

Address given by Emery Reves (Luxembourg, 5 September 1948)

Caption: On 5 September 1948, the journalist Emery Reves, author of the best seller *The Anatomy of Peace*, gives an address to the World Federalist Congress in Luxembourg.

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[...]

It seems that historical facts have designated the Western European nations to initiate the evolution toward world federation. These great, civilised peoples have suffered too much since the crisis of the nation-state structure started in 1914. Many people in these countries realize that their national institutions are no longer powerful enough to protect them against the miseries of wars and feel the necessity of creating a higher legal order for their own protection and prosperity

They see the coming clash of the two giants and their instinct dictates them to try to keep out of this battle, and to unite with those who are dominated by the same fears.

There is no use to argue against this newly arisen European nationalism and European isolationism which, of course, is even more naive than was the isolationism of the American Middle West. We must recognize that almost all federations and unifications of the past have taken place under similar circumstances, under the same historical pressure with forces independent units to combine in face of a greater common danger.

I believe therefore, that we should not waste our time in opposing a European federation, but should rather encourage it, provided that it is the beginning of a process and not a closed, new sovereign state, which is bound to clash with the remaining other sovereign units.

It is common place to recall that the creation of the unified German and Italian states did not bring peace for the citizens of Frankfurt and Munich, Florence and Venice, but merely led them into a different kind of war.

I need not say that by suggesting to encourage the quickest possible federation of any two or more European or other nations, I am thinking on FEDERATION and not on a treaty arrangement between sovereign states which, of course, could never be regarded as a step toward World Federation.

Another line of division among federalists is based on economic considerations. Some want a federation to save capitalism and the free enterprise system. Others say that we must become Socialists before they should federate. It is my conviction that those who argue along these lines do not quite understand the essence of federalism, nor its purpose. If we try to create a capitalistic or Socialist World Federation, a Catholic or a Protestant World Federation, we shall have none of it.

According to my conception, Federation is the one and only democratic, legal framework within which the national economic and the innumerable other conflicts among men can be solved by legal methods and not by violence. To try to fill this legal framework before its birth with a social, economic or religious content will inevitably lead to an abortion.

The third line of division amongst Federalists concerns the procedure. Some believe that the only way to get World Government is to persuade the Governments of the sovereign nation-states to amend the United Nations Charter to the effect that its Assembly become a real legislative body and its Security Council a real executive. Others say that we must organize a people's convention, of delegates elected directly by the peoples to draft a world constitution. It is obvious that both these factions are convinced of the practicability of their own views and the unreality of their other concept. Here again, I am unable to understand the controversy. It is a historical fact that no new idea has any chance to triumph unless and until it becomes the interest of a power group. I see no possibility of a World Federation by consent, based on democratic principles until we, who believe in Federalism, acquire Power.

Power means people.

We must convince tens of millions of people in many countries, before we can impose our conception on national Governments and legislatures.

Many of you may feel that this is a pessimistic outlook. I cannot admit that it is. The task is immense. But it could be accomplished in a relatively short time, with the proper instrument and the right doctrine.

Once this movement is solidly based on power, Federation can be accomplished not only by rewriting the United Nations Charter but by several other conceivable methods which all seem feasible. However, I insist, every one of these conceivable methods pre-requires power.

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