

THE NEW HUMAN REVOLUTION
A NOVELIZED HISTORY OF THE SOKA GAKKAI
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A discussion of the long road that led to European economic unity.

The other members of the Common Market criticized French President de Gaulle for his opposition to British membership in the community and tried persuading him to change his stance. But de Gaulle refused to budge, saying that the time was not yet ripe for the British to join the European Economic Community. Two weeks later, on Jan. 29, the negotiations for U.K. admission to the Common Market broke down.

The idea of a unified Europe had a long history, the first signs appearing as early as the 14th century. Concrete plans to achieve this goal dated back to the first half of the 18th century, in the pioneering efforts of the French thinker Charles-Irénée Castel Saint-Pierre, who proposed achieving lasting peace in Europe through the establishment of a European confederation and a united council that represented all the constituent nations.

Many great thinkers after him, including the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, pursued the dream of European unity. One of the most vocal was the great 19th-century French writer Victor Hugo, who throughout his life was a staunch proponent of the ideal of a “United States of Europe.” He insisted that one day all the nations on the continent, without losing their distinct qualities and their glorious individuality, would melt together into one higher unity, thereby forming European fraternity.

As if blind to this beautiful ideal, however, the European nations became enmeshed in ever-deepening division and conflict, where military strength was often used to seize one another’s territories and economic markets. Then, in the first half of the 20th century, Europe experienced the cruel tragedy of two world wars.

After the desolation of World War I, the European people felt a deep sense of impending crisis and a portent of the collapse of Western Europe. In 1923, Austrian thinker Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, then only 28, published a book called *Pan-Europe*, in which he passionately called for European unification. The book was widely popular and gave rise to the global Pan-European Movement.

But fascism and Nazism suddenly reared their heads, plunging the whole continent again into war. In the face of brutal military aggression, the ideal of European unification was once more consigned to oblivion.

The dream of unification only began taking concrete shape after World War II ended in 1945.

The world continued to see dramatic changes. After the end of World War II, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union came to the fore. Europe, too, was divided into East and West.

Even so, after living through two world wars, people of good conscience were seriously seeking a way to lasting peace. One such person was the French statesman and political economist Jean Monnet, who pursued the idea of European unity based on his wish “to unite men, to solve the problems that divide them, and to persuade them to see their common interest” (*Memoirs*, p. 221).

As a first step toward that goal, Monnet decided to establish a structure that would prevent the countries of Europe, particularly Germany and France, from ever warring with

each other again. He aspired to create first of all an economic union. Inspired by Monnet's ideas, Robert Schuman, France's foreign minister, proposed in 1950 that the markets for coal and steel-commodities that had been triggers of war between the two countries over the many years-be jointly managed.

This took shape in 1952 as the European Coal and Steel Community, which comprised six members—France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Given that there were then more than 30 nations in both Eastern and Western Europe, it may have been a modest beginning. Nevertheless, the ECSC was to be the nucleus of subsequent moves toward wider unification.

In 1957, the same six nations signed treaties establishing the EEC (Common Market) and the European Atomic Energy Commission, both of which began operating the following year. Over the years, these three organizations gradually merged, taking the name the European Communities (EC; the plural was dropped in the 1980s).

But in 1963, there was still a long road to travel to European unity.

Eiji Kawasaki said in a quiet, contemplative tone: “De Gaulle's rejection of British membership to the Common Market reminds me anew of just how daunting the task of European unification is destined to be.

“Not only is the schism between Eastern and Western blocs wider than ever, but even among the Western democracies, France and the United States are sharply at odds over nuclear policy. In the socialist camp, meanwhile, we see tensions between the Soviet Union and China. Looking at all of these phenomena, it seems that the world, including Europe, is heading toward further division.”

Shin'ichi Yamamoto responded with strong conviction, “I, on the contrary, feel quite sure, from a long-term perspective, that Europe's unification is a historical certainty.”