

'Double indemnity' from the Daily Mail (10 May 1948)

Caption: On 10 May 1948, referring to the debates being held at the Congress of Europe in The Hague, the British daily newspaper Daily Mail is supportive of a United Kingdom which maintains its links with the British Empire whilst making great efforts to achieve European unity.

Source: Daily Mail. For King and Commonwealth. 10.05.1948, No 16.220. London.

Copyright: (c) Daily Mail

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/double_indemnity_from_the_daily_mail_10_may_1948-en-a15fad83-1224-47ee-831f-0c2ae6b073d9.html

Publication date: 20/09/2012

Double indemnity

The Hague Congress has given new life to an old question. Since Britain has an Empire to cultivate, why does she not turn her back upon Europe?

We have tried to answer that here more than once lately. We return to it today because we believe it should be thoroughly understood.

There are two main points of view. The first is that Western Union is bound up with Empire Union, and that one cannot succeed without the other. MR. CHURCHILL holds that belief. So do we.

The second is that this country should leave Europe to stew to its own juice and should concentrate on Empire development.

We believe that argument to be based on the fallacy that Britain is not part of Europe. She is part of Europe, because geography has made her so.

The Isolationists are old-fashioned. Their contentions were first heard at the end of Seven Years War (1763), when the British won India and North America.

Europe

Britain turned away from Europe. Twelve years later, when the American War of Independence broke out, she had no friend. All Europe was against her, and she lost her North American Colonies.

When the elder PITT had said he would conquer Canada on the plains of Germany he meant that Britain could not become an Imperial Power unless she was first a European Power.

That is still true. Britain cannot remain an Imperial Power unless she is also a European Power. An Empire which was gained in Europe could be lost there also.

Britain can never disinterest herself in Europe—which is why she has fought in the last two wars.

Not even America finds the Atlantic not broad enough to protect her from the contagions of the Old World. She abandoned it in 1919, but was compelled to return to it in the last war. She was attacked only by Japan, but she fought Germany and Italy as well.

America

Why? Because she knew that if democracy perished in Europe it would soon be extinguished in America. The resources of Europe under totalitarian rule would enable it to outbuild even the prodigious plants of the United States.

So it is with her now—and with us too. The moment any one Power dominates Europe this island is threatened. That is the peril which looms today. We must play our part in meeting it before it becomes active.

To pretend that Europe does not exist would not help us in an emergency. It would increase the danger, for the nations of the West, cold-shouldered in peace, would rally round our enemy in war.

These are the material reasons. There are also moral reasons. We cannot allow freedom to die across the Channel, nor can we betray our friends or our spiritual heritage.

Empire

We must strive to be strong, and we can best do that by populating our Empire and developing its enormous potential wealth. In those great lands, without a doubt, lies our salvation—but let us remember that there could be no sure future for us, nor for the people of the Dominions, if we allowed freedom to die in Europe.

Western Union is an idea as well as a confederation. It is supported by the United States and the people of the Empire subscribe to it as surely as to the people of Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

Western Union is the beginning of an experiment which may be the biggest thing in the history of mankind. If it is to succeed it must be backed by the full weight and resources of every country which believes in democracy, and by their dependencies.

If we do not stand together in this, then shall we fall separately. And our generation would then see Freedom perish from the earth.