

Dawley

## I. THE SOCIAL POSSIBILITIES OF WAR<sup>1</sup>

Severally and collectively mankind always builds better or worse than it knows. Even in the most successful enterprises aims and results do not wholly coincide. In executing our immediate purpose we have to use forces which are outside our intent. Once released, however, they continue to operate, and they bring with them consequences which are unexpected and which in the end may quite submerge the objects consciously struggled for. Such an immense undertaking as the present war is no exception. The will to conquer describes the immediate aim. But in order to realize that end all sorts of activities are set going, arrangements made, organizations instituted, as incidental means. After they have been called into being they cannot be whisked out of existence merely because the war has come to an end. They have acquired an independent being and in the long run may effect consequences more significant than those consciously desired. If, for example, one takes a cross section through the warring countries at present, one finds a striking rise in power of the wage-earning classes. Through the necessities of war, their strategic position in modern social organization has been made clear, and the Russian Revolution has brought the fact to dramatic self-consciousness. Is it not conceivable that some future historian may find this consequence outweighing any for which the war was originally fought?

If it is the unintended which happens, a forecast of the consequences of the war seems doubly futile, for it is hard enough to disentangle even the professed aims in such a manner as to make them precise and definite. Yet it is possible to see some of the forces which have been released by the war. Through

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fixing attention upon them, we make some guess about the future in its larger outlines.

The first result which I see is the more conscious and extensive use of science for communal purposes after the war. Changes which are effected by embodying scientific discoveries in mechanical inventions and appliances endure. The transformations brought about first in industry and then in general social and political life by the stationary steam-engine, the locomotive, the internal combustion engine, etc., have stayed put, while matters which absorbed in their day much more of conscious attention and made much more of a stir in the realm of thought, have sunk beneath waves of oblivion. Mechanically speaking, the greatest achievements of the year have been, of course, the submarine and airplane, the mastery of the undersea and the air. Is it not likely that the combined effects of the two will do more to displace war than all the moralizing in existence? Anticipations of the future are too readily couched in terms of the fantastic rather than of the commonplace; or rather the miraculous, once established, becomes commonplace. But considering the social revolution wrought by steam and electric transportation on land and water in abolishing parochial and provincial boundaries, it seems probable that air navigation will round out their work in obliterating nationalistic frontiers.

The war has, in addition to specific inventions, made it customary to utilize the collective knowledge and skill of scientific experts in all lines, organizing them for community ends. It is unlikely that we shall ever return wholly to the old divorce of knowledge from the conduct of social affairs—a separation which made knowledge abstract and abstruse, and left public affairs controlled by routine, vested interest and skilled manipulation. The one phase of Prussianism, borrowed under the stress of war from the enemy, which is likely permanently to remain, is systematic utilization of the scientific expert. Used for the ends of a democratic society, the social mobilization of science is likely in the end to effect such changes in the practise of government—and finally in its theory—as to

initiate a new type of democracy. With respect to this alteration, as with respect to the airplane, there is more likelihood of underestimating than of exaggerating the consequences which are to follow.

Another consequence, not directly willed but made necessary as an incident of the war, is the formation of large political groupings. Almost all the nations of the world are now arrayed on one or other of the two sides. Not only is such a world-wide organization including the peoples of every continent a new and unique fact, so much so that the world for the first time is politically as well as astronomically round, but the character of the alliances is quite unprecedented. In order that the military alliance may be made effective, there is in effect if not in name a pooling of agricultural and industrial resources, a conjoint supervision of shipping and hence of international trading, a world-wide censorship and economic blacklist. In addition each nation now has an interest in knowing about other nations, which has put the world as a whole on the map for the citizen of Little Peddington and Jay Corners.

The kind of knowledge and interest that was once confined to travelers and the cultured has become widely distributed. When a million or two young men return from France, the jolt given to our intellectual isolation by the very fact of the war will be accentuated. And Europe, it is safe to say, will have learned as much about us as we about it. The shrinkage of the world already effected as a physical fact by steam and electricity will henceforth be naturalized in the imagination. All of these things mean the discovery of the interdependence of all peoples, and the development of a more highly organized world, a world knit together by more conscious and substantial bonds.

Whatever the immediate decisions of the statesmen who sit in the peace conference at the end of the war, this means that an international state is on its way. Few people realize what a small number of independent states remained in the world even before the war—many times less than there were within

the present German Empire a century ago. Consolidation has proceeded with the same certainty and acceleration as in the case of the multitude of small local railway systems which once sprawled over this country—and from the same causes. The war has speeded up the movement, and in the various commissions and arrangements which it necessitated will have behind mechanisms which are bound to continue in operation—first in order to meet actual post-war needs and then because there is no way of getting rid of them without uprooting too many other things which will have got linked up with them.

It is a mistake to think that the movement for the self-determination of nations, the releasing of nationalities now held in dependence, will arrest, much less reverse, the integrating movement. Cultural emancipation of nationalities and local autonomy within a federation are to be hoped for; if they are not attained, the war will have been fought in vain so far as its most important conscious objective is concerned. But even if this goes beyond local autonomy to the point of complete political independence of a new Bohemia, Poland, Ukraina, Palestine, Egypt, India, it will not militate against the virtual control of the world by a smaller number of political units. The war has demonstrated that effective sovereignty can be maintained only by states large enough to be economically self-supporting. New nations could exist permanently only if guaranteed by some large political union, which would have to be more closely knit together than were the treaty-alliances which "neutralized" (till the war broke out) some of the smaller states of Europe.

To say, however, that the world will be better organized is not—unfortunately—the same thing as to say that it will be organized so as to be a better world. We shall have either a world federation in the sense of a genuine concert of nations, or a few large imperialistic organizations, standing in chronic hostility to one another. Something corresponding to the present anti-German federation, with minor realignments in course of time, might constitute one of these; the Central Empires and southeastern Europe another; Russia, it is conceivable,

would go it alone, and the Oriental countries might make a fourth. In this case, we should have a repetition of the Balance of Power situation on a larger scale, with all its evils, including the constant jockeying to secure by threat and bribe the allegiance of Scandinavia, Spain and some of the South American countries to one imperialistic federation or another.

The choice between these two alternatives is the great question which the statesmen after the war will have to face. If it is dodged, and the attempt is made to restore an antebellum condition of a large number of independent detached and "sovereign" states allied only for purposes of economic and potential military warfare, the situation will be forced, probably, into the alternative of an imperially organized Balance of Power whose unstable equilibrium will result in the next war for decisive dominion.

The counterpart of the growth of world organization through elimination of isolated territorial sovereign states is domestic integration within each unit. In every warring country there has been the same demand that in the time of great national stress production for profit be subordinated to production for use. Legal possession and individual property rights have had to give way before social requirements. The old conception of the absoluteness of private property has received the world over a blow from which it will never wholly recover.

Not that arbitrary confiscation will be resorted to, but that it has been made clear that the control of any individual or group over their "own" property is relative to public wants, and that public requirements may at any time be given precedence by public machinery devised for that purpose. Profiteering has not been stamped out; doubtless in some lines of war necessities it has been augmented. But the sentiment aroused against profiteering will last beyond the war, while even more important is the fact that the public has learned to recognize profiteering in many activities which it formerly accepted on their own claims as a matter of course.

In short, the war, by throwing into relief the public aspect of every social enterprise, has discovered the amount of sabo-

tage which habitually goes on in manipulating property rights to take a private profit out of social needs. Otherwise, the wrench needed in order to bring privately controlled industries into line with public needs would not have had to be so great. The war has thus afforded an immense object lesson as to the absence of democracy in most important phases of our national life, while it has also brought into existence arrangements for facilitating democratic integrated control.

This organization of means for public control covers every part of our national life. Banking, finance, the supervision of floating of new corporate enterprises, the mechanism of credit, have been affected by it to various degrees in all countries. The strain with respect to the world's food supply has made obvious to all from the farmer in the field to the cook in the kitchen the social meaning of all occupations connected with the physical basis of life. Consequently the question of the control of land for use instead of for speculation has assumed an acute aspect, while a flood of light has been thrown upon the interruption of the flow of food and fuel to the consumer with a view to exacting private toll. Hence organization for the regulation of transportation and distribution of food, fuel and the necessities of war production like steel and copper.

To dispose of such matters by labeling them state socialism is merely to conceal their deeper import: the creation of instrumentalities for enforcing the public interest in all the agencies of modern production and exchange. Again, the war has added to the old lesson of public sanitary regulation the new lesson of social regulation for purposes of moral prophylaxis. The acceleration of the movement to control the liquor traffic is another aspect of the same fact. Finally, conscription has brought home to the countries which have in the past been the home of the individualistic tradition the supremacy of public need over private possession.

It may seem a work of supererogation to attempt even the most casual listing of the variety of ways in which the war has enforced this lesson of the interdependence, the interweaving of interests and occupations, and the consequent necessity of

agencies for public oversight and direction in order that the interdependence may become a public value instead of being used for private levies. It is true that not every instrumentality brought into the war for the purpose of maintaining the public interest will last. Many of them will melt away when the war comes to an end. But it must be borne in mind that the war did not create that interdependence of interests which has given enterprises once private and limited in scope a social significance. The war only gave a striking revelation of the state of affairs which the application of steam and electricity to industry and transportation had already effected. It afforded a vast and impressive object lesson as to what had occurred, and made it impossible for men to proceed any longer by ignoring the revolution which has taken place.

Thus the public supervision and control occasioned by this war differ from that produced by other wars not only in range, depth and complexity, but even more in the fact that they have simply accelerated a movement which was already proceeding apace.

The immediate urgency has in a short time brought into existence agencies for executing the supremacy of the public and social interest over the private and possessive interest which might otherwise have taken a long time to construct. In this sense, no matter how many among the special agencies for public control decay with the disappearance of war stress, the movement will never go backward. Peoples who have learned that billions are available for public needs when the occasion presses will not forget the lesson, and having seen that portions of these billions are necessarily diverted into physical training, industrial education, better housing, and the setting up of agencies for securing a public service and function from private industries will ask why in the future the main stream should not be directed in the same channels.

In short, we shall have a better organized world internally as well as externally, a more integrated, less anarchic, system. Partisans are attempting to locate the blame for the breakdown in the distribution of fuel and the partial breakdown in

food supplies upon mere inefficiency in governmental officials. But whatever the truth in special cases of such accusations, it is clear that the causal force lies deeper.

Fundamental industries have been carried on for years and years on a social basis; for public service indeed, but for public service under such conditions of private restriction as would render the maximum of personal profit. Our large failures are merely exhibitions of the anarchy and confusion entailed by any such principle of conducting affairs. When profit may arise from setting up division and conflict, it is hopeless to expect unity. That this, taken together with the revelation by the war of the crucial position occupied by the wage-earner, points to the socialization of industry as one of the enduring consequences of the war cannot be doubted.

Socialization, as well as the kindred term socialism, covers, however, many and diverse alternatives. Many of the measures thus far undertaken may be termed in the direction of state capitalism, looking to the absorption of the means of production and distribution by the government, and to the replacement of the present corporate employing and directive forces by a bureaucracy of officials. So far as the consequences of war assume this form, it supplies another illustration of the main thesis of Herbert Spencer that a centralized government has been built up by war necessities, and that such a state is necessarily militaristic in its structure.

On the other hand, it must be pointed out that in Great Britain and this country, and apparently to a considerable degree even in centralized Germany, the measures taken for enforcing the subordination of private activity to public need and service have been successful only because they have enlisted the voluntary coöperation of associations which have been formed on a non-political, non-governmental basis, large industrial corporations, railway systems, labor unions, universities, scientific societies, banks, etc. Moreover, the wage-earner is more likely to be interested in using his newly discovered power to increase his own share of control in an industry than he is in transferring that control over to govern-

ment officials. He will have to look to politics for measures which will secure the democratization of industry from within, but he need not go further than this.

Reorganization along these lines would give us in the future a federation of self-governing industries with the government acting as adjuster and arbiter rather than as direct owner and manager, unless perhaps in case of industries occupying such a privileged position as fuel production and the railways. Taxation will be a chief governmental power through which to procure and maintain socialization of the services of the land and of industries organized for self-direction rather than for subjection to alien investors. While one can say here as in the case of international relations that a more highly organized world is bound to result, one cannot with assurance say which of two types of organization is going to prevail. But it is reasonably sure that the solution in one sphere will be congruous with that wrought out in the other.

Governmental capitalism will stimulate and be stimulated by the formation of a few large imperialistic organizations which must resort to armament for each to maintain its place within a precarious balance of powers. A federated concert of nations, on the other hand, with appropriate agencies of legislation, judicial procedure and administrative commissions would so relax tension between states as to encourage voluntary groupings all over the world, and thus promote social integration by means of the coöperation of democratically self-governed industrial and vocational groups. The period of social reconstruction might require a temporary extension of governmental regulation and supervision, but this would be provisional, giving way to a period of decentralization after the transfer of power from the more or less rapacious groups now in control had been securely affected.

The determination of the issue in one sense or the other will not, of course, immediately follow the conclusion of the war. There will be a long period of struggle and transition. But if we are to have a world safe for democracy and a world in which democracy is safely anchored, the solution will be in

the direction of a federated world government and a variety of freely experimenting and freely coöperating self-governing local, cultural and industrial groups. It is because, in the end, autocracy means uniformity as surely as democracy means diversification that the great hope lies with the latter. The former strains human nature to the breaking point; the latter releases and relieves it—such, I take it, is the ultimate sanction of democracy, for which we are fighting.