

## Motion adopted by the Italian Movement for European Federation (Milan, 27 and 28 August 1943)

**Caption:** From 27 to 28 August 1943, at its constituent meeting in Milan, members of the European Federalist Movement (EFM) adopt a motion which lays down its future prerogatives.

**Source:** Socialist Commentary. Monthly Journal of the Socialist Vanguard Group. February 1944, n° 9; Volume 9. London: Socialist Vanguard Group.

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[...]

“If a post-war order is established in which each State retains its complete national sovereignty, the basis for a third world war would still exist even after the Nazi attempt to establish the domination of the German race in Europe had been frustrated.

“Nations must no longer possess the right to make war and conclude peace; to have national armies under their control; to divide up the world into exclusive economic units with the aim of depriving their rival countries of markets and raw materials, thus securing a monopoly position for their own benefit; to deprive people of the freedom to go where they like by preventing them from settling in districts where their activity gives them self-satisfaction and is also beneficial to humanity as a whole; to transform themselves undisturbed into despotic States who educate their citizens to hate and resort to force and make preparations for aggression. All these powers provide instruments of destruction, barbarism and suppression.

“Equally fatal would be a solution after the pattern of the League of Nations or the German Staatenbund (League of States) of the last Century. Such a League of sovereign States which has no armed force of its own, but is dependent upon the armed forces of the member States, would be a politically inadequate instrument to look after the common interests of the Continent. Such an organisation could only serve as a medium for powerful States to assert their hegemony, and it would become the breeding ground for new imperialist conflicts.

“Militarism, despotism and wars can be abolished only through the creation of a European Federation to which those sovereign rights are transferred which concern the interests of all Europeans; rights which to-day in the hands of national States bring about death and destruction. Armaments, international trade, the fixing of national frontiers, the administration of colonial territories not yet ripe for self-government, safeguards against the re-establishment of authoritarian regimes — in short, the administration of peace and freedom throughout the whole of Europe must be subject to the legislative, executive and judicial authority of the European Federation. Within the territory covered by the sovereign Federation the citizens of the various States must enjoy European citizenship as well as their national citizenship, e.g., they must be directly subject to the laws of the Federation.

“The M.F.E. (Movimento Federalista Europea) does not seek to be an alternative to political movements which strive for national independence, political freedom, economic justice. It does not tell the leaders and supporters of those movements which in a way concern themselves with everything in our culture that is alive and progressive — national independence, freedom, socialism — that these are ideals they must abandon in order to devote themselves exclusively to the unification of Europe. On the contrary, it is from these movements that the M.F.E. draws its support, and it works to establish those aims which represent the highest values of our civilisation. But whereas patriots, democrats and socialists commonly think that they must first achieve these aims in the individual countries and assume that ultimately, and automatically as it were, an international situation would arise in which all peoples would fraternise, the M.F.E. warns against this illusion. The order of importance of these aims is just the other way round. National independence, freedom, socialism will be alive and beneficial forces only when Federation, e.g., a political institution which safeguards international peace and justice, will be their basis — and not their consequence. If we succeed in laying the foundations of a European Federation, the realisation of all our other progressive aims will be easier. If we concern ourselves exclusively with the internal problems of the various nations, national, political and social, the causes of rivalry, conflicts, imperialism, militarism, despotism and wars will all remain. National independence would again take the form of national-socialist arrogance, seeking to oppress weaker nations; political freedom would be suffocated by militarism and disappear; and the socialist structure would become a convenient instrument to keep the nation under arms prepared for totalitarian warfare. To create a European Federation is therefore definitely the first task upon which the progressive European movements must concentrate all their energies. It is the aim of the M.F.E. to convince them that this is necessary and whilst supporting all movements for national, political and social liberation to direct

them to that aim.

“The bestialities of this war, the danger of world-wide oppression to which we were all subject, the proven inability of single States to preserve their own independence and neutrality, all demonstrate with unmistakable clarity that the system of absolute national sovereignty must be abolished. But powerful reactionary forces in the political and economic spheres want to preserve this system because it is useful to them. At the end of this war, in the midst of a short period of national and international crises when the structure of the national States will either partly or completely collapse, we must seek to lay the foundations of a real peace. This time there must be no repetition of 1919; the peace settlement must not be the outcome of diplomatic intrigue and the ambitions of ministers as though it were no concern of the people how the peace is organised. It will therefore be necessary to give firm support to that country or those countries which favour the creation of a federal organisation, and to mobilise within every nation all popular forces behind this demand of a federal solution. For only during such a revolutionary period, and so long as the memories of the horrors of war are still alive, will the European Federation be able to withstand pettiness, treason and nationalist interests and become a reality.

“If we allow this decisive moment to go by, the progressive forces will have fought in vain, whatever their achievements may be in other spheres. New forms of Fascism and Nationalism would soon again raise their monstrous heads. For this reason the M.F.E. seeks to mobilise the political forces it can influence not for an aim to be realised in the distant future; it seeks to use the imminent critical period to erect the only effective barrier against the inhuman scourge of total war that is open to civilised nations; a political structure which guarantees the free development of national culture, civil liberties and socialist institutions, and which paves the way for the creation of a world federation of free peoples at a later date.”