

THE LABOUR PARTY

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THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
POST-WAR SETTLEMENT

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Report by the National Executive Committee  
of the Labour Party to be presented to the  
Annual Conference to be held in London  
from May 29th to June 2nd, 1944.

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# THE LABOUR PARTY

## THE INTERNATIONAL POST-WAR SETTLEMENT

When the War broke out, the British Labour Movement pledged itself to do all in its power to defend our country against the Nazi gangsters and to fight on until the victory of civilised life was assured. That pledge has been honoured in the letter and the spirit. It will continue to be honoured until the War is won.

But victory on the battlefields is not enough. We must look beyond the surrender of our enemies to the Peace Settlement. We must pledge ourselves to the great end of an enduring Peace, and to the methods of social relationships which assure that Peace will endure. We cannot permit the agony and horror and destruction of these bitter years to be repeated. That is the debt we owe to our posterity. That is the dream for which so many have so bravely died.

To pay that debt, we must begin, without delay, to build a World Order, in which all peoples unite to pursue their common interests. We are confident that the vital interests of all nations are the same. They all need Peace; they all need security and freedom; they all need a fair share in that abundance which science has now put it into our power to create.

But none of this can be achieved unless the international settlement which follows this War is built on unbreakable foundations. We must be clear about our direction. We must be united in our aims. As we have stood together in the shadow of War, so we must stand together in the sunshine of victorious Peace.

### THE PURPOSES OF THIS SETTLEMENT ARE PLAIN

They must be

- (a) To prevent future War, both by removing its causes and by organising in advance collective and preventive action against all forms of aggression;
- (b) To make sure, none the less, that, if War should again be forced upon us by aggression from any quarter, we shall be able to crush the aggressor quickly and completely;
- (c) To achieve a high and ever rising level of economic well-being in all lands, the ending of mass unemployment, poverty, and malnutrition, and an effective system of social security everywhere; and
- (d) To promote the spread of Democracy and Political Freedom throughout the World.

In brief, our aims must be the maximum security

- (a) Against War;
- (b) Against defeat, if War should come;
- (c) Against unemployment, poverty, and all other forms of economic distress; and
- (d) Against Fascism and all forms of political slavery.

To each of these aims Socialism is a fundamental necessity. Each can be achieved only by international co-operation as well as by national action.

The broad outlines of such a Settlement are contained in the Atlantic Charter, to the principles of which not only Britain and the United States, but Russia and all the other United Nations have subscribed.

### THE TERROR IN THE OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

We in Britain must learn to see the lessons of these cruel years through the eyes of our suffering comrades in German-occupied Europe and in Japanese-occupied Asia. Therefore, we must take full account of the crimes committed against multitudes of innocent victims in many lands. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party made strong declarations, which were approved by last year's Annual Conference (London, 1943), in condemnation of German atrocities against Poles, Czechs, and Jews. Frightful massacres, tortures, and brutalities have been perpetrated, not only against these unhappy peoples, but even on a vaster scale against the Russians and, in a smaller but sufficiently horrifying measure, against the inhabitants of other occupied territories both in West and South East Europe. A huge mass movement of population has been ordered by the Germans, in the course of which millions of slave labourers have been driven from their homes in the occupied territories to work in Germany, and crushing levies, both in money and in goods, have been imposed upon these territories under the title of "Costs of the Armies of Occupation." These levies have already greatly exceeded all those imposed on Germany after the last War.

Apart from prisoners of war, and apart from Russia, more than 20,000,000 people in Europe have been forced to live and work away from their homes.

In China, and in other territories in South East Asia overrun by the Japanese, massacre, torture, enslavement, and looting have likewise been practised on an immense scale.

The plain facts regarding all this should be frankly and fearlessly stated. It is wrong to try to hush them up. It is very easy for us in this uninvaded, unenslaved, relatively unscorched island to preach to others, less fortunate than ourselves, that they should entertain no feelings of revenge or hatred towards their torturers. It is less easy for these pitiful victims to forgive and to forget.

## THE QUESTION OF GERMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Little is to be gained by debate as to how many Germans are "responsible" for all this wickedness. Certainly many millions are directly responsible for these acts; in particular, the members of the Gestapo, the S.S. and the S.A., who are all Nazis, and large numbers of the Regular Armed Forces. These alone add up to a formidable total of criminals. Moreover, it is hard to argue that any nation, which allows a minority to rob it of its freedom, thereby escapes "responsibility" for all the consequences of this robbery. The Socialist, Trade Union, and Co-operative Movements have been completely smashed and there is, as yet, no effective "Underground Movement" in Germany. Since the Nazi usurpation of power in 1933, many millions of German workers, in the arms factories and in other branches of industry, have been doing their utmost to build up and to strengthen Hitler's War machine.

On the other hand, it is absurd to deny that there are, and always have been, large numbers of decent, kindly Germans. The trouble is, not that good Germans don't exist, but that they are singularly ineffective in restraining the bad Germans.

Of Hitler's opponents in days gone by, some, no doubt, were afterwards converted to the Nazi creed. Many others, including most of the best, are now dead, either in the course of nature, or by mass murders or slow torture in Concentration Camps, or as casualties in this War. On the other hand, a systematic effort has been made, through Nazi "education," since 1933, to corrupt and brutalise all German youth.

## PRECAUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

After all the world has gone through, we cannot trust to luck again. In the interests of all her neighbours, and indeed in the interests of the Germans themselves, especially of the younger generation, we must take all necessary measures to prevent any repetition of German aggression. So, too, Stalin and the Russians insist. So do the spokesmen of our comrades in all the countries in occupied Europe. We in Britain had a narrow escape in 1914-1918, and a still narrower escape in 1940. Twice in our lifetime we have been on the brink of a national disaster, from which, following a German victory and a ruthless German Peace, our recovery would have been made impossible. We cannot run such risks a third time.

Likewise, in the Far East, the Chinese people are rightly determined to run no more risks with Japan. Their determination is shared by our kinsmen in Australia and New Zealand, and by the United States.

## ANGLO-AMERICAN-RUSSIAN CO-OPERATION

The Post-War Settlement must grow out of the immediate Post-War Situation.

When the War ends, whether in Europe or in Asia, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union will be the three outstanding Great Powers, great both in military and industrial resources of all kinds.

Our first aim, therefore, must be to continue the closest possible Anglo-American-Russian co-operation. If we three hold together, all will be well; if we fall apart, all will be dark and uncertain. With the U.S.S.R. we have already concluded the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance, which binds our two Governments and peoples together, as partners in a common quest for Peace, Security and Economic Progress, for the next twenty years. With the U.S.A. we have, as yet, no such formal bond of partnership; but we must do our best to foster, by all practicable means, Anglo-American understanding and joint endeavour.

## NUCLEUS OF A WORLD ORGANISATION

But Anglo-American-Russian co-operation must not lead to an exclusive group, nor be an instrument of domination over the rest of the world. It must rather be the solid nucleus of a World Organisation. The form of this World Organisation must depend on what the three Great Powers will agree to. One reason why the League of Nations "failed" was because the U.S.A. never, and the U.S.S.R. only for a brief period, were members. Even more after this War than the last, the absence of either will fatally weaken any World Organisation. Both are immensely stronger now, both absolutely and relatively to the rest of the world, than they were then. We cannot dictate to the U.S.A. or to the U.S.S.R., nor they to us. We can only pool our ideas and hopes, and seek the widest possible measure of agreement. The Conferences between representatives of the three Governments at Moscow and Teheran are a useful beginning.

## THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

Britain will exercise great influence in the world, as part of a Commonwealth, including the Dominions and Colonies and, if possible, India also.

The recent proposal of Mr. Curtin, the Labour Prime Minister of Australia, for permanent consultative machinery on all external policy between the United Kingdom and the Dominions should be strongly supported. Australia and New Zealand should have a primary voice in the details of the Peace Settlement in the Pacific together with the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., China and Canada. It is the common interest of all these to make Japan incapable of further aggression, and to build up a real co-operative prosperity in the Pacific.

## ARMED FORCES

Experience shows that, for any period with which we are concerned, pacifism is an unworkable basis of policy. There must be sufficient armed forces, readily available and properly organised, to prevent any repetition of this bitter experience. Strength is essential to safety and, as we now know, there are terrible risks in being weak. It is better to have too much armed force than too little. But armed force must be used, and must be pooled under international agreements, to protect, and not destroy, the essential freedoms of mankind, and to enforce "the rule of law" among the nations.

It is Utopian to suppose that the national armed forces of the British Commonwealth, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., can be transformed, immediately after the War, into a single international force. But we should seek to create the beginnings of such a force, at first in addition to national forces, as soon as the War ends. The present co-operation of staffs and troops, and navies and air forces, in campaigns all over the world will help this on. A mixed Army of Occupation in Germany—principally British, American, and Russian—will give scope for a practical experiment in an international force.

The R.A.F. already contains, not only squadrons from the Dominions, but Polish, Czech, Dutch, Belgian, French, Norwegian, and Greek squadrons also. This fusion, if the rest agreed, should be maintained, and might be extended. Further, the leasing of air and naval bases in the territories of other States is a step in the right direction. Our leases to the U.S.A. are due to be continued, and both we and the Russians should have bases on the Continent of Europe, both in enemy and, by agreement with our friends, in allied territory. It would be best if all these bases were to be held on behalf of the United Nations.

## ARMS MANUFACTURE

Whatever other nations do, all British arms and munitions, including aircraft, should be made in Government factories. We should try to persuade as many other nations as possible to agree to the prohibition of private manufacture of arms. We should also try to persuade the chief arms-producing States to join with us in imposing strict control over the sale of arms to others. There will be vast stocks of arms in the world, when the War ends, and they may easily get into the wrong hands.

## TOTAL DISARMAMENT OF GERMANY AND JAPAN

This must be enforced in the Peace Treaties, without limit of date. A purely Civilian Police, backed by the Armies of Occupation, must keep order, and the power of the German military caste, as well as of the German Junkers and Heavy Industrialists, must be destroyed. Similarly with Japan. The victorious States must be the sole judges this time, of how soon and how far they can reduce their armaments. Nevertheless, after victory, a large and an agreed reduction should certainly be possible, and the British Government should concert plans for this, first with the American and Russian Governments, and then with the rest of the United Nations.

Germany and Japan should be occupied for a considerable period after the War. Italy and the smaller Axis satellites are much less dangerous, and could be controlled less strictly, and for a shorter time.

Some form of international control of the German and Japanese economic and financial system, including heavy industry, by the Governments of the United Nations, at least for a period of years, must be worked out. The German "War potential," that is to say German capacity to start another War, must be decisively reduced. Similarly for Japan.

But we must remember that no discrimination against the defeated States can be enforced for long, except by actual military occupation or by an effective threat of force from close at hand.

## WAR CRIMINALS

So far as they can be identified, these must be handed over, but a series of long judicial trials must be avoided. The Moscow Conference decision to send back all those criminals, so far as may be practicable, to the scene of their crimes, to be judged there, is to be welcomed. It would be just that the members of the Gestapo, the S.S., etc., should be required, for a period, to perform "reparation labour" in Russia or elsewhere, though we should want none here.

## REPARATIONS AND RESTITUTION

Last time the victors made a sad mess of this.

Nearly all reparation claims were fixed in terms of money. Reparations in kind played only a small part and, for the rest, Germany was free to obtain foreign exchange for payment of reparations by exporting any goods she chose to any market she chose. There was no control either over the nature of these exports or over their destination. It was this which did such grave damage to British exports and employment, in the coal industry, in particular. Last time, moreover, no use was made, in any of the countries entitled to reparation, of German labour to repair the damage on the spot.

This time reparations must be part of a controlled and ordered system. Its aim must be the repair of War damage as soon as possible and according to a careful plan, while avoiding any adverse effects on the economic life of the recipients. It would be well to complete the whole reparation programme in, say, five or six years.

In addition to restitution or replacement of identifiable objects which have been looted, there should be provision for

- (a) Reparation deliveries in kind, *e.g.*, machinery, machine tools, rolling stock, timber, etc., for reconstruction in devastated territories ;
- (b) Reparation by German labour in such territories, if this is desired by any of the Governments concerned (the Russians have already made it plain that they desire it) ;
- (c) Payment of the local costs of the Armies of Occupation.

The Germans have clearly demonstrated by their heavy exactions and by their systematic exploitation of the occupied territories that very large contributions, in labour and in goods, as well as in money, can be collected from one country for the benefit of another. It is only simple justice that, so far as is humanly possible, when the War is won there should be a redress of these cruel robberies and compensation for the victims.

## FRONTIERS

Frontiers in Europe and elsewhere must be finally settled in the light of many conditions which cannot now be exactly foreseen. It would be a mistake for the Labour Party to come out in favour of any programme of cut-and-dried boundaries at this stage. But we must aim, when fixing the frontiers, at three things. First, the frontiers should be so drawn as to reduce to a minimum any inconvenience, geographical or economic, in the transit of persons and goods. Second, the frontiers, once drawn, should be regarded as settled, and all agitation for frontier revision should be discouraged. Third, we should seek such international arrangements as will make frontiers less and less important as economic or cultural barriers, less barriers than bridges between nations. But "national minorities" in Central Europe, left outside the boundaries of their own nation, should be encouraged to rejoin it. In particular, all Germans left outside the post-War German frontiers, unless they are willing to become loyal subjects of the State in which they find themselves, claiming no special privileges, should go back to Germany. Indeed, they will be well advised to do so in their own interests, for, in the early post-War years at any rate, there will be a depth of hatred against Germans in the occupied countries, which it is impossible either for us or for Americans to realise.

Germans in many of those areas may have to face the choice between migration and massacre.

The organised transfer of population, in the immediate post-War period, may, indeed, be one of the foundations of better international relations in a later phase. Nor would this be a new departure. Between the Wars the transfer of population between Turkey and Greece was an undoubted success.

In any case, there will be a vast problem of repatriation and resettlement in Europe, when tens of millions of refugees, slave labourers, and prisoners of war return to freedom and their own homes. Compared with this, the transfer even of substantial national minorities, German and other, to the right side of the post-War frontiers, will be a small affair. However, just when so much is fluid, there will be a unique opportunity, which will not recur, to make a permanent settlement of this vexed question. Thus we may hope to heal one of the running sores in the body of Europe.

## INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ORGANISATION

The Moscow Declaration has committed the principal United Nations to the creation of a General International Organisation which shall promote the common interests of all, and shall secure all nations against aggression, with the least practicable diversion of the world's resources to armaments and preparation for War.

The Moscow Declaration lays down some of the fundamental principles on which this Organisation must be built. The Labour Party are resolved that British foreign policy shall be directed to ensuring that this Organisation shall succeed. So long as they live under the constant threat of War, the nations cannot plan for peaceful international co-operation, nor can they work together for their common economic prosperity ; each of them must strive to increase its potential military power, and to promote, so far as possible, its national economic self-sufficiency.

In planning the International Political Organisation, we must remember and adapt all the useful experience of the League of Nations, and learn the lessons both of its failures and of its successes. We must ensure that those who lead the Organisation shall have both the will and the power to check any disloyal preparations for aggression in their earliest stages, and to suppress aggressive War rapidly and decisively, if unhappily it should begin.

The Moscow Declaration and the Atlantic Charter both make it plain that the Organisation must be world-wide, and that, in due course, it must include all the nations in every continent. This is plainly right ; nearly all the great international questions are world-wide in their scope. We must, however, find a solution, both just and realistic, of the problem presented by the fact that modern States are of most unequal strength. All States, members of an International Society, must have equal rights to Peace, Freedom, and Security. But all States cannot hope to have equal influence or equal power, and it is only building a theorist's house of cards to pretend they can. Switzerland cannot count for as much, in practice, as the Soviet Union, nor Bolivia as the United States. This fact must be reflected in the constitution and working of the Society.

There are some matters in which continental or regional action may be required. A European Transport Authority, with large powers over railways, rivers, canals, and road transport, might render great services, both to Europe and to the world, and in itself would be a powerful instrument against preparation for aggressive War. But it will be essential that both Britain and Russia shall be actively associated with all such European schemes.

Again, while there should be world-wide agreement which shall effectively ensure that Civil Aviation shall be used to promote Peace, instead of serving, as it did before 1939, to promote competitive preparation for War, there may be some regions—Europe, the Middle East, the Far East—where even closer international organisation and operation of Civil Aircraft may be required.

The International Political Organisation must establish the binding force of International Law. All through history, civilised society has everywhere been built up on the foundation of law, and the new International Society will be no exception. Unless the acceptance and enforcement of law becomes the rule of international life, we shall relapse once more into lawless and increasing destructive violence.

But a firm system of law requires tribunals to apply it. There must, therefore, be a new World Court of International Justice.

There must also be a recognised procedure for developing the law to meet the needs of a changing society, and to remove, by peaceful means, international injustices and causes of discord which may arise.

This system of law, and, indeed, the whole International Political Organisation, must depend on the consent, or rather, on the active support, of the peoples of the world. The proceedings of its Councils and Assemblies should, therefore, save in exceptional cases, be public.

Public debate is the indispensable instrument of liberty and justice, as the British Parliament has so often proved. The great service of Broadcasting should be internationally controlled and should be used to keep the peoples truthfully informed, to promote their sense of international solidarity, and to enable them to understand the policies that will lead to stable Peace.

### INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

It is now a commonplace that, though we failed most ignominiously in this field between the Wars, nevertheless the I.L.O. was one of the best creations of the Peace Treaties. It must be greatly developed and strengthened in the future. It must become a powerful and vital instrument, not only for international understanding among the workers of all lands, but for raising standards of life throughout the world, and especially in backward countries. It should do much of its work through Permanent Commissions dealing with particular industries on an international basis. Thus we should lessen the sense of national differences, and also the differences in national standards of life, between coal miners, transport workers, agricultural workers, and others.

Far greater devastation and economic loss will have been caused by this War than by the last. To make good this loss, at the best, will take some years. It is misleading to say, as some do, that "we must all be poorer after the War," if by this is meant that we must accept a lower standard of life for a considerable period. But it is inevitable that, for a while, we must continue to live in conditions of shortage and of "siege economics." This will necessitate a continuance of rationing and of many other controls. There must be no premature decontrol this time, such as plunged us into depression and mass unemployment after the last War. In particular, we must keep control of prices, raw materials, capital issues, capital exports, and foreign trade. But if we plan and co-operate wisely, and make full use for the common good of all our modern scientific and technical possibilities, we can soon pass from this phase of scarcity into a phase of plenty.

To help us to achieve this transition, we shall need many new forms of international economic organisation; not only a strengthened and developed I.L.O., but new international institutions and agreements to plan relief and rehabilitation, to organise abundant world-wide food supplies, to regulate international trading and transport and monetary relationships. Many of these international plans are now being worked out. All these preparations should be pressed forward vigorously. They must provide us with the means of attaining full employment, rising standards of life and comfort, and a reasonable stability in place of the violent ups and downs in work, wages, and prices, which distorted and disfigured economic life between the two Wars. "Expansion, not restriction," must henceforth be our watchword and the aim of all our economic planning.

Just as the Armies of Occupation may grow into an International Force, so—and much more easily—may the civilian agencies set up to supervise relief, repatriation, and resettlement, including transfers of population, and the rebuilding and revival of economic life in Europe and Asia, grow into an International Civil Service with great future possibilities. Germans and Japanese are entitled, in the coming years, to share in any general upward movement of standards of living; but, in the transition period of shortage and repair of damage, it would be most unjust that the aggressors should enjoy a higher standard of living than their victims. Germans must not expect to live better than Russians, Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, and the rest; nor Japanese better than Chinese. It is to prevent such an injustice and to hasten the recovery of the victims, that a practicable programme of reparation and restitution is required.

After this War, Russian industry, in the aggregate, will be much more powerful than that of Germany. In a comparatively short time, Chinese industry will likewise surpass, in scale and output, that of Japan. Both these will be changes for the better.

In any economic plan, either for Europe or Asia, or for the world as a whole, a better balance of industry, in accordance with the economic possibilities of various regions, must be established.

Great and constructive tasks await the workers of the world, if only they can banish from their lives War and the fear of War. The common pursuit of world-wide economic improvement will do far more to unite Governments and peoples than any purely political arrangements.

## COLONIES

In all Colonial territories the first aims of the administration must be the well-being and education of the native inhabitants; their standards of life and health; and their preparation for self-government without delay. In the light of much recent experience, we are convinced that the conquest of illiteracy can be accomplished much more rapidly than was previously thought by specialists, and, once this is effected, the road to self-government is a direct one. But there must be a sincere determination on the part of those responsible for colonial administration to put native interests first in the priorities they organise; and in planning the development of the natural resources of Colonial territories native well-being must be the primary consideration. In regions such as Africa, South-East Asia, and the South-West Pacific, where neighbouring Colonies are administered by different Governments, we strongly recommend the early creation of Regional Councils to co-ordinate economic policy—trade, transport, etc.—with a view to making the interests of the Colonial peoples primary beyond all doubt.

With this same object in view, we are strongly in favour of the fullest publicity in Colonial policy and administration. Publicity, we are confident, is at once the main enemy of abuse and exploitation, and the main encouragement to experiment and innovation. It is most desirable, therefore, that all Colonial Powers should not only agree to publish regular and full reports on the Colonies they administer, but also that they should facilitate visits to, and Reports upon, these Colonies, also to be published, by the representatives of the international organisations concerned with Colonial questions.

## PALESTINE

Here we have halted half way, irresolute between conflicting policies. But there is surely neither hope nor meaning in a "Jewish National Home," unless we are prepared to let Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority. There was a strong case for this before the War. There is an irresistible case now, after the unspeakable atrocities of the cold and calculated German Nazi plan to kill all Jews in Europe. Here, too, in Palestine surely is a case, on human grounds and to promote a stable settlement, for transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully organised and generously financed. The Arabs have many wide territories of their own; they must not claim to exclude the Jews from this small area of Palestine, less than the size of Wales. Indeed, we should re-examine also the possibility of extending the present Palestinian boundaries, by agreement with Egypt, Syria, or Transjordan. Moreover, we should seek to win the full sympathy and support both of the American and Russian Governments for the execution of this Palestinian policy.

## THE FURTHER FUTURE

Just as we must now look beyond victory to the immediate post-War settlement, so we must bear constantly in mind the more distant future. The settlement so made must end the war, and, as we hope, lay the firm foundations of the Peace. But it can give us, of itself, no more than a breathing space. It will be for a younger generation to build the superstructure of a permanent Peace. Our task is to create for them the foundations upon which they can build that superstructure.

The Labour Party works for a Socialist future. It does so because, twice in our own life-time, we have seen that War is inherent in the nature of a capitalist society. Capitalism means everywhere the protection of the privileges of the few by the sacrifice of the well-being of the many; and in the relations between States, capitalism means a power—politics which is even more ugly and brutal. This is why the Labour Party is convinced that, only as the framework of our civilisation is Socialist, can we hope both for the assurance of economic plenty and a Peace which it is the interest of all States to preserve.

No other setting makes genuinely possible either the destruction of Fascism or the achievement of the Rights of Man. No other setting, whether national or international, will enable the peoples of the world to go forward together. A Socialist civilisation offers to men and women everywhere the chance of realising the inherent dignity of human nature. If, we have the courage to build it, we can go forward together, confident and free, co-operative and magnanimous, into an age at long last unfettered by the dread bitterness of War.

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