

a felony depriving those who engage in it of intercourse with civilized peoples.

With war aims conceived on these lines the free peoples of the earth would feel this war to be a struggle for the right of entry into a new and higher phase of human existence. Short of such aims, or of aims akin to them, this war would prove to be merely another episode in a series of attempts to decide whether men and peoples are worthy and capable of peace.

b) (. . .) Decisive moments in human history – and this is such a moment – demand bold thinking and high aims. To the idea of federal union many minds in many countries already assent. The practical difficulty is where and how to begin. If we wait until the end of the war we may fall into errors similar to those that were destined to ruin much of the work done by the framers of the League of Nations Covenant. We may try to form, with an elaborate written constitution, another League or federation of sovereign States, each jealous of its own sovereignty . . . In this matter the rule of thumb is the safest guide. We must work with the tools and the materials that lie ready to hand.

The nearest and readiest of these tools are Great Britain, France and the British Dominions. All stand on democratic foundations. France and Great Britain are now united, far more than allied, in this war. A "Supreme Council" directs their war effort. This union should be broadened and deepened until the principle of a Supreme Council – in which, if their peoples desire it, the British Dominions could take part – would be embodied in a permanent institution. From it might evolve something in the nature of a federal Government for the British and French democracies – with one proviso of ultimately decisive importance. To membership of this federation and to a share in its government, democratic countries now neutral could be admitted at the end of the war, or earlier should attack upon them by the enemy or his helpers bring them into the war. No country without democratic institutions could be eligible.

The proviso "of ultimately decisive importance" is that whatever federal institutions may be set up, or federal government that may be formed, should be responsible not to the Governments but directly to the peoples of the countries belonging to the federation. As the American writer, Mr. Clarence K. Streit, has urged unanswerably in his famous book, *Union Now*, the main cause of the failure of the League of Nations was its character as a League of sovereign States, not a Union of peoples, each of the States-members of the League retaining its unlimited national sovereignty over affairs which by their very nature should have been common to all. Here Mr. Streit is on strong ground. One of the authors of the Constitution of the United States, Madison, learned from a study of confederacies, ancient and modern, that only those federations which were founded upon the assent of individual citizens, not on that of States, had endured or could endure. This is, indeed, the underlying principle of the United States of America, just as it is of the Swiss Confederation. Each member of a workable federal system must retain control of its own internal affairs while surrendering to a federal government, drawing authority from the peoples not from the States of the federation, sovereignty over affairs that are common to all. (. . .)

61. G. D. H. Cole: 'War Aims'

November 1939

Excerpts from *War Aims*, London, *New Statesman and Nation*, November 1939, (56 pp.), pp. 13-15, 41-43, 44-46.

George Douglas Howard Cole (1889-1959) was a historian, a university teacher, and one of the most influential intellectuals in the Labour Party. In 1939 he was a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford; and he was Chairman of the Fabian Society from 1939 to 1946. He was a prolific writer of books, pamphlets and press articles, and a man of individual views.

The following extracts are taken from a substantial pamphlet on war aims, in which Cole developed the argument that it was not enough to say that Britain was fighting against Hitlerism: it was also necessary to say what she was fighting for. In Cole's view, the then Prime Ministers of Britain and France, Chamberlain and Daladier, were incapable of taking an initiative on war aims, because all they really wanted was to restore the status quo ante bellum; and so far the Labour Party had failed to fill the gap with a programme of its own. Cole therefore set out his personal views on positive war aims, putting European federation as the main objective. He concentrated on questions raised by colonial territories and economic union, arguing that the political problems had been resolved. The extracts deal with (a) the general aim of federation; (b) colonies under a federation; and (c) economic union.

(. . .) What is it that needs to be said? First and foremost, that we are fighting Hitler, not as defenders of the old Europe, but as protagonists of the new. That we stand, not for restoring Poland or Czechoslovakia, or any other country, to the status and the condition that it has lost, but for creating a new Europe in which Poles, Czechs and Slovaks, equally with Britons and Frenchmen and Germans, will have freedom to manage their own internal affairs on condition of being ready to play their parts in a wider Federal system. Secondly, that, if European peace and prosperity are to be secured, there must be, all over Europe, a fundamental change in the very conception of statehood, and a renunciation, in certain vital respects at least, of State Sovereignty and independence, with a view to the creation of a peace as well assured as the peace between the English and the Scots, or between the German, French and Italian Cantons of Switzerland, or between Holland and the Scandinavian States. There must be in our war aims no motive of re-drawing the map of Europe so as to partition it again into a number of completely independent sovereign States, each entitled in international law to pursue its own interests to any extreme, even by means of armed force. We must recognise that the day of wholly independent small nations is over, and that the only alternatives before us are either to create a Federal Europe in which national autonomy will be reconciled with common responsibility and acceptance of a general rule, or to allow the continent to be cut up into "spheres of influence" dominated by the major Powers, which will promptly proceed to reorganise their forces in preparation for the next great war.

If, rejecting the latter alternative, we decide to make our war aim the institution of a Federal Europe, we must realise clearly what this objective requires of us. For if there is one thing certain it is that a Federal Europe cannot be built upon the foundations on which the attempt was made to build a League of

Nations after the last war. Countries which are to live permanently at peace must accept a common rule of conduct as limiting their national rights. They must be ready to renounce not only the resort to war in furtherance of their aims, but also the means of resorting to it. Moreover, they must be prepared to co-operate positively, especially in their economic affairs, and to use every endeavour to create in their people's minds a feeling of loyalty to the Federation of which they are members, even when this seems to conflict with the stimulation of a more narrowly patriotic sentiment towards their own country as distinct from the rest.

We cannot expect the Germans to pay any attention to us when our statesmen proclaim that we are making war upon "Hitlerism" and not upon the German people, unless we pledge ourselves to war objectives which they can accept as theirs as much as ours. We and they will have to live together in the new Europe that will come into being after the war; and we should know by now that even the most complete military victory cannot for long keep in subjection a people as numerous and assertive as that of Germany. The future well-being and satisfaction of the Germans are as much in our interest as our own well-being and satisfaction. Accordingly, our war aim cannot be merely victory, or merely the reduction of Germany to military impotence. We and the Germans and all the other peoples of Europe must work together with a good heart in building the new European system, or it cannot be built at all, except in such a shape as will lead to yet more wars.

It is therefore necessary, in considering the future, to be mindful of the past, in order both to avoid a repetition of old crimes, and to search in these for indications of where we went wrong in making the Versailles settlement, and in administering it when it had been made. If now, on the ground that we are at war, we endeavour to bury our past mistakes under the heaps of the slain, we shall be making the worst possible preparation for the tasks ahead. The wiser course is to admit openly what we have done amiss, and to lay plans no less openly for a settlement which shall be free of the faults that have led to the present disaster. We may blame Hitler as the author of the war; but we shall be wise to ask ourselves also what it was that raised Hitler to a position of power which enables him to lay Europe waste. Our war aims must be not merely to defeat Hitlerism, but to create a world in which Hitlerism will be impossible and unknown. We cannot hope to achieve this unless we are aware and repentant of the follies which have been committed in our name (. . .)

Even a Federation based on Europe must include the colonial territories of the Great Powers, whether recently or anciently acquired. There are only two ways of dealing with colonies that are consistent with the conditions of a lasting settlement among the great powers. One way is to give them self-government, in a sense as full and complete as that in which it is enjoyed by Canada, or Eire, or South Africa, or Australia, or New Zealand. That, plainly, is the only way open to us of dealing with India, or with any other colony or mandated territory that is capable of looking after its own affairs. But admittedly we cannot solve the colonial problem simply by turning all the colonies into virtually independent States; for many of them are not capable of standing alone, nor is it any more

hopeful a solution of the world's problems to balkanise Africa than to balkanise Europe.

Accordingly, for many colonies we must adopt the alternative way of action – the international way. (. . .)

The only possible answer to the demands of the "Have-nots" for colonial empires is that we are prepared to throw our conquests together into a common pool, and to do our best to work out an international solution of the entire African problem. The basis of this solution can be only that *no* European power shall have any colonies in Africa, but that all parts of the continent that are not fully self-governing shall be put under the administration of an international body (or of more than one) empowered to exercise all the authority of a Government. By this I mean that the administrators of these internationalised territories must have full power to levy taxes and provide services, to maintain their own armed police and their own machinery of justice and administration, and to control the economic and social development of the territories under their control under an international deed of trust which will instruct them (a) to act as trustees for the inhabitants, (b) to grant no discriminative privileges, political or economic, to any of the States entering into the agreement, or indeed to any others, and (c) to foster as speedily as possible local, regional and continental institutions of African self-government in such a way as to lead towards the removal of tutelage without the effect of splitting up the continent into a number of independent sovereign States. In effect, in Africa as well as in Europe, we have to work towards a *federal* solution on a democratic basis, even if the advance has to be made more gradually and requires a period of international tutelage.

This would mean that Africa, divided perhaps into three or four suitable regions, would be governed by an international civil service recruited personally and not on the nomination of the various European Governments. It would be governed under a deed of trust; and the administrators would be answerable to a sort of Mandates Commission appointed by the new Federal European Authority. (. . .)

Just as, in Africa, it is essential to plan and to administer common services over areas much wider than those of the separate colonial possessions of the various powers, so in Europe Federation must rest on a basis of common services and international administration. Two very simple examples will help to illustrate what I have in mind. At present, each independent State has its own patent law, so that a patent is valid only when it has been registered in each separate country. Again, each State has its own laws regulating the existence and working of joint stock companies, partnerships, Trade Unions, Cooperative Societies, and every sort of business enterprise or private association. Federal Europe, on the contrary, must have a common patent law and a common commercial code, which will render any registered patent or enterprise free over the entire territory of the Union. This, of course, will not prevent any State forming part of the Union from bringing any particular service under public ownership or under any special form of control. What is needed is not uniformity, but a unified pattern of law and practice which can be administered on international principles in the courts both of the constituent States and of the Union as a whole.

This common basis of law is indispensable if the States which form the Union are to be able to grow together naturally by transacting the ordinary business of life in a common way. It is not, I think, practicable to propose that over the entire territory of the Union all customs barriers shall be thrown down at once; for import duties are indispensable to some States as sources of revenue, and the sudden destruction of all forms of protective duty would too seriously dislocate the economic systems of some others. The constituent States should, however, mutually agree to a progressive lowering of tariff barriers, to a common method of levying customs duties, and, with one important reservation, to a Most Favoured Nation Clause which would exclude all discrimination against the goods of any country belonging to the Union.

The suggested reservation is that this equality of treatment should not prevent contiguous States, such as the Scandinavian, the Danubian, or the Balkan groups, from entering into arrangements of their own either for complete Customs Unions, with full freedom of trade between members of the group, or for mutual tariff reductions leading in the direction of commercial union. Without this reservation, the laying down of rules against tariff discrimination might hinder, instead of helping forward, the freedom of international trade; for neighbouring countries would be prevented from relaxing their restrictions – as they have been in recent years – if every concession which they granted one to another had to be made immediately applicable over the whole area of the Union.

In the nineteenth century, statesmen worshipped the fiction – for not even then was it really a fact – that the economic relations between States had nothing to do with their political relations. In these days of gigantic national combines claiming the support of the State power, and of totalitarian war which involves the entire economic resources of each belligerent, the fiction that diplomacy can be divorced from economics has to be entirely given up. Economic power largely determines military strength; and it is an essential part of modern warfare to weaken the economic potential of the enemy. This, which applies to waging war and to preparing for it, applies with equal force to the arts of building peace. If the peoples of Europe are to achieve economic and social welfare, the economic barriers between them must be torn down, and their Governments must set to work, collaboratively, to develop their common economic heritage. Moreover, as long as the economic forces of Society are left to be controlled by contending economic groups, economic conflict will engender political conflict, and each State will set out to grab as much as it can of the economic means both to riches and to military strength. These are the reasons why, in building a better substitute for the abortive League of Nations, we must build upon foundations of economic, and not merely superstructural, union.

62. Clement Attlee: 'Europe Must Federate or Perish'

November 1939

Excerpt from C. R. Attlee, *Labour's Peace Aims*, London (Peace Book Co.) January 1940, (16 pp.), p. 12; reprinted in C. R. Attlee, Arthur Greenwood and others, *Labour's Aims in War and Peace*, London (Lincolns-Prager) 1940.

Clement Richard Attlee (1883–1967; Lord Attlee, 1955) became leader of the Labour Party in 1935. In May 1940 he was to join Churchill's coalition government and serve in the War Cabinet throughout the rest of the Second World War. He was Prime Minister from 1945 to 1951.

During the period of the phoney war, as Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, he gave general support to Chamberlain's government in the prosecution of the war, while exercising the right to criticise and make suggestions. In a speech at Caxton Hall on 8 November 1939, to a meeting of Labour Members of Parliament and Parliamentary candidates, he set out six principles which should form the basis for a peace settlement. One of these principles (the fifth) dealt with the need for an international authority, and included the striking phrase "Europe must federate or perish", which was eagerly taken up and quoted by advocates of federalism at the time. It should be noted, however, that it was not elaborated or developed in the text of Attlee's speech, and it did not prove to be a permanent commitment by the Labour Party to the principle of federalism.¹

The following extract puts Attlee's phrase in its context by setting out all his six principles.

What then should be the principles of a Peace Settlement?

The first principle is that there should be no dictated peace. We have no desire to humiliate, to crush or to divide the German nation. There must be restitution made to the victims of aggression, but all ideas of revenge and punishment must be excluded. If peace is to be lasting it must result from the agreement of all, not from the dictation of a few nations. The failure of the treaties at the end of the last war to bring abiding peace was largely due to the neglect of this principle. But if we desire to build a new world its foundations must be laid not only by the large and strong, but by the small and less powerful. It is the function of law to prevent the strong abusing his strength at the expense of the weak. The smaller nations, just because they are not aggressive, bring to the councils of the nation a most valuable element.

The second principle necessarily follows. It is the recognition of the right of all nations, great or small, of whatever colour or creed, to have the right to live and to develop their own characteristic civilisation, provided that they do not thereby infringe the rights of others. The German, relinquishing his conception of the

¹ An official statement of war aims issued by the National Executive of the Labour Party on 8 February 1940 referred to the need to create a new international organisation, based on the existing ties between the British Commonwealth, France and their allies; but it did not include Attlee's remarkable sentence. See *The Times*, 9 February 1940.

primacy of the German race, must recognise that the Pole and the Czech and the Jew have as much right as he, no more and no less, to a place in the world and to a share in the bounty of nature. Equally, the Briton must recognise that the same is true of the African or any other inhabitant of the British Empire. The German must concede to the Austrian the right to decide his own future. The Briton must equally concede the same right to the Indian.

Thirdly, there must be a complete abandonment of aggression and of the use of armed force as an instrument of policy. War must be outlawed and the rule of law accepted. Where disputes cannot be amicably settled by negotiation, they must be submitted to the decision of disinterested arbitrators and their decision accepted.

Fourthly, there must be recognition of the rights of national, racial and religious minorities. While as far as possible every State should be left free to manage its internal affairs, there is a common interest in the prevention of oppression, and in the recognition of the rights of individuals. It may well be that later the principle of the recognition of the rights of the individual might be given still wider extension, and be firmly established as part of the law of nations. Here it is sufficient to lay down as a principle that where there are racial minorities in any State, there must be some effective authority by an international body over the sovereign rights of the individual State.

Fifthly, there must be acceptance of the principle that international anarchy is incompatible with peace, and that in the common interest there must be recognition of an international authority superior to the individual States and endowed not only with rights over them, but with power to make them effective, operating not only in the political, but in the economic sphere. Europe must federate or perish.

Sixthly, there must be abandonment of Imperialism and acceptance of the principle that in the government of colonies and dependencies where self-government cannot yet be conceded, the interests of the natives must be paramount, and that there must be equal access for all nations to markets and raw materials. This can best be achieved by an extended and strengthened mandate system under international authority. We hold that the redistribution of colonial territories between rival Imperialisms is no solution, for we do not admit that any nation has the right to hold others in subjection.

63. Norman Angell: The Unification of the West December 1939

Excerpt from *For What Do We Fight?*, London (Hamish Hamilton) December 1939, (275 pp.), pp. 264–270.

Sir Norman Angell (1872–1967) was a prolific political writer. His most famous book was The Great Illusion (1909), in which he argued that war could bring no economic benefits to the belligerents and that co-operation was replacing force in the conduct of international

affairs.¹ Despite the collapse of the latter part of his argument in 1914, Angell remained an influential figure. He was a Labour Member of Parliament from 1929 to 1931, and was knighted in 1931.

The main argument of Angell's book *For What Do We Fight?* was that the principle at stake in the war was the preservation of "the rights of man". He wanted the British government to make use of the stalemate of the phoney war period (which he thought would last a long time) to prepare a general statement of war aims which would appeal both to neutral countries and to the enemy. In particular, he urged that Britain should declare her support for "the unification of the West" and "the Federal idea". The following extracts, taken from the concluding chapter of the book, deal with the idea of using Britain, the Commonwealth and France as the basis for a federal union; with the need for common policies in foreign affairs, defence and economics; and with the position of Germany.

Implicit in much that has been written in the foregoing pages is the fact that one of our major difficulties will be to persuade the enemy people and the neutrals that this time we mean what we say when we speak of fighting for principles of security and equality of right as important to the world as a whole as to ourselves.

There is one means by which we can prove that we mean business; by beginning to put our vaguely outlined plans into execution *now*.

There are two immediate steps which more than anything else whatsoever would show whether and to what degree we ourselves are prepared for the unification of the West, are ready for the Federal idea; which would tend to convince the world – neutral and enemy peoples alike – of the reality of our professions about a new international system. And that is to begin, now, to build up a real federal unity with France; to make of the French and British Empires a unit, not merely for war purposes, but as the beginning of the permanent reconstruction of Europe and the world along new lines. Concurrently a persistent drive should be made towards a real Federal Union of the Commonwealth. We should begin to accustom ourselves and the world to think of France and Britain, not as two countries of about forty million people each (confronted by a greater Germany twice the size of either), but as a single country of eighty millions, the pivot of a union of an additional five hundred millions, girdling the world.

The beginning of some kind of Franco-British federalism might be found in the Franco-British Supreme Council already linked with Franco-British Boards for Shipping, Purchase of Supplies, Exchange Problems. There might well be established, by private effort at first, a Franco-British Interparliamentary Conference, first of all between like-minded parties of both parliaments, going on to conferences of representatives of all British and all French parties.

The essence of any plan for "federalizing defence" should be its operation *in peace time* as well as in war. (. . .)

In other words, if there is to be co-operation in war, there must be a common

¹ Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* London, (Heinemann) first ed. 1909; several later editions; cf. the obituary of Angell, *The Times*, 9 October 1967, reprinted in Frank C. Roberts, ed., *Obituaries from The Times, 1961–1970* London, (Newspaper Archive Developments Ltd.) 1975.