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Churchill's Ideas on United Europe After World War II¹

INTRODUCTION

Histories abound about Winston Churchill's political career after the Second World War² and post-1945 British foreign policy, and the list of such bibliographical items is continuously expanding.³ This essay proposes to survey W. S. Churchill's views about Europe from the last year of World War Two, to his death on January 24, 1965. Instead of the classical approach of a history of politics or diplomacy, I prefer to seek an answer to what standpoint Churchill represented as regards post-1945 Europe, and how he attempted to convert it into the official stream of British foreign policy. Therefore, I will provide an overview of British foreign policy only when it radically differed from Churchill's position,

1 The study is a revised form of a former paper of the author published in *Hungary Through the Centuries*. Editor-in-Chief Richard P. Mulcahy. New York, 2011. 235–252.

2 Important works about Churchill's post-1945 activity (the list is by no means complete), James W. Muller, *Churchill as Peacemaker*. Woodrow Wilson Center Series. Washington D. C., 1997.; John W. Young, *W. S. Churchill's Last Campaign – Britain and the Cold War 1951-55*. Oxford, 1996. Martin Gilbert, *Never Dispair – W. S. Churchill 1945-1965*. Vol. VIII. London, 1988.; John W. Young, *Policy of Churchill's Peacetime Administration*. Leicester, 1988.; Henry Pelling, *Winston Churchill*. London, 1974.; Anthony Seldon, *Churchill's Indian Summer; The Conservative Government, 1951-55*. London, 1981.; John Charmley, *Churchill's Grand Alliance, The Anglo-American Special Relationship 1940-57*. London, 1996.; John Ramsden, *The Age of Churchill and Eden 1940-1957*. London, 1995.; Anthony Montague Browne, *Long Sunset - Memoirs of Winston Churchill's Last Private Secretary*. London, 1995.; *Churchill. Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran*. Boston, 1966.; Paul Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front 1900-1955*. London, 1992.; Roy Jenkins, *Churchill*. London, 2001.

3 For post-1945 British foreign policy see Elizabeth Barker, *Britain in a Divided Europe 1945-1970*. London, 1971.; Joseph Frankel, *British Foreign Policy 1945-1973*. London, 1975.; Brian White, *Britain, Detente and Changing East-West Relations*. London, 1992.; Martin Smith – Steve Smith – Brian White (eds.), *British, Foreign Policy, Tradition, Change and Transformation*. London, 1988.; John W. Young, *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992*. London, 1993.; Frank Roberts, *Dealing with Dictators. The Destruction and Revival of Europe 1930-1970*. London, 1991.; Anne Deighton, *The Impossible Peace. Britain, the Division of Germany and the Origins of the Cold War*. Oxford, 1990.; Kenneth O. Morgan, *The People's Peace – British History 1945-1990*. Oxford, 1992.; *Documents on British Policy Overseas*. Ed. by M. E. Pelly – H. J. Jasamee – K. A. Hamilton – R. Bullen – G. Benett. London, HMSO, Ser. I-II-III., 1986, 1991, 1997.

which happened on several occasions. With this, following an analysis of his address evaluating the immediate post-war situation, as well as the Fulton speech, I will discuss Churchill's vision of a United States of Europe. Aside from using published and unpublished archival sources,⁴ it is necessary to analyze in detail some fundamental documents related to Churchill's post-1945 activities ("iron curtain telegram," Fulton Address, Zurich Address, documents related to the United States of Europe), because Hungarian studies of history, so far, have not dealt with them in a substantive manner.

The Europe that Churchill knew has ceased to exist. The author's aim is to present this controversial man's views about Europe, which themselves were controversial in their day. Nevertheless, without his predictions, concepts and visions of a united Europe, today's European Union would not exist.

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FULTON

Churchill's ambivalent attitude regarding communism and the Soviet Union evolved during the years of the Second World War. Prior to 1939, he represented an uncompromising anticommunism (a characteristic feature until his death, that even his sharpest critics admit), which somewhat softened during the war years for practical reasons due to a necessary cooperation with the Soviet Union.⁵ However, he remained suspicious of Soviet foreign policy, throughout the war. In October 1939, in a radio speech, he compared Soviet foreign policy to a mystery which is "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."⁶ Although this statement was obviously inspired by the shock felt over the Molotov-

4 From among unpublished archival sources we rely mostly on material in Churchill Archives, in Churchill College, Cambridge (Churchill Papers 2/18-2/377, United States of Europe, 5/2-5/9, Churchill Speeches, 5/2-5/7.), as well as Churchill's speeches, which are to be considered primary sources because he wrote most of them himself. His post-war speeches were published in Randolph S. Churchill's edition: *The Sinews of Peace*. London, 1948. *Europe United*. Cassel, London, 1950.; *In the Balance*. London, 1951.; *Stemming the Tide*. London, 1953.; *The Unwritten Alliance*. London, 1961.

5 John Charmley's works, primarily: *Churchill. The End of Glory – A political biography*. London, 1993.; Idem, *Churchill's Grand Alliance – The Anglo-American Special Relationship 1940-1957*. London, 1995.

6 Op.cit., Robert Rhodes James (ed.), *Winston Churchill. His Complete Speeches 1897-1963*. VI. 1935-1942. New York, 1974, 6161. Quoted in Viktor Mauer, Harold MacMillan and the Deadline Crisis over Berlin 1958-59. = *Twentieth Century British History*, 9, 1998. no. 1. 54–85.

Ribbentrop Pact and the rapid fall of Poland, still it provided the bottom-line upon which British foreign policy laid judgements about the Soviet Union's power politics. Churchill sensed acutely the dangers implied in the Yalta order, which the words of his telegram of May 14, 1945 to Lord Halifax commenting on the Soviet declaration of war against Japan aptly illustrate. He was convinced that the cost of the Soviet declaration of war against Japan could be very high: the upper hand for the Soviets in Central Europe and in the Balkans.⁷

He took a similar position regarding Hungary, when, in a private conversation two weeks later, he emphasized that:

“...The position of the Magyars has been maintained over many centuries and many misfortunes, and must ever be regarded as a precious European entity. Its submergence in the Russian flood could not fail to be either the source of future conflicts or the scene of national obliteration horrifying to every generous heart...”⁸

He contrasted the threat of communism and communist activity in Europe with the traditional values of the Christian world, but he never denied that communists are very practical and purposeful people. Canadian Prime Minister MacKenzie King noted in his diary that Churchill compared communists to Jesuits denying Jesus's principles, who would be willing to do anything to reach their aim and were to no extent naïve daydreamers. Since they were extremely pragmatic in their aims, it was the only way to manage them.⁹

Because Churchill had in all his life been convinced that big events only waited for him to direct them and that he held extraordinary skills in strategic thinking, he referred to many of his earlier predictions in and about his relation to the Soviet Union. In his telegram to Stalin on April 29, 1945, he called attention that the grave differences between the western and the “eastern” world would sooner or later tear Europe apart, unless

7 Churchill Papers, 20/219. Quoted in, Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 14.

8 Churchill Papers, M/529/5. PM. personal minute. Quoted in, Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 24-27. During his post WWII political career Churchill could gain valuable and up-to-date information on Hungary from his business partner and intimate friend Emery Reves (Révész Imre). On their cooperation, see Róbert Barta, *Az államférfi és a világpolgár. W. S. Churchill és Emery Reves*. [The statesman and the world citizen] Máriabesnyő, 2013. 147.

9 J. W. Pickersgill – D. F. Forster, *The MacKenzie King Record*. vol. 3. 1945-46. Toronto, 1970. 83–87. Quoted in Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 160–162.

leaders of the antifascist alliance prevented it.¹⁰ Occasionally, however, he turned a critical eye on his own role, although he never denied that making big decisions in an informal way greatly appealed to him. Turning to his doctor in a confidential moment, he recalled the famous “percentage agreement” made with Stalin in October 1944:

“Read that. We made an arrangement with Stalin in the war about spheres of influence, expressed in percentages. Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece and so on. Here they are in print . . . It seems rather cynical, I said to Stalin, to barter away the lives of millions of people in this fashion. Perhaps we ought to burn this paper. ‘Oh, no’ said Stalin, ‘you keep it.’ . . . You see the people at the top can do these things, which others can’t do.”¹¹

The fact that the Soviet Union’s spread in Europe was relentless seriously worried Churchill. Such a fear indeed motivated the “iron curtain” telegram, which he sent to President Truman on May 12, 1945. Although the expression “iron curtain” originated much earlier, the telegram is more than a mere analysis of the situation.¹² He found it very urgent to make a lasting agreement with the Russians, before everybody got too comfortably settled in the occupied zones. Churchill’s “iron curtain” telegram was motivated by a double fear. At all costs, he wanted

10 Prime Minister’s Personal Telegram, T. 657/5. No. 2255 to Moscow, Premier Papers 3/356/6. Quoted in, Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 659.

11 *Moran Diary*, August 16, 1953. Moran, 481–482.

12 Historical studies claim that the phrase “iron curtain” was first used by Russian emigrant philosopher Vasilii Rozanov in his 1918 book *Apocalypse of Our Time*, which discussed Russian development (“With a rumble and a roar, an iron curtain is descending on Russian History.”) Two years later, in a book about her travels in Soviet-Russia (*Through Bolshevik Russia*), Ethel Snowden also mentions it (“... a country ... being behind an iron curtain.”) The expression also appears in a speech by Goebbels, Nazi minister of propaganda, delivered on February 25, 1945 (“... ein eisenes Vorhang.”), as well as in a radio speech by Graf Schwerin von Krosigk, German minister of foreign affairs, delivered on May 2, 1945 (“... In the East the iron curtain behind which, unseen by the eyes of the world, the work of destruction goes on, is moving steadily forward.”) Krosigk’s speech was published in details in *The Times*, 3 May, 1945. The term was also used by Allen W. Dulles in a position paper he presented to the Council on Foreign Relations in September 1945. The Office of Strategic Services (OSS), for which Dulles had worked, had just been disbanded. Dulles came to New York to give the Council his assessment of the immediate post-war European situation. In relation to this, he stated that with regard to the Soviet Union’s activities in Eastern Europe it was “as if an iron curtain has fallen.” This position paper was not published at the time, and remained in the Council’s archive. However, it was eventually published in the Fall 2005 edition of the Council’s journal *Foreign Affairs*, as part of its commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the conclusion of World War Two.

to prevent an American withdrawal of troops from the continent when the war ended – this had been his primary aim in Yalta too – and, because he did not trust the Russians, he wanted to come to terms with them from a position of power.

The new first secretary to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, George F. Kennan's long telegram, cabled in spring 1946, already regarded the expansive Russian foreign policy as a crossbreed between Marxist hegemony and an old czarist politics of conquest. Thus, when Churchill delivered his speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1946, he underscored an already crystallizing American policy of containment. The speech did not contain surprising new elements, but its tone was unusually frank. It featured all of the major points of Churchill's future foreign policy. Soviet occupation did not ensure democratic development in Eastern and Central Europe, with special regard to Poland and those German regions under Soviet control. Dictatorships and police states were forming everywhere with the help of the Soviets and local communists, which fundamentally threatened peace in Europe and divided the continent. Churchill opined that an extraordinary danger was present since the Soviet Union enjoyed military superiority on the European mainland. He believed that even if the Russians did not want war, they did want to utilize their wartime victory to a maximum extent. In order to achieve this, they wanted to push the border of their European zone of influence as far West as possible. Besides systemically plundering the areas they controlled, the Soviets interpreted democracy to mean an autarchy of the local communist parties.

In this situation, the most important task the English-speaking democracies needed to do was to cooperate closely in matters of economic, political and military, as well as pursue common action under UN auspices. The West needed to negotiate from the position of power: it must rearm and not allow any of the Western occupied German areas to fall into Soviet hands. Nevertheless, Moscow and surrounding satellite states must not be rejected from a coming reorganization of Europe; they must be negotiated with. Churchill was optimistic for the future because, when English-speaking peoples join efforts it must be for world peace and such an alliance would inevitably be invincible. Of course, in this unity he relegated a triple role to Great Britain: to be the focal point of the Western European democracies, the British Commonwealth, and the special American-British relationship. Hence, the western world,

together with the British Empire, was to face a charming future, as long as Churchill's recommendations were considered and followed.

Churchill's Fulton Address was not received with unanimous enthusiasm. Truman's administration distanced itself from the principles advertised in Fulton, although they had received Kennan's "long telegram" a week earlier and it reoriented American foreign policy in the exact direction that Churchill proposed. The British Labour government, naturally, did not take a speech by a conservative politician in opposition to be part of its official foreign political considerations, and foreign policy documents testify that the British could not do much against the sovietization of Central and Eastern Europe – at least, not in the field of economics. A final note of the summative document assessing the situation in Eastern Europe between 1945–46 stated that British commercial and economic interests in the region were negligible, but that existing ones needed to be protected.¹³ Thus, the leading economic and political personalities in the least "sovietized" countries needed to be approached and dealt with, primarily through cooperation within international organizations. It would be an oversimplification to claim that British foreign policy "wrote off" the region: for instance, they continued to follow Hungarian domestic affairs attentively, but they did not have, nor could have, any influence over the proceedings.¹⁴

The most violent response to the Fulton Address, of course, came from the Soviet Union. Stalin himself gave an unusually long and very sharp-toned statement for *Pravda* on March 14, 1946.¹⁵ In his opening he called Churchill a warmonger, who, much like Hitler, proclaimed the superiority of certain peoples – in this case the English-speaking peoples. Those who did not speak English had no choice but to accept Anglo-Saxon hegemony because it was good by nature. If they did not act accordingly, it meant war. Concerning sovietization in Eastern Europe and building dictatorships, Stalin commented that as to his best knowledge there was a one-party government in Great Britain and the opposition could not have a say in how the country was governed. All around Eastern Europe, however, multiparty coalitions operated with active involvement of the parties in opposition. The Soviet leader did not avoid cynical words. To

13 *FCO Documents on British Policy Overseas*. Ed. by M. E. Pelly – H. J. Jasamee – K. A. Hamilton. Series I. Vol. VI. HMSO, London, 1991. East-Europe 1945-46. 363–378. An analysis of Soviet economic policies in the region.

14 *Loc. cit.* 157–158, 199–201, 305–312.

15 Stalin's answer to the Fulton Address. = *Pravda*, March 14, 1946.

a statement by Churchill that the communist movement takes a growing space in the areas occupied by the Soviet Union, he observed that this time Churchill was close to the truth, except that the communist movement was taking space all over the world. Then, in accordance with the tone of the article and Stalin's unusually turbulent temper, further lines followed to glorify the communists' heroic antifascist stance.

It is difficult to regard Stalin's acute explosion merely as his subjective opinion, because the marshal directed the country's foreign policy. In all likelihood, Soviet explosions against the Fulton Address perfectly fitted into a conception – supported by recent historical research of the early cold war – that the Soviet Union and Stalin, personally, thought the breakout of a third world war to be a real possibility as early as summer of 1946. As it was, Stalin came to believe it was an inevitability well before the creation of the Kominform.¹⁶ Furthermore, the Fulton speech touched upon a sensitive issue, and the British Labour government's ambassador to Moscow (Frank Roberts) pointed to it in a telegram to Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin, dated March 18, 1946. Roberts noticed that influential members of the Soviet political elite became particularly angry over that part of the speech where Churchill asserted that the only thing the Soviets respected was military power.¹⁷

Summing up we can argue that Churchill's Fulton Address cannot be considered as the opening of the cold war. Neither the phrase "iron curtain" nor his evaluation of the contemporary European scene were original. The Fulton speech was in keeping with Churchill's style, but he was in opposition and his statements did not reflect the views of Mr. Attlee's Labour government. As for the United States, its foreign policy was already moving toward containment prior to the Fulton speech. In the language of sport: undoubtedly, the Soviet Union hit the high ball offered by Churchill, and using all mechanisms of the machinery of propaganda, they named the former wartime ally a warmonger. By this time, Soviet foreign policy was also inclined toward an unavoidable confrontation with the West. The same thing happened here was what happened several times during Churchill's career: he analysed the situation with brilliant sensitivity, he predicted future and, without him being involved, the events proved him right. All of the major elements of his foreign policy vision featured in the Fulton Address, as we have argued above, unfolded the way he said they would, with the possible exception of the United States of Europe.

16 John Lewis Gaddis, *We Know Now – Rethinking Cold War History*. Oxford, 1997. 23.

17 FCO Documents, Ser. I. Vol. VI. 326–331.

CHURCHILL AND THE IDEA OF THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

Churchill first used the expression “United States of Europe” in Brussels on November 16, 1945, in a speech given in a joint session of the Belgian Senate and House of Representatives, although he acknowledged that it originated from Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi, the founder of pre-war pan-European movement.¹⁸ This part of his speech contained generalities only and served for rhetorical purposes: “United States of Europe...would unify this continent in a manner never known since the fall of the Roman Empire, and within which all its peoples may dwell together in prosperity, in justice and in peace.”¹⁹

In front of the Dutch National Assembly in the Hague he practically repeated the Brussels speech; however, he also mentioned the integration of East Europe and the Soviet Union, and he envisioned these under United Nations’ control.²⁰ After such antecedents came his famous Zurich address, where he expatiated on his full concept of the United States of Europe. In his lecture delivered at the University of Zurich, on September 19, 1946, he attempted to connect a European image of the future with the democratic and federalist system of Switzerland, which was an obvious gesture towards his audience. He mentioned Kalergi’s important role too, in the context that the Count influenced Aristide Briand’s Europe-plan, which in turn inspired Churchill’s idea of a united Europe, and that he largely inspired his [Churchill’s] ideal of a United Europe. Sharp but correct, Churchill criticized the League of Nations’ pre-war activity. In his opinion, the principles that the League proclaimed – which were essentially good – were only followed by states

18 Graf Kalergi met Churchill four times between 1946-1950. The preface to his book published in 1950 (*An Idea Conquest the World*) was written by Churchill. Further important works by Kalergi, *Pan Europe*. Vienna, 1923. *Totalitarian State Against Man* (1938), *Europe Must Unite* (1940). Although Churchill acknowledges Kalergi’s achievements, but did not agree with the pan-European movement being so sharply anti-Russian, “...I think it would be a pity for me to join an organization which had such a markedly anti-Russian bent, but I was not aware that this was Count C. K.’s conception.” (Letter to Duncan Sandys, June 29, 1946. Churchill papers, 2/23. Quoted in Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 243.) More about Kalergi’s activity in detail, Emma Kövics, *Az európai egység kérdése és Németország 1889-1933*. [The issue of the European union and Germany] Budapest, 1992.

19 Speech of 16 November 1945, Brussels. Churchill Papers 5/2.

20 “... I see no reason why, under the guardianship of the World organization, there should not ultimately arise the United States of Europe, both those of the East and those of the West...” Speech of 9 May 1946, The Hague. Churchill Papers 5/5.

whose interests demanded the creation and running of this international organization. Quite obviously, this was a critique of the victors of World War One, and Churchill's conclusion was that one must not commit the same mistakes again. Germany must be disarmed and a Franco-German rapprochement, which would be the centre-piece of a peaceful and United Europe, had to be furthered at all costs. He cited Gladstone's words, who thought that after serious conflicts a healing dimness of forgetting should veil participants. Thus, Churchill was among the first to urge reconciliation between the two arch-enemies, even if at this time he envisioned it with a unified and demilitarized Germany. We know, today, that German and French statesmen took decisive, practical measures for the post-war reconciliation of the two peoples (exchange holiday trips for orphans, charitable cooperation for the missing-in-action, family reunion programs, etc.). Still by investing his authority or the friendship of the two peoples at all international fora, Franco-German reconciliation became a pan-European issue. Churchill emphasized that in a united Europe the smaller needed as much influence as the larger ones (!), and he wished to integrate German provinces into a United Europe in a federation (in smaller units), referring back to the disjointed medieval principalities.

The Zurich address touched upon a timely issue: nuclear weapons. He found it encouraging that this new weapon formed a protective shield over the Western world (because the USA enjoyed a nuclear monopoly then), but pointed out in no uncertain terms that this situation was bound to change and, if used for aggression, the atomic bomb would lead to a world catastrophe. Everybody took the hint that the speech did not mention explicitly: an effective security system must be developed before the Soviet Union came into possession of a similar piece of arms. Churchill was, nevertheless, wary of excluding the Soviet Union and other Eastern European peoples from United Europe. When, as a first step, he proposed the foundation of a Council of Europe, he mentioned that in the creation of a United Europe, France and Germany must act as leaders, but Great Britain, peoples of the British Commonwealth, possibly the USA and hopefully the Soviet Union must also participate.

Media responses to Churchill's Zurich address were very mixed, most of them highlighted the surprise element of the speech: Franco-German reconciliation. More realistic responses emphasized Churchill's consideration of the interests of the Soviet Union. Russians refused it unanimously, the French took it grudgingly, and British reactions were also contradictory. Even Churchill acknowledged that his Zurich address

contributed largely to the Labour Government's not supporting the British delegation travelling to a session of the Congress of Europe held in the Hague between May 7–10, 1948, because it was led by him.²¹ An article in the liberal *Manchester Guardian* reflected the most realistic British opinion:

“Europe is at present divided into two parts by the quarrel between the Soviet world and the Western world. If this division persists the best we can hope for is a closer union of the nations in the western half, which Russia would certainly consider a hostile “block”. True unity can to be achieved only by agreement with the Soviet group, which will not be favourably impressed by any speech of Mr. Churchill's.”²²

French pouting is quite understandable after considering a report sent by Churchill's in-confidence son-in-law, Duncan Sandys about his visit to De Gaulle. The initiative came from Churchill, who, in a letter dated November 26, 1946, asked De Gaulle's opinion about Franco–German reconciliation as proposed in the Zurich address. Sandys delivered the letter in person and he reported in writing to his father-in-law about the French politician's answers during their conversation:

“He said (De Gaulle) that the reference in Mr. Churchill's Zurich speech to a France-German partnership had been badly received in France. Germany, as a state, no longer existed. All Frenchmen were violently opposed to recreating any kind of unified, centralized Reich, and were gravely suspicious of the policy of the American and British Governments. Unless steps were taken to prevent a resuscitation of German power, there was the danger that a United Europe would become nothing else than an enlarged Germany.”²³

He emphasized that if the French can be gained for the idea of a United Europe, then it must commence in such a form where both Great Britain and France are founding members. Furthermore, these two countries need to develop a shared platform into details in each measure that concerns Germany. De Gaulle also thought that France would support the idea of an European federation if she could come to terms with Great Britain in

21 Churchill as chairman of the British United Europe Committee led the delegation, and only two Labour Party politicians supported travelling (Gordon Lang, Hugh Delargy). Gordon Lang of the Labour Party, who participated in Churchill's United Europe movement, got totally isolated within Labour because of his article published in London *Cavalcade* on May 10, 1947, in which he ensured the Conservative politician of his support.

22 East and West. = *Manchester Guardian*, September 20, 1946.

23 Churchill Papers 2/20.

questions of debate. Churchill, like leaders of the official British foreign policy, knew exactly well that De Gaulle's not quite modest "conditions" needed to be treated with concern. Although they were convinced that France was not, and would not, for quite some time, be in a position to act as a European leader, they also sensed that such a vacuum on the continent needed to be filled in by Great Britain. This did not, however, match with the British Europe policy, traditionally based on a balance of power. The dilemma was well illustrated by a September 25, 1946 letter from the British Ambassador in Paris (Duff Cooper) to Churchill:

"...France is not in a position, and probably never will be again to take the lead in Europe. There are only three possible starters: Russia, Germany and Great Britain. In the last war the English Channel saved us, as it so often done before and which it can never do again. We are more a part of the continent of Europe than we have ever been, and if we refuse to play our part in it properly we shall be guilty of a greater folly than the United States will be if they refuse to play their part in the world."²⁴

Because De Gaulle, like Churchill, was in opposition, his opinion could not be considered an official standpoint but, regardless, the British treated French weakness as a fundamental tenet in foreign policy for nearly two decades after the close of the Second World War.

The American response to the Zurich address is also worthy of attention. Newspapers wrote about the speech often highlighting only parts of it, at times rather critically, with a frankness unusual in the European press. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* reduced the speech into a European peoples' union being created under British auspices, while the *Globe Democrat*, also of St. Louis, emphasized what they perceived as an anti-Russian edge with Franco-German cooperation within a United States of Europe.²⁵ Some more critical voices objected to Churchill's trying to create European unity within, or enlarging, the scope of the United Nations. In the *New York Herald Tribune* the influential columnist Walter Lippman expressed his opinion that whether Germany became a part of United Europe depended primarily upon Moscow's attitude about the matter because the Soviets had half the country under occupation.²⁶

On June 12, 1946, General George C. Marshall announced at a press conference that Churchill's Zurich address inspired the US administration to a great extent in launching a program later known as the Marshall Plan. For

24 Churchill Papers 2/20.

25 *St. Louis Dispatch, Globe Democrat*, September 21, 1946.

26 *The Star Times*, St. Louis; *New York Herald Tribune*. In, Churchill Papers 2/22.

this reason, and also for the wide international response, Churchill prided himself on this address for the rest of his life. He referred back to it several times and, perceptibly, he thought of it as a major political success. He repeated the key elements of the speech almost word by word in Parliament on June 26, 1950, highlighting the leading role Great Britain was to play in the western world. Hardly more than two months later, in a letter to President Truman, Churchill attributed Franco-German reconciliation to the speech delivered in Zurich, and considered it a great personal success.²⁷ As Prime Minister, in a radio speech on December 22, 1951, yet again he recalled Zurich's spirit and contrasted it with the communist menace, while offering a fine critique of America's world hegemony:

"If war comes it will be because of world forces beyond British control. On the whole I don't think it will come. Whatever happens we stand up with our strength in defence of the free world against Communist tyranny and aggression. We shall do our utmost to preserve the British Commonwealth and empire as an independent factor in world affairs. We shall cherish the fraternal association of the English-speaking world. We shall work in true comradeship for and with United Europe."²⁸

However, the concept of the United States of Europe was not only present in speeches and debates. Archival documents dealing with the movement show that it was inspired by Churchill's speeches in Brussels, the Hague and Zurich, and that the British organization had been in existence since the winter of 1946.²⁹ This is probable because the aims of the United Europe Movement in Britain had, in all likelihood, been composed in October 1946. Accordingly, the major aim of the movement was:

"...To unite Europe...from the Atlantic to the Baltic Sea. Eastern Europe...for the present...unable to join the proposed "European Federation"...should make a start on their own, always leaving it open to the other states to join later as when they can... The United States of Europe would be neither dependent on nor opposed to the USA or the Soviet Union. ...it would be fitted into the structure of the United Nations Organization and subject to the authority of the Security Council."³⁰

The movement, however, had to pay special attention to affairs of the British Commonwealth and it could not represent a radically anti-Soviet position:

27 Churchill Papers 2/32 and Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 536.

28 Gilbert, *Never Despair*, 670.

29 Churchill Papers 2/18-27.

30 "United States of Europe," Statement of Aims, undated. Churchill Papers 2/19.

“United Europe would have been the status of a Regional Group under the Charter of the United Nations Organization and would naturally seek the close friendship and co-operation of the Soviet Union and the United States of America... Britain has special obligations and spiritual ties which link her with the other nations of the British Commonwealth. Nevertheless, Britain is a part of Europe and must be prepared to make her full contribution to European Unity.”³¹

Although the movement’s formal membership was limited to a few hundred people, it did have several thousand supporters, and so created a temporary executive committee, with Churchill presiding, and with all of its important offices filled by either by his old friends and followers, or by reliable but insignificant politicians. It is not too far-fetched to say that British United Europe Movement was nothing but Churchill’s creation to save himself for action in higher politics and to build political credit by propagating a European unity. Although the movement’s leaders took precautions to include politicians from all colors of the political palette into the executive, even moderate opinions abroad recognized that the organization was structured around Churchill.³² In his program speech delivered in the Royal Albert Hall, the ex-Prime Minister insisted that Great Britain have key-role not only in a united Europe but in world politics too. In his view, three of the world’s four power centers had Great Britain in the focus. Of course, besides controlling the British Commonwealth, United Europe would also be centered in London, which was tied to America with a set of special relationships based on Anglo-Saxon values and solidarity. Despite these facts, however, it cannot be said that the movement served as nothing more than a springboard for

31 United Europe Speeches, Royal Albert Hall, London, May 14, 1947. Churchill Papers 2/18.

32 Unarguably, the power of Churchill-believers in the leadership of the movement was overwhelming; Leo Amery (Churchill’s old friend), Lady Violet Bonham Carter (Asquith’s daughter, leader of the Liberal Party in 1946-47), Lord Layton (economist, ex-leader of the *Economist*, director of *Reuters* between 1945-53), Duncan Sandys (Churchill’s son-in-law) all took side with the ex-Prime Minister during his long political career. Representatives of churches, active and retired leading military officers, and even famed politicians such as Lloyd George, Harold MacMillan and Anthony Eden participate in the executive of more than 36 people (in summer 1947). On March 17, 1948, the *Glasgow Herald* cited an article by Leon Blum published in *Le Populaire* the previous day, “...The stamp of his approval brought with it the danger that the European federation would have a character too narrowly Churchillian... The Federalist movement would have great difficulty in emerging from the shadow of a too illustrious name.” Churchill Papers 2/18. United Europe.

Churchill's political ambitions. It played a significant role in Britain's preparation for the European Congress held in the Hague between May 7–10, 1948, as well as the British public's acceptance of those institutions associated with Western European economic integration.³³ A British delegation of 140 members that went to the Hague was led by Churchill, who reiterated the idea of a United Europe in his congressional speech and urged participants to create an assembly of United European nations as soon as possible.

More than merely supporting Western European integration with words, the British United Europe Movement built a widespread international network of relations. Besides the Central European Federal Movement created by refugee migrant politicians of the Baltics and Soviet client states as well as the College of Europe founded in 1950, they held relationship with a sub-organization of the European Movement, the so-called Eastern and Central European Group, a colorful medley of politicians having emigrated from the region.³⁴ At the same time, the movement had American supporters who provided financial help for the British. Influential leaders of the Morgan Rockefeller and Armco companies supported Churchill just as much as Senator J. William Fulbright or future secretary of state for foreign affairs John Foster Dulles. British supporters did not lag behind either. They collected £35,000 over dinners in the movement's fundraising campaign in summer 1947 and 1948. Not only did such large companies as British American Tobacco, Dunlop, Shell Union, Unilever donate, but so did financial institutions including the Bank of England, Lloyds, and Baring Bros., as well as individuals, notably N. M. Rothschild.

The reception of Churchill's United Europe Movement was identical in spirit with his general postwar reputation; it was very controversial. Serious polemics and conflict developed between him and Graf Kalergi,

33 Primarily, we refer to organizations named The European Coal Organisation, The European Committee for Central Inland Transport, The Emergency Economic Committee for Europe, Economic Commission for Europe, and the non-official Independent League for European Cooperation.

34 On behalf of Britain, this was presided by Harold MacMillan, with his deputy E. Beddington-Behrens (retired military officer, leading figure of the League of Nations and the European Movement later), but the chairman of SDAP, the Dutch socialist party (K. Vorrink) and G. M. Dimitrov, as presiding secretary of the International Peasants' Alliance also acted as vice-presidents. With 34 members, the organization also maintained a Hungarian section, headed by Pál Auer, ex-ambassador to Paris, and members such as Lipót Baranyai, Baron György Bakách-Bessenyei and Károly Peyer.

who saw a dangerous competition in Churchill's activity in the field. In a letter addressed to Churchill, dated December 4, 1948, Kalergi grieved that the British consider him a competitor rather than a cooperating colleague. He wrote dozens more of letters to Churchill, in which he kept repeating the charges that United Europe served British purposes only, and that the British boycotted the European Parliamentary Union created by him.³⁵ There was a grain of truth in this because Churchill did not attend the Congress of the organization in Venice on September 19–22, 1949, under a vain excuse. Opposition between the two politicians originated in Kalergi's fine recognition that Churchill's vision of the USA – British Commonwealth – United States of Europe did not leave space for his organization. Soviet official position regarding the movement was publicized in *Izvestiya* in several articles during 1947. According to these, the British served an obsolete pan-European vision as if it were something new, to cover up their imperialistic goals. The whole idea lacked any sense of reality anyway.³⁶ Although not in such a sharp tone, the summer of 1948 did bring conflicts with the Labour administration in the question of a United Europe. The government disagreed with Churchill mainly because they did not think that Great Britain had enough economic power to help, reorganize and unite Europe. The British Labour Party opposed Churchill for ideological reasons too, because they backed out of all potential conflicts with the Russians. Churchill never denied though that his movement stood closely related Conservative Party politics:

“...appealing both to the imperial pride of a Conservative gathering and the feeling that we as a party have our own conception of foreign policy, not contrary but an improvement of that of the Government...I am sure the Party is much more in the mood of responding to a vision and positive policy, whether in foreign affairs or otherwise...”³⁷

Attlee did not support the plan of a united European parliament. He would rather trust the initiative with the respective national governments

35 Churchill sources contain several dozens of letters by Kalergi (Churchill Papers 2/25), which highlight that Kalergi had more need for Churchill than vice versa. Documents sometimes reveal comic polemics; Kalergi charged Churchill that the European logo proposed by him – capital E – indeed referred to England, while in a letter of March 1951, to reach his goal, he even sent a photo of his deceased wife hoping that the British politician would be touched.

36 Sidney Bailey, *United Europe – a Short History of the Idea*. Churchill Papers 2/18. Publ. by *National News-Letter*. London, 1947. 34.

37 Churchill's letter to Duncan Sandys. Churchill Papers 2/18. *United Europe* (undated).

than Churchill's movement. The Labour Prime Minister saved time when he declared in a letter to Churchill that the whole concept of the United States of Europe had to be discussed with the prime ministers of the British Commonwealth, because it was a fundamental issue for all of their concerns.³⁸ The Labour government had always been suspicious of such hyperactive policymaking of the conservative leader concerning the issue of United Europe. Not without reason, they supposed that Churchill formed the Europe movement to his own image as supplementary action so as not to waste time in opposition, which also gave the ex-PM a task grand enough to fulfill his ambitions. Their opinion as regards the Council of Europe was not any more favorable, as summed up succinctly in a telegram by the British Ambassador to the United States (G. Jebb) to Prime Minister Attlee. In it, Mr. Jebb stated that Mr. Churchill, Mr. Reynaud and Mr Spaak used the Council of Europe as a pulpit from which to attack the policies of their respective governments.³⁹

Labour predictions seemed to come true when, following a minimal conservative victory, in October 1951 Churchill took the seat of prime minister for the second time.⁴⁰ He was nearly 77: ill, hard of hearing, and easily tired. He suffered from aortic stenosis, which often resulted in bad temper and partial amnesia. He became more selfish and introverted, but he could achieve what he had done many times in the past: to get in an adequately high position where his extraordinary skills could solve international problems of the greatest impact. No longer did the United Europe Movement satisfy his ambitions, nor did he have time left for it.

38 C. Attlee's letter to Churchill of August 21, 1948. Quoted in the *Times*. Churchill Papers 2/22.

39 FCO Documents, Ser. II. Vol. I. 309. Paul-Henri Spaak (1898-1972), Belgian lawyer and politician, foreign minister (1939-49, 1954-57, 1961-66) and prime minister (1938-39, 1947-49). Between 1950-1955 he was chairman of the International Council of the European Movement. From May 1957 to March 1961 he was general secretary of NATO. Paul Reynaud (1878-1966), French lawyer and politician, prime minister in 1940, deputy prime minister in 1953. From 1949 he was member of the Council of Europe, from 1952 he was chairman of the Economic Committee of Council of Europe.

40 In the British general elections of October 25, 1951, the Conservative Party took 48% of the vote and 321 seats in Parliament. Together with the Liberals (14.9% – 6 parliamentary seats) they gained a tiny governing majority as opposed to the Labour Party, which gained only 295 seats with its 49.2% result, for a curious feature of the election system. See also *British Political Facts 1900–1975*. Eds. David Butler –Anna Sloman. London. 1975. 184.

SUMMARY

Winston S. Churchill, a character of limitless self-confidence, was deeply convinced that his extraordinary talent predestined him for solving great tasks, and he always believed that he could control world events.⁴¹ In relation to post-1945 foreign policy, this resulted in insisting on his obsessions often in spite of realities. In the last year of the war, it was undoubtedly him who called attention to the Soviet menace, the division of Europe and the responsibility of Western democracies to address it. He repeated this in Fulton; however, we know today that his famous address did not have much to do with launching the cold war.

The idea of the United States of Europe in his Zurich address was partly naïve – because it really did not address the continent’s division. Yet, it founded a Western European movement for unity and helped secure the Marshall Plan. His United Europe Movement organized in Great Britain imagined unity with London in the centre, which Churchill may have been the only one to support. Nonetheless, he could not deny that the British Empire was still at the centre of his political consciousness. The policies he followed during his second premiership followed classic 19th-century traditions of British diplomacy (pragmatism, a sense of compromise, national interests emphasized).⁴² He radically opposed a policy of appeasement if rooted in weakness, but he was also convinced that the West must negotiate with Moscow from a position of power.

He was an anticommunist to the bone, but he would not convert the cold war into an election campaign. Although he always denied doing it, in fact he wished to act as mediator between world powers. He accepted the division of Europe (and Germany) as a temporary condition, but he would render a Finland-type solution (independence, with friendship with the Soviet Union) for Eastern European Soviet satellite states. Because he believed in Western democratic values, he considered that the kind of government the Soviet Union had was part of their domestic affairs. Yet he condemned dictatorship and tyranny. His aim was to stem the spread of communism – even if on his own, so for him the policy of easement was more a form of containment than its opposite. He wanted to maintain a strong Western alliance system even when cold war tensions would

41 At the launch of his political career at the beginning of the century, he claimed with Lloyd George, “We are here for the fame!” He followed this motto all his life. See Charmley, *Churchill. The End of Glory*, 48–60.

42 Young, *W. S. Churchill’s*, 323.

release.⁴³ He may have been the first leader in the West to realize that rigid anticommunist propaganda and an unreasonably strong opposition against the Soviet Union would only solidify it as a police state. Since the Americans never formally accepted Europe's division, Churchill could not get Stalin to repeat the percentage distributions of political influence as he had in October 1944. He was a politician of too complex and controversial character to solve similarly complex and controversial questions of post-war foreign policy with usual, simplifying old methods. As one his biographers, Paul Addison, put it "From complexity...there is no escape: to simplify is to falsify."⁴⁴

43 Young, W. S. Churchill's, 326.

44 Paul Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front*, 433. Quoted in Young, W. S. Churchill's, 341.