

Declaration by the French Committee for European Federation (June 1944)

Caption: In June 1944, members of the French Resistance, meeting as the French Committee for European Federation, deliver a statement in which they show their support for European federalism and define the shape of a united post-war Europe.

Source: Centre d'action pour la fédération européenne (sous la dir.). L'Europe de demain. Neuchâtel: Editions de la Baconnière, 1945. 216 p. (L'évolution du monde et des idées). p. 76-78.

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Declaration by the CFFE (French Committee for the European Federation)

[...]

1. It is impossible to rebuild a prosperous, democratic and peaceful Europe as a group of sovereign States separated by their political and customs borders. Those would be the worst conditions for economic reconstruction; Fascism and Nazism cannot be crushed by totally destroying their economic and social roots. A Europe of that kind would always be at the mercy of economic rivalries, demographic imbalance, material, social and cultural decline, the rise of chauvinism and racism and recurrent wars setting the whole world ablaze and destroying all human civilisation.

2. Any attempt by a group of countries to establish prosperity, democracy and peace on the lines of a league of States is doomed to failure. In practice, such a group would be an impotent council of sovereign rival States, because it would have no independent economic, political and military power of its own to enable it to impose its decisions. It would become an instrument serving the hegemonic policy of the strongest States and making future conflicts inevitable.

3. Europe can develop towards economic progress, democracy and peace only if national States federate and hand over to the European federal State Europe's economic and commercial structure, the right to have its own army and to take action against any attempt to restore authoritarian regimes, the management of external relations, the administration of colonial territories not yet ready for independence and the creation of a European citizenship in addition to national citizenship. The government of the federal State will be democratically and directly elected by the people and not by national governments.

4. The European Federation is not opposed to nation states, provided that they are progressive. National governments will be subordinate to the federal government only on issues of concern to all the federated States, but national governments, as well as regional and local 'self-government' bodies, will continue to exist with their own laws where these do not conflict with federal laws and will retain their administrative, linguistic and cultural autonomy.

5. The Movement for European Federation will base itself on the national movements fighting for economic and social justice, against political oppression and for the free and peaceful establishment of their particular national identity. But, while Democratic, Socialist and Communist patriots often think that those aims should primarily be achieved separately in each country and that, eventually, an international situation will develop in which all nations can fraternise, the Movement for European Federation is warning against that illusion. The order of those aims is precisely the reverse. In a Europe divided into sovereign States, such national movements will inevitably fail or decline; progressive development is possible only in a federal Europe. The European Federation is, therefore, the first of the aims that the Democratic, Socialist and Communist patriotic groups have to set themselves.

6. The Movement for European Federation rejects the view that those issues should not be considered until later, on the grounds that the only aim at present is to fight for national freedom. The two aims need to be pursued simultaneously, otherwise there is a danger that a reactionary European structure will be imposed on nations, as happened in 1919. If the Movement for European Federation did not base itself from the outset on the resistance and liberation movements, if it did not reflect their main policies in the revolutionary situation to come, it would then be much more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve European Federation.

7. As a stage in the world federation of nations, the European Federation must be the immediate aim of the Democratic, Socialist and Communist militants and the Resistance. The French Committee for European Federation urges them to lend their support, jointly and severally, to the fundamental ideas of its manifesto and to back its action.