

Extracts from four speeches made during the Conference for the Establishment of an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation of the United Nations, held in London from 1 to 16 November 1945.

"We are met at the end of the greatest war in history, against the background of two continents with their attendant islands, across which the fires of war have raged. Even now the embers still glow, and here and there the flames still flicker. All of us here—all the nations that we represent—have taken some part in this great struggle. All have ranged themselves under the flag of freedom and against aggression and oppression. Many of us have drunk together from a common cup of sorrow and sacrifice. Now we are met together; workers in education, in scientific research and in the varied fields of culture. We represent those who teach, those who discover, those who write, those who express their inspiration in music and art. We have a high responsibility, for entrusted to us is the task of creating some part—and not the least important part—of that structure of the United Nations on which rest our hopes for the future of mankind. It is for us to clear the channels through which may flow from nation to nation the streams of knowledge and thought, of truth and beauty which are the foundations of true civilization."

Ellen Wilkinson, President of the Conference, Minister of Education, United Kingdom, 1 November 1945

"In the new world order towards which we are moving it is essential that we should have appropriate machinery to deal with each of the major fields of human activity (...) However we classify the principal elements in the public life of the world it would be impossible to exclude from our classification that large and significant field of activity which can be described broadly as the life of the mind. This covers not only the special field of education in all its branches and at all its stages, it includes the whole intellectual realm with its 'many goodly states and kingdoms', the sciences, the humanities, the fine arts, research for the advancement of knowledge and the whole vast territory in which ideas are disseminated. The field of educational and cultural relationships is surely one of the richest and most significant in the international life of the world. We cannot be content until our new world organization provides for the fullest and most beneficent development of these relationships. Do not wars, after all, begin in the minds of men?"

Clement R. Attlee, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, 1 November 1945

"We believe that the intellectualism of the eighteenth century and the materialism of the nineteenth should give place in the twentieth to the conception of a true and balanced integration of man. That is why—while the education of the intellectual faculties was the chief concern of those systems which are now obsolete, and while the education of the will has resulted in extremes of imperialism that we condemn—the horizons now open to our view will demand of us a form of education aiming at international cooperation through the medium of truth, virtue in all its significance, and democracy."

Jaime Torres Bodet, Delegate of Mexico, 2 November 1945

*"Our duty will be more completely defined when our charter has been adopted by all the United Nations, and when, on what I hope may not be a far distant day, we have the great Soviet Republic in our midst (. . .). We shall never lose sight of the fact, so adequately expressed at the opening of our deliberations, that it is not the sum of knowledge that is to be the distinguishing mark of the activities of our future Organization, but the development of culture. One of our great authors has said: '**Science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul.**' We can say: '**Knowledge without morality can only result in barbarism.**' We who know that there can be no democracy without culture, will direct our efforts towards adding something else to knowledge: a great ideal, a clear vision of the great problems to be solved in the cause of international peace and, lastly, and perhaps most important of all, the mastery of self."*

René Cassin, Delegate of France, 16 November 1945

**UNESCO – Its Purpose and Its Philosophy ([here](#))
by Julian Huxley, First Director-General, 1946**

UNESCO Constitution: ([here](#)) English – Français – Español – Russian – Arabic – Chinese

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