prejudice. Very strongly in evidence was a phenomenon whereby the younger states especially were quite sensitive on the point of their own sovereignty. Ruling and management circles reasoned in terms of their own, often narrowly conceived state interests, anxious not to lose anything to anyone else. The history of those

years is full of examples of how comparatively minor border clashes, or disputes relating to national minorities, poisoned relations between states for years to come, leaving no room for calm reflection and sober assessment.

On the other hand, however, the fears which Coudenhove's appeals for the abolition of borders might have aroused among the smaller and weaker states had a particular justification. When all is said and done it was precisely the borders which shielded them from the domination of stronger states. These and similar questions became more frequent. Coudenhove-Kalergi appealed to Europeans for unity, pointing to the danger threatening them from without. However, this argument seems rather to miss the point. A sense of threat and hostility was fermenting inside Europe itself. Its source lurked on the Spree or the Danube, and not in the Urals or beyond the Atlantic. And this was what a large proportion, if not the majority, of Europe's inhabitants felt.

Europe after the First World War was divided not only from a political point of view, but from an intellectual one as well. And these latter divisions were often deeper and more difficult to overcome than the borders marked out on maps and in the actual territories. And yet despite everything, despite the generally unpropitious atmosphere, Coudenhove-Kalergi's manifesto contained a number of elements which might sound convincing in the ears of the Europeans. To these belonged first and foremost his arguments concerning the benefits which would accrue from economic co-operation, and from the abolition, or at least the reduction, of tariff barriers. Certainly his appeal that everything possible should be done to avert the threat of another war was bound to meet with a favourable response.

But in some places the plan for Pan-Europa was clearly a good deal weaker, sometimes containing approaches which were simply erroneous. For instance, it was difficult to imagine a united Europe which excluded Russia, one of its integral parts. The potential of such a truncated Europe would be considerably reduced, whilst its stability would be questionable. Above all the political views which guided the author did not make a convincing justification.

Another weak side of the book was that the author reproduced the most diverse arguments in favour of a united Europe, but

wrote considerably less about how exactly this Europe was to look. Predominant here are vague approaches to the topic, leaving wide areas open to various speculations and interpretations. Coudenhove-Kalergi's intention was the initiation of an organized campaign in favour of Pan-Europa. Above all he turned to unsophisticated people, to the ordinary citizens, hoping to create a mass movement which would force governments into action. But neither was he short of measures aimed at the rulers.

However, the beginning was difficult and modest. Coudenhove himself admits that his first articles and appeals, in 1928, produced hardly any response. 51 people joined the Pan-Europa movement, and the majority of these were "fantasts or madmen".²⁹ Coudenhove understood that the role of mainstay of the Pan-Europa movement would best be fulfilled by France, at that time the strongest and most influential of the European states. But under the leadership of Raymond Poincaré, conducting an uncompromising policy in respect of Germany, France was not suited for this function. Neither could it be fulfilled by Germany.

Such being the case, Coudenhove's choice fell on the Little Entente, in which he saw a local alliance of states, which could, however, become the embryo of a broader understanding. He began with Czechoslovakia. In long talks with Thomas Masaryk, he tried to induce him to make an official declaration in favour of Pan-Europa. He obtained a promise of support only. Masaryk thought that the idea itself was right, but felt that the time for its realization was not yet ripe. Coudenhove was not discouraged by setbacks, and began to operate on his own account. He found the atmosphere most conducive in Vienna, which became the centre of the entire movement. Its offices were located there, and it was there that the publishing enterprise "Pan-Europa" was set up, enabling the development of a large-scale propaganda campaign.

Austria, which felt herself to be the most handicapped state in post-war Europe, saw an opportunity for herself in the Pan-

²⁹ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben für Europa. Meine Lebenserinnerungen*, Köln-Berlin 1966, p. 121.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 118 - 119.

European idea. Leading Austrian politicians joined the movement, promising all-round support. We know today that these promises were not mere words. On the instructions of their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Austrian diplomats actively supported the Pan-European movement.³¹

Of considerable significance was the assistance offered by financial circles, chiefly German. German industrialists had long dreamed of gaining access to the European markets. Pan-Europa could help them to achieve this. They were therefore quite ready to devote large sums of money even to such an uncertain enterprise.³² Similar views prevailed within the German government, which initially was fairly well-disposed towards the Pan-European movement.³³

Coudenhove-Kalergi was a tireless champion of the ideas he propounded. He ceaselessly visited the European capitals, inducing, persuading, founding national Pan-Europa committees. There were two main environments where he succeeded in winning over followers. First of all there were the economic figures already mentioned, representing those branches of industry and trade which, in the consciousness of their own strength, did not fear competition, and saw benefits for themselves in one or another kind of unification of Europe. The other group consisted of intellectuals: writers, publicists, who were stimulated into action by ideological considerations, by the enchanting vision of European unity.

Coudenhove also met with goodwill on the part of politicians and diplomats. But this was often superficial goodwill, resulting from tactical considerations, and concealing calculation of one form or another. Thus, for example, at one point representatives

³¹ It was in this spirit, for instance, that the Austrian envoy in Berlin, Richard Riedl, acted when, on 27 April, 1923, he sent, on authority, to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs a brochure entitled "Vertrag zur Gründung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa" (W. Lipgens, *Europäische Einigungsidee 1923 - 1930 und Briands Europa-Plan im Urteil der deutschen Akten*, "Historische Zeitschrift", Bd. CCIII, 1966, p. 64).

³² R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, pp. 124 - 125.

³³ W. Lipgens, *op. cit.*, pp. 64 - 65.

of Fascist Italy expressed interest in the question of the unification of Europe. Here an opening was seen in Rome for the expansion of Italian colonists into French North Africa. When this turned out to be little realistic, however, Italy's attitude quickly stiffened. None the less Coudenhove still attempted to gain Mussolini's support.

Very characteristic, and symptomatic of the views of representatives of other governments too, was the attitude of Eduard Beneš to Pan-European concepts: "*In der Theorie war er Pan-europäer,*" writes Coudenhove, "*aber nicht in der Praxis. Er wolte jede mögliche paneuropäische Sicherung seiner Landesgrenzen, aber keinen wirksamen Schutz der deutschen Minderheiten. Er wolte den Abbau der Zollgrenzen gegenüber Osteuropa, um den nationalen Markt der Tschechoslowakei zu erweitern, aber keine Zollunion mit Deutschland aus Furcht vor dessen Konkurrenz*".³⁴

Coudenhove was very anxious lest the movement he directed be suspected of Germanophile tendencies, or even be thought to be of German inspiration. Hence the constant efforts to gain assistance from the Czechoslovakian government, hence the unceasing endeavours to win France over. These were finally crowned with success at the beginning of 1925. Coudenhove managed to secure the goodwill of Édouard Herriot, then Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs of France. In one of his public speeches, Herriot even alluded to the fact that "*Mein grösster Wunsch ist, eines Tages die Verwirklichung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa zu erleben*".³⁵

The conclusion of the Treaties of Locarno was a happy event for the Pan-European movement. The easing of tension in Franco-German relations which followed on from this, meant the elimination, or at least the reducing of one of the greatest difficulties perceived by Coudenhove-Kalergi on the path towards the realization of Pan-Europa.

In 1926 Coudenhove attempted to endow the movement with a new impetus, to lead it onto a higher level of development. Namely he put forward a proposal for the summoning of a con-

³⁴ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, p. 129.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 134 - 135.

gress, whose purpose would be to create a more compact, centralized organization. Such a congress took place in Vienna on 3 - 6 October, 1926 in a very ceremonious setting. Two thousand delegates representing 24 nations took part in it. Among others there was also a Polish delegation, headed by Aleksander Lednicki.

Officially speaking the congress was a complete success. A joint, outline programme of action was adopted, and the Statute of the Pan-European Union was passed. A Central Council was called into being, as the supreme authority, composed of the chairmen of the national committees. Coudenhove-Kalergi was elected President of the Union.³⁶ However, in the interpretation of one critical observer, the congress appeared otherwise: first and foremost it created the impression of a theatrical entertainment.³⁷ But one way or another, in the course of a few years the Pan-Europa movement grew in numbers, came to be noticed, and expanded its influence and contacts. Coudenhove appreciated the goodwill lavishly extended to him by numerous people of the writing profession. But he still strove fervently for the aid and support of economic circles.

He was encouraged in this direction all the more by clear hints that he must win over leading business figures to his ideas. In Paris, for instance, he was told: "*Nur wenn wir diese Herren veranlassen können, ihre nationalistische Einstellung gegen eine europäische einzutauschen, können wir hoffen, Frankreich für Pan-europa zu gewinnen!*"³⁸ These efforts must have been at least partially successful, since Coudenhove himself spoke about the subsidizing of the movement, partly by German economic circles. Even an International Society for the Support of Pan-Europa was founded, president of which was an industrialist from Stuttgart, Robert Bosch.³⁹

Much more difficult was gaining the support of the governments and official circles of particular countries, for which

³⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 149 - 151.

³⁷ From a report by the German envoy in Vienna, Count Lerchenfeldt, of 8 October, 1926 (quoted after W. L i p g e n s, *op. cit.*, p. 69, note 43).

³⁸ Coudenhove - Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, p. 165.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 167.

Coudenhove persistently strove, realizing that only with their assistance would the question of the unification of Europe take on a realistic shape. An inspection of the documents of the German Foreign Affairs Office gives one an insight into the degree of scepticism and incredulity with which German diplomatic workers treated the Pan-European movement. One can conclude that a similar state of affairs existed in many other countries.

Thus one of the higher officials at the Foreign Office, Bernhard von Bülow, described the Pan-European movement in August, 1926 as a questionable enterprise, whose aims were still at the formative stage and as yet difficult to anticipate in a political respect.⁴⁰ He also recommended a good deal of reserve and moderation. On more than one occasion Coudenhove's efforts and endeavours were brushed off with insignificant promises, evasions, or even a polite refusal. He sometimes had to wait months for an answer from or audience with a minister. The fact that he continually renewed his efforts, notwithstanding his failures and without being discouraged by setbacks, can only be ascribed to his extraordinary perseverance. After all, he himself was forced to admit that although the Pan-European movement had developed in leaps and bounds during the years 1923 - 1928, it had no influence at all on governments. It thus lacked any real political strength. At the sessions of the League of Nations, too, there had barely been any mention of the movement.

However, the situation changed radically when finally one of Europe's leading statesmen actively supported the idea of the unification of Europe. That politician was Aristide Briand. Coudenhove-Kalergi met Briand for the first time at the beginning of 1926. There was no need to win him over to his ideas. Briand had long since been observing the Pan-European movement, and was determined to give it his support. He said to Coudenhove that he wanted to crown his "Locarno triumph" with a new, bold step in the direction of a United States of Europe. He also promised to give moral support.⁴¹ He kept his word—in 1927 he assumed patronage of the movement, becoming Honorary President of the

⁴⁰ W. Lipgens, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴¹ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, p. 148.

Pan-European Union. From that time on he was unstinting in propagating the idea of unification. In one of his speeches in the winter of 1928, for example, he emphasized: "*Une confédération européenne serait le vrai moyen d'assurer la paix. La Société de Nations est trop vaste et trop faible. Les Traités de Locarno sont trop restreints et trop directement liés aux mauvais traités de paix de 1919. Mais l'Europe! Les 27 Etats européens unis dans les domaines économique, douanier, militaire, voilà où serait le salut [...]*"⁴²

However, Coudenhove waited impatiently for more concrete steps on Briand's part. But over two years were to pass—in Coudenhove's estimation the most valuable time, promising the greatest hope of success—before Briand decided on an official line of action. He is meant to have been convinced only by Coudenhove's desperate arguments; during a meeting with Briand in May, 1929, Coudenhove said that if a strict understanding between the European states was not reached in the nearest future, then again two hostile camps would be created in Europe. One would seek revision of the peace treaties, the other would attempt to maintain the *status quo*. Coudenhove also spoke of the danger of a German-Italian alliance. All this is meant to have made a very strong impression on Briand.⁴³ More reliable, however, would seem to be the information that it was a change in the attitude of the French right and leading figures in economic circles which enabled Briand to take a decisive stand. A significant role here is meant to have been played by the French economist and politician Louis Louchet.⁴⁴

In any event the fact is that from mid—1929 Briand was determined to act. In June, during a meeting with Gustav Stresemann in Madrid, he informed him that the stage of settling questions left by the war was now basically over. It was now necessary to consolidate European relations, both from the political and the economic point of view. He said it was necessary to find the energy for a combined effort on the part of all European

⁴² H. Brugmans, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁴³ Account by the German representative at the League of Nations, Dufour, of 7 September, 1929 (W. Lipgens, *op. cit.*, p. 72).

⁴⁴ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, p. 166.

states, otherwise Europe would be swallowed up. It was necessary to create a kind of European federation. Stresemann basically acquiesced, though first and foremost he perceived the economic aspect of the problem.⁴⁵

On 5 September, 1929, as Premier of France, Briand made a speech at a session of the Council of the League of Nations, officially presenting his views. The most important passage in his speech read as follows: "*Je pense qu'entre des peuples qui sont géographiquement groupés comme ceux d'Europe, il doit exister une sorte de lien fédéral. Ces peuples doivent avoir la possibilité à tout moment, d'entrer en contact, de discuter leurs intérêts, de prendre des résolutions communes, d'établir entre eux un lien de solidarité qui leur permette de faire face, au moment voulu, à des circonstances graves si elles venaient à naître. C'est ce lien que je voudrais m'efforcer d'établir*". In the further course of his speech, Briand emphasized with full force: "*Evidemment, l'association agira surtout dans la domaine économique, c'est la question la plus pressante.*"⁴⁶ Broadly speaking, he merely put forward the idea of unification. The plan for its realization was to be the subject of further proceedings.

Briand's speech was greeted with thunderous applause by those present. Other speakers, too, supported the case for unification. On 9 September, the first unofficial Pan-European conference of government representatives (chiefly foreign affairs ministers) from 27 states was held. It was agreed that Briand should set his proposals down in writing, and send them to governments with a request for comments. After taking the latter into consideration, Briand was to appear before the League of Nations one year later with the final version of the project. Although the prospects appeared very bright, even at that time certain unfavourable signs were visible. For instance the silence of Great Britain's representative was rather puzzling. The delegates of several other states were relying on him.

However, worse was to come shortly after this. On 3 October,

⁴⁵ Note by the interpreter of the Stresemann-Briand talks, Paul Schmidt, of 11 June, 1929 (W. Lippens, *op. cit.*, p. 73).

⁴⁶ J.-B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, pp. 274 - 275.

1929, Stresemann died, and the new people who followed him, succumbing more and more to the wave of nationalism, had few thoughts of unification. The Wall Street crash, which on 24 October initiated a world crisis, gave rise to strong autarkical tendencies among the European states. This created a more and more unfavourable atmosphere for Pan-Europa. None the less Briand set about devising the promised document. Alexis Léger, a high official within the Quai d'Orsay, was responsible for the actual wording. In May, 1930, following approval by the French government, the memorandum was ready. It was made public on 17 May, the same day as the Second Pan-European Congress gathered in Berlin.

The memorandum contained an expansive and strongly accented justification of the need for unification. It stressed that unification was an obvious necessity confronting all the nations of Europe. The sentiments of the nations themselves were already sufficiently clear. Now it was up to the governments to assume responsibility.⁴⁷ However, there were few concrete propositions among the general statements. Briand wrote merely of a European Conference as the chief organ of the Union, consisting of representatives of all the European governments belonging to the League of Nations (this eliminated the Soviet Union and Turkey). The executive organ of the Union was to be a permanent political commission with a secretariat at its disposal. The choice of Geneva as the seat of these bodies was meant to underline the fact that the European Union would be acting within the framework of the League of Nations.

Two points were strongly emphasized in the document. Firstly that membership of the Union was in no way prejudicial to the sovereignty of member-states. Secondly, in contrast to the previous proposals, the primacy of political questions over economic ones was distinctly stressed, since it was recognized that any progress towards economic unity was dependent upon the question of security. This latter change, which surprised many observers, was

⁴⁷ The text of Briand's memorandum, dated 1 May, 1930, is in *Société des Nations. Documents relatifs à l'organisation d'un régime d'Union Fédérale Européenne*, Genève 1930, pp. 1 - 16.

effected under the unquestionable influence of the developing crisis. The authors of the memorandum, fearing that demands for close economic unions, and the abolition or limitation of tariffs, might turn out to be very unpopular in the new circumstances, carried out certain manipulations, shifting these questions into the background. In doing this, however, they showed that immediate, tactical considerations were more important to them than long-term foundations and principles.

Coudenhove—an adherent of the actual, strict Union—could not disguise his disappointment after familiarizing himself with the contents of the memorandum by Briand. "*Es war Flickwerk*", he wrote, "*verwässert und verwaschen. Er bestand auf der ungeschmälernten Souveränität aller Bundesstaaten, auf der Unterstellung Europas unter den Völkerbund und auf dem Primat der Politik über die Wirtschaft. Nichts an diesem Dokument appellierte an die Phantasie der Völker; es war geschrieben für Diplomaten und Juristen.*"⁴⁸

For the purpose of comparison, it is worth recalling that a few months earlier, on 25 February, 1930, the Pan-European Union had put forward its own project for a "European Pact" whose purpose was the creation of a "Federation of European States". This plan, which went considerably further than Briand's project, envisaged the creation of the following joint bodies: a Federal Council (an upper chamber composed of state representatives), and a Federal Assembly, consisting of parliamentary delegates. Apart from this there was also to be a federal court and a secretariat. The Federation would have its own funds, whilst the citizens of particular states would simultaneously hold European citizenship, and so on.⁴⁹

Briand's project on the other hand, satisfied few people. For some it went too far, for others it was too modest. What is more, a tendency on the part of some states to go in quite the opposite direction to European unification, began to surface. Very characteristic in this respect were the views of particular governments sent to Briand. Thus the English reply, for instance, was non-committal. However, the most important thing it contained was

⁴⁸ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, p. 181.

⁴⁹ J.-B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

a proposition that any European organization should be restricted to a European committee of the League of Nations. This meant the practical shelving of the entire question. Today we know that the British government was, from the very outset, averse to the idea of the unification of Europe. Chiefly in view of the fact that they feared that it might create an undesirable precedent, which might reinforce decentralization tendencies within the context of the British Commonwealth.⁵⁰

The German government also took up a negative attitude towards the French Premier's proposal. It was extremely characteristic that, in preparing their reply, the members of Heinrich Brüning's Cabinet did not even consider the merits of the case for European unification. A negative reply was a foregone conclusion. Briand's project was perceived as intending to bring about the "perpetuation of the territorial status quo in Europe", and the consolidation of "France's hegemonic position". And if the reply was very carefully prepared, with the elaborate working of practically every word—this was done not with Briand, the official addressee, in mind, but in regard to the German electors, and especially those recruited from the nationalist right. It was no accident that the German reply contained sharp criticism of the existing situation in Europe, as well as an assurance that in fact no state was so desirous of reform as Germany. However, no-one reading this could be in any doubt as to the fact that this was not a criticism of the overall divisional structure as Coudenhove-Kalergi saw it, but a condemnation of "the Versailles system". Neither did the German government agree to the exclusion of Soviet Russia and Turkey from the sphere of European co-operation. After enumerating various other objections and reservations, the note concluded that in September a mere review of such material as might be utilized for joint European action would be undertaken. The Germans, then, were clearly playing for time, attempting to defer the entire question *ad calendae graecas*.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Cf. K. D. Erdmann, *Der Europaplan Briands im Lichte der englischen Akten*, "Geschichte im Wissenschaft und Unterricht", 1950, No. 1, pp. 16 - 32.

⁵¹ Cf. W. Lipgens, *op. cit.*, pp. 329 - 352.

Basically the issue was doomed by the practical rejection by the British, and especially by the Germans. The situation was not changed by the fact that the majority of Europe's minor and medium-sized states, twenty in all, and with the exception of Eire and Hungary, declared their basic consent to Briand's project, and expressed their readiness to take part in further preparations. But even these states were not short of comments and proposals, most often relating to their own situation, their specific feelings and needs. Thus for example, Poland, Spain, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Eire all insisted on the absolute sovereignty of individual states in the prospective union. Portugal and the Netherlands demanded consideration of the fact that they possessed colonies. Bulgaria and Austria postulated the principle of complete equality between the victors and the vanquished of the last war.

After studying the replies Briand was not of a mind to give in. On 9 September, 1930—as had been forecast—delegates of the European states gathered in Geneva to hear his views on the comments which had been submitted. Taking advantage of the marked divergences and even incompatibility of the postulates received, Briand proposed that first of all the “principle of European unification” should be established. This would then enable the calling of an assembly of the European union. However, this was vehemently opposed by the British representatives, supported by the Germans.

In the course of the discussion which developed, “like a bomb” the news broke of the decisive victory of Hitler's party in the elections to the Reichstag. An even more unfavourable climate was created for European reconciliation and unification. Opposition towards Briand's projects gained in strength and severity. The British forced through their concept of the founding, not of a European union, but of a Study Committee on a European Union within the framework of the League of Nations.

Briand's final attempt was at calling into being at least a permanent European Secretariat in Geneva. But this, too, was rendered impossible by the British delegates. Under the pretext of avoiding duplication, they proposed that the Secretary-General

⁵² *Ibidem*, pp. 353 - 354 ; Duroselle, *op. cit.*, pp. 278 - 279.

of the League of Nations, Sir Eric Drummond, should also assume direction of the European Secretariat. The proposal was accepted, thus depriving the European Secretariat of all independent significance.⁵³ The Geneva debate of September, 1930, and the resolutions passed at it, signified the overall failure of the idea of European unification. Regional controversies and nationalist tendencies predominated more and more. The best evidence of this is provided by the fate of the Study Committee on a European Union called into being.

This met for its first sitting in January, 1931. But instead of examining the general questions which might have been prompted by its title, at the suggestion of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Julius Curtius, it dealt with a detailed and secondary economic matter—the sale of grain surpluses in the states of Eastern Europe. The only thing worthy of note was the fact that it was decided to invite a representative of the Soviet Union to the next session of the Committee.⁵⁴ The latter was present at the second session, which took place in May, 1931, and at once presented an initiative for the conclusion of an “economic non-aggression pact”. However, the proceedings were dominated by another, controversial issue—a dispute concerning the tariff union with Austria planned by the Germans.

Disputes also broke out at the third session of the Committee, in September, 1931. All proposals aimed at leading the question of European unity out of its impasse were defeated. And thus a French project for creating a permanent European Union Commission within the framework of the League of Nations, was rejected by the German delegates, supported by the Italians, and a proposal by the Estonian delegate that discussions should be held on the question of the statute of a United States of Europe was also filed.⁵⁵ In 1932 the Committee met two more times, but was

⁵³ W. Lipgens, *op. cit.*, pp. 356 - 357 ; R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, pp. 182 - 183.

⁵⁴ Cf. H. Dirksen, *Moskau—Tokio—London*, Stuttgart 1950, pp. 96 - 98.

⁵⁵ R. Pusta Kaarel, *Fonctionnement et travaux de la Commission d'Etude pour l'Union Européenne*, “Revue de Droit Internationale”, 1931, pp. 425 - 440.

incapable of taking any decisions. Meetings were not resumed in 1933. In this way an institution symbolizing the existence of an initiative for European unity completed its existence.

Such being the case, Briand, and especially Coudenhove-Kalergi, displayed admirable tenacity, attempting as they did to carry on with their work under more and more unfavourable conditions. "*Als müden und gebrochen Mann sah ich*" recalls Coudenhove, "*Briand im September 1931 in Genf wieder. Er war entschlossen, den Rest seines Lebens der Paneuropa-Idee zu widmen. Seine Augen leuchteten schöner den je. Aus einem Kämpfer war er zu einem Märtyrer geworden.*"

From the forum of the League of Nations, Briand announced his intention of travelling round Europe with a pilgrim's staff in his hand, in order to proclaim the idea of peace and unity among the peoples. Coudenhove intended to accompany Briand on this pilgrimage.⁵⁶ But the death of Briand on 7 March, 1932 put an end to these plans.

Management of the campaign and the entire burden of responsibility again fell on the shoulders of Coudenhove-Kalergi. However, he was not alone. His efforts were still supported by many writers, publicists and scholars. One of these Philippe Lamour, wrote in 1931: "*Contre la guerre, il faut construire l'Europe [...] une Europe concrète, faite, non de l'union diplomatique, donc hypocrite des Etats, mais de la fédération, de ses unités naturelles autour des axes normaux donnés par les fleuves, les climats et les solidarités naturelles.*"⁵⁷

Lying behind was a tendency to turn towards nations, societies. After the collapse of the initiative undertaken by the governments, this trend again began to dominate within the Pan-European movement. Under such banner the Third Pan-European Congress assembled in Basle on 1 - 4 October, 1932. A resolution was passed on the creation of a "European Party". However, realization of this aim was deferred until such time as the "German crisis" was resolved. Such resolution followed soon afterwards, but in a sense which could not have been more unfortunate for the Pan-European

⁵⁶ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, pp. 183 - 184.

⁵⁷ H. Brugmans, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

movement—on 30 January, 1933 Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. In this situation there was no longer any question of the creation of a “European party”. A reorganization of the aims and methods of the movement took place. National Socialism was the chief enemy of European unity, and the struggle against it was now transformed into the principal task.⁵⁶ The Fourth Pan-European Congress, organized in Vienna in 1935, was devoted to precisely this issue.

However, the Pan-European movement was not strong enough to stand up against Hitlerism in any very serious way. The movement itself, however, sustained some painful blows at the hands of the Nazis. One of their first measures was the banning of the movement within the territory of Germany. Hitler burned with hatred for the adherents of European unification, seeing in them the spokesmen of a harmful trend, incompatible with his Nazi ideals: “*So beruht die paneuropäische Bewegung*”, he wrote, “*zunächst schon auf dem fundamentalen Grundirrtum, dass man Menschenwerte durch Menschenzahl ersetzen könnte [...] führt sie doch in ihrer konsequenten Befolgung zu einem Rassenchaos und Durcheinander, zu einer Verbastardung und Verniggerung der Kulturmenschheit und endlich damit zu einer solchen Senkung ihres rassistischen Wertes, dass der sich davon freihaltende Hebräer langsam zum Weltherrn aufzusteigen vermag*”.⁵⁷ These insane words became the ideological premiss of the activity of the Nazis. However, they did not particularly publicize their fight against the Pan-European movement. They preferred to operate secretly, but all the more effectively.

The annexation of Austria was another serious blow to the Pan-European movement. It lost its headquarters and its entire publishing base. Coudenhove himself managed to escape at the last minute. Despite the defeats he endeavoured to renew his activity within France. After a short break a new mouthpiece for the movement began to appear, in the shape of *European Letters*,

⁵⁶ J. Rappard, *Uniting Europe* (1930); U. Quartara, *Gli Stati Uniti d'Europa e del Mondo* (1930); A. d'Alia, *Confederazione Europea* (1934); A. Salter, *The United States of Europe* (1933); W. B. Curry, *The Case for Federal Union* (1939), etc.

⁵⁷ R. Coudenhove-Kalergi, *Ein Leben...*, p. 228.

published in three languages. On 17 May, 1939, the ninth anniversary of publication of Briand's memorandum, the Pan-Europeans organized a great rally in Paris, attracting the intellectual élite of France's capital.⁶⁰

Right to the last Coudenhove-Kalergi did not lose hope. In the military alliance between France, England and Poland he saw a symbolic significance—namely, the joining of Europe by England.⁶¹ Even the outbreak of war did not put an end to his activities. He attempted to operate under new, changed circumstances in the United States. However, for some years now all these efforts had been devoid of any real significance. The contemporary idea of the unification of Europe had broken down a good deal earlier. It collapsed with the fiasco surrounding Premier Briand's initiative in 1930. There were many reasons for this. Some of these have already been indicated. It is worth emphasizing once more that this initiative came too late. At precisely the same moment when a crisis was developing in Europe, accompanied by a rising tide of nationalism. But at the same time Briand's proposals in a sense arrived too soon, fell on unprepared ground. Apart from a group of enthusiasts, the majority of people in power evaluated the issue of unification as a fantasy, as an unrealizable Utopia, whilst behind their words of approval lay for the most part tactical considerations, aimed at securing short-term benefits of one kind or another.

The Pan-European movement of the inter-war period fell in a confrontation with concrete European realities, dominated above all by thinking centred on state interests. On the other hand there was not sufficient understanding of broader, European interests. Thinking of this kind had neither a strong tradition nor lasting support. The victory of Hitlerism in Germany dealt it the final blow. But can one say that the movement for the unification of Europe during those years was totally devoid of meaning? Looking at the issue from a historical perspective, it would seem inappropriate to give an unambiguously negative reply to this question. An idea was put forward which had undoubted attractive

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 234 - 235.

⁶¹ J.-B. Duroselle, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

force and a rational core. This idea concentrated a considerable body of people, who acted in its name, propagating it throughout Europe, and even attempting to endow it with a specified organizational framework. A tradition was created, a programme arose which, though not realized, did not entirely lose its relevance.

The best evidence of this is the revival of unification tendencies following the Second World War. Out of these grew concrete action, which took on realistic shape in western Europe, especially in the economic field. However, the experiences of the inter-war period have clearly taught us that one cannot unite merely part of Europe, since this would not be lasting and effective unification, and could lead to even deeper divisions within our continent. And despite everything, the latter still remains a whole, not only from a geographical point of view, but also from that of civilization and culture, whilst economic co-operation within Europe is simply an indispensable necessity. Europe never did end at the Elbe or at the Vistula. Its boundaries always stretched from the Portuguese coast up to the Urals, from the northern tip of Norway to the southern extremity of Italy.

(Translated by Phillip G. Smith)