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PUBLIC OPINION AND A NEW WORLD ORDER¹

James Fulton Zimmerman

IN THE BRIEF period of a little over twenty years, we have witnessed the failure of a great international effort to establish the basis for harmony, order, and peace in the political and economic life of nations. Disunity has reached such an extreme in our world that it expresses itself in the form of two opposing ideologies, each of which demands the total destruction of the other. The doctrine of one side denies the supremacy of the human spirit; the other side, so far as we are able to discern, is not yet prepared to formulate its ideals and declare its long-range purposes in terms of the unified political and economic welfare of nations and peoples.

We witness now the world-wide effort of these opposing forces to knit together a great many disparate peoples, nations, minorities, religious and political creeds into two solid military camps opposing one another. It is a diplomatic and military struggle of the greatest magnitude in history; and the outcome both in war and in the peace to follow is of most vital concern to all mankind. Guided by our emotions, we are inclined to separate the war from the future peace; but our intellect warns us that historical continuity operates and that the conditions of peace are being fixed day by day as the war proceeds. As Vice-President Wallace has so well said, "From the practical standpoint of putting first things first, at a time when there are not enough hours in a day and every minute counts, planning for the future peace must of necessity be a part of our all-out war program."

I wish, therefore, to discuss the problems both of war and peace in terms of public opinion in this country as it bears upon the war itself,

¹ This article is substantially the text of the commencement address delivered by Dr. Zimmerman, President of the University of New Mexico, to the graduating classes of the University and of the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, both on the same day, May 11, 1942.

and the possible roads we may seek to travel in the postwar world. Any analysis of American public opinion such as I am undertaking cannot be complete. It will, I believe, show the general trends, and may prove of value both now and in the future. It may be helpful if I call these trends in public opinion the six roads which we may travel after the war.

I. A STRONGER LEAGUE OF NATIONS

This road is suggested by those who believe that if the League could be strengthened by an international military force, by compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court, by a more stringent membership basis, and by more adequate sanctions, it would succeed where the older organization failed. There is much to commend this view to those who believed in the League.

But there are many who are skeptical of organization and machinery and who believe that only a radical change in the spirit of humanity and in the temper of nations would guarantee that any League machinery would succeed. They argue that the machinery of the League which made it possible to change the 1918 settlement in the interest of one group of nations, could have served also to modify that settlement in the interests of all nations had there been intelligent, courageous, and unselfish leadership; that limitations on the defeated powers could have been extended to all; that economic inequalities could have been adjusted; and that security for all could have been assured, if the leading nations had possessed a common will to attain these objectives and had been willing to make sacrifices for the common good of all.

The students of world affairs who favor a stronger League counsel us not to yield to pessimism because the first great effort failed, but to try again, since this is the most practical road toward world organization and peace. Dr. James T. Shotwell and his Commission to Study the Organization of Peace are, perhaps, the best representatives of opinion among those who favor the restoration and strengthening of the League of Nations, and their publications are worthy of careful study by all thoughtful citizens.

II. A WORLD FEDERATION

A second road being advocated by some Americans is that of World Federation. The concept of universal world federation is best illustrated by a joint resolution of the General Assembly of the state of North Carolina adopted March 13, 1941. It sets forth that through the

centuries civilization has united the world into an international community, but that as yet this community has no government, and it must either succumb to anarchy or submit to the restraints of law and order; that only a government capable of discharging all the functions of sovereignty in the executive, legislative, and judicial spheres can accomplish such a task; that nationalism has reached its height in this generation and must yield its hegemony in the body politic to internationalism; that mankind must pool its resources of defense if civilization is to endure; that federation preserves the whole without destroying its parts, and strengthens its parts without jeopardizing the whole; that the entire human race is one family, and all nations are component parts of an indivisible community; and that there is no alternative to the federation of all nations except endless war.

The document, in conclusion, calls upon Congress to pass a resolution committing the United States to the principle of the Federation of the World, and requests the President to call an international convention to formulate a constitution for the federation which shall be submitted to each nation for its ratification. This federation plan which is being submitted to other state legislatures through the efforts of a well-known Rhodes Scholar, represents possibly the highest expression of American idealism in international relations.

But it is doubtful that this ideal can be realized, first, because nations at present represent too great a diversity in size, culture, and the level of their political and economic development to become parts of such a world federation; second, because the geographical contiguity which has characterized all successful national federation is lacking in the world picture; third, because there is no adequate spiritual unity or emotional mythology to create and maintain such a federation; and finally, because there does not seem to exist as yet any possible unified source from which such a world government could derive its political, financial, and military power. These arguments do not hold against smaller regional federations which will be mentioned later as possibilities in certain geographical regions.

III. THE UNITED NATIONS

The third possible road for us to travel is that of the United Nations—the extension into peacetime of the road we are traveling in war. With twenty-six nations already united in the war effort, it seems, to many, logical and strategic to cement the ties of these nations during the war,

so that the union will carry on during the years of reconstruction and recovery and become the adequate nucleus of the final organization for peace.

The arguments against this plan are based chiefly upon the conditions which have existed in the progress of the war efforts themselves. The United Nations have attained that measure of unity which they enjoy in the war largely through the leadership of Great Britain and the United States. The European governments which signed the Declaration of the United Nations, approving the Atlantic Charter drawn by Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt and pledging co-operation until victory over the enemy, are now in exile. With the single exception of Russia—now a very important exception—they have contributed little to the war effort. The Central and South American governments signing the United Nations declaration give it significance and meaning for us both in war and in peace, but much still remains to be done before thoroughgoing unity of purpose in war plans or in peace plans has been attained.

The philosophy of the United Nations is sound in the negative sense in that it constitutes a rallying cry against the aggressor nations. This strategic value must not be overlooked. But the weakness of the United Nations plan lies in the inherent difficulty of formulating a positive statement of purpose of war and peace which will satisfy the different peoples and nations with their varying religious, political, and economic interests, which we seek to unite into an efficient organization against the enemy. It would greatly accelerate our task of winning the war if the United Nations could now say what they are fighting for, with the same united conviction as they have said what they are fighting against. It is difficult at times to refrain from speculating upon the possible course of the war in the Far East, had we been able to win and hold the loyalty of the millions there with a sincere and challenging offer of democratic partnership both in the war and in the peace to follow. And it is perhaps not altogether unrealistic to consider the possibility that the nations of the Orient, with technical and mechanical development comparable to that of Russia during the past twenty years, may become world powers of gigantic military magnitude in the near future. If the pattern of British-American policy toward Russia during the past twenty years is to be followed in Far Eastern diplomacy, we may not be permitted to carry the white man's burden there much longer.

Furthermore, the growing confidence that the power of the United

States will win the present war for the United Nations, is already resulting, in some instances, in a weakening of the democratic bonds which we hoped would keep all these nations united in war and peace. It is my deep personal conviction that the time has come, or will soon come, when the ideals of the United Nations expressed in the Atlantic Charter and in the Four Freedoms which now constitute the official war and peace aims, should be amplified and implemented. Even our own citizens have difficulty in recalling the points of the Atlantic Charter, if indeed they know them. If we really want to travel this way which we have called the United Nations road, then we should put forth all possible efforts to bring the United Nations to a better understanding of one another.

IV. AN ANGLO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE OR UNION

A fourth road is that of an Anglo-American Alliance or Union. This policy has the support of those who believe that after the military victory of the United Nations over the Axis, the pre-eminence of British and American influence will be recognized at the peace table. The plan has several variations, the best known of which is that of Clarence Streit's Union of the English-Speaking Peoples, which followed his original plan for the union of all democracies. This plan offers a rather sound basis for the type of limited federation mentioned above; it conforms to a generally recognized need for economic units larger than the national state; and it makes a strong appeal to those who feel the influence of our historical, governmental, linguistic, and literary ties with Great Britain and her associated commonwealths. It is thought to be our duty in the long future to shoulder our just share of the white man's burden and march on through the centuries ahead in joint Anglo-Saxon world leadership, if not in actual world dominion. Many believe that after a period of necessary policing, following the war, we could enlist the co-operation of other nations in plans for larger federation and could thus finally achieve a new world order on a democratic basis.

Critics of this course contend that the plan overlooks the interests of the great world population centers. They point out that the United States, South America, and the British commonwealths (exclusive of India) combined have only about one tenth of the world's population. It is also believed that this Anglo-American Union does not accord to Russia the place she will surely demand in Europe and Asia, if with her aid, the Axis powers are defeated. Furthermore, if after military

victory, Anglo-American power were sufficient temporarily to guarantee world order and stability comparable to the former *Pax Britannica*, such an era would be short-lived, since it would invite and incite the organization of opposing alliances of other powers in Europe and Asia. The progress of the war itself reveals Anglo-American reliance upon Russia, and many are beginning to feel that continued emphasis upon Anglo-American control after the war will not contribute to the war efforts of the United Nations.

V. THE WORLD BALANCE OF POWER

The fifth road being considered in the United States is that of a World Balance of Power based upon world political and military strategy, with our nation as the leading power on this continent and in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This view is most clearly set forth in the recently published book entitled *America's Strategy in World Politics*, by Dr. John Spykman of Yale University. The road of world power must be followed, he holds, because this war, like all others in recent times, is a struggle for power among the great nations. This struggle for power must go on until we have time to work out a better democratic order within nations and among nations.

There is no international community to guarantee life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness. The separate nations under the balance of power system are now, and will be after this war, in control of whatever world order we have. Germany seeks control of Europe and Africa, and Japan of Asia. If they win and unite these three continents against us, they can ruin us economically by blockade, and they will control huge war potentials. Our hemisphere defense is not adequate against such a combination of power. Hence we must maintain a balance of power in the transatlantic and transpacific areas if we expect to remain independent and to maintain our power position. It is accepted by those who believe in this theory of world power politics, that the United States, because of its geographic position, depends upon the balance of power in Europe and Asia for its own survival, and that when that balance is upset as it is now by Germany in Europe and by Japan in Asia, we must fight. According to this view, when peace comes, assuming that the United Nations win, there will remain six great powers as follows: the United States, Great Britain, Russia, China, Germany, Japan, and many smaller ones. Britain will not relish the idea of a Germany too weak to oppose Russia in Europe. Neither

Britain nor the United States will want to see Asia left entirely to China and Russia; hence Japan will remain a great military power.

The philosophic basis of this concept of international struggle is the idea of the struggle for power which still goes on within the nations and which will, it is thought, go on after this war, until we, by slow processes, build a social order that conforms to the needs of a mechanized industrial society. The masses have no assured place in our society transformed from rural and agricultural to mechanized and industrial life by the machine. The old social and economic order is gone; and there is as yet no new order to take its place. Hitler found a way to fit the masses into an order of conquest. No one else had any better plan to offer them. They must have a place and feel that they belong in the body politic. No one in all this world knows how to implement the phrase "freedom from want," and it is sheer folly for us to think that we know. We do know that the Hitler way will never do; but we need time to work out a better order for democracies and for all other peoples and nations.

In other words, those who follow Dr. Spykman's ideas—and there are many people in our country who do—have no quarrel with the dream of those who would apply to our postwar world a kind of international New Deal, but consider it only an *ideal*, which cannot come true for generations or perhaps centuries. In the meantime, these people say we must rely on the more realistic world balance of power.

VI. AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

Finally we must consider the road of World Imperialism. This idea appears under such labels as Henry Luce's "American Century" and Dorothy Thompson's "Call to Destiny." According to these writers when we win this war, the United States will be the dominant power in the world. We must take the leadership to which this power obligates us and lay down to all the world our terms of peace. We will feed the world and dominate its trade. We will provide the world with technical skill of all kinds, on the one hand, while on the other we will supply with freedom and justice. Dorothy Thompson wants us "to Americanize enough of the world so that we shall have a climate and environment favorable to our growth." This American imperialism is identified by some with Anglo-Saxon hegemony and implies that those who speak the English language are to be the real supermen of the future. To other

America's road to power and to world imperialism is the older doctrine of "the manifest destiny" of America alone.

This view is a strange mixture of American idealism and world domination patterned somewhat after the *Pax Romana* and the *Pax Britannica*. Our American way of life is best and most peaceful. Having won the war and decided upon our way as the way of life for the world, we shall employ our force, says one prominent writer, "on anyone anywhere in the world who becomes a menace to us, our way of life, our beliefs or interests, or to anyone who shares them, or is bound up with them. In the light of history we have proved our decency. We shall enforce it at once on anyone who threatens it anywhere. We are going to define and maintain the standard of international behavior." We find, therefore, that there are those among our own fellow citizens who repudiate as Utopian dreams all plans to organize the world on the basis of international co-operation, and who embrace the gospel of coercion in the interests of a new world *Pax Americana*. It is my deep personal conviction that the future of democratic civilization will be dark indeed if the United States, relying upon its growing military might, should ever set out to journey on this road of world imperialism.

I regard these six proposals, which I have called roads, as important, since they constitute possible blueprints for the future and stimulate us to consider the alternatives open to us.

In summary, however, we are able to reduce these six roads to two. The first three roads mentioned, namely, the stronger League of Nations, World Federation, and United Nations, may be merged into one road which may be called the road to Greater International Co-operation. Federal Union is too much of an American road, untraveled by the great majority of nations and peoples; but the ideals of World Federation, which are considered too extreme for world application, will prove helpful in regional areas where they possess practical value in economic and political affairs.

The League or Confederation idea seems to have at least a chance to succeed. This road to Greater International Co-operation, if we are to build it, will follow the same general route as that of the first League of Nations. Some curves must be straightened out here and there along the way; some cuts and fills will have to be made. To review the causes of failure of the old League would require too much detail here; but I would like to emphasize that a careful study of the causes of that

failure is the best single source of education on this entire subject for the American public today.

The people of this country were right in their fundamental convictions on international problems twenty-five years ago. The vast majority sensed that the road of international co-operation was then the road we should have taken. We want to be sure the next time that no group in the United States Senate or anywhere else can again lead us away from this road. Obviously we may want to use some name other than League of Nations; and we shall need to understand better than many of us do now, that varieties of forms of government and different economic systems can function co-operatively in international affairs. That is what is happening now during the war; and it is what has happened during peace throughout the past history of international relations. Those who think that a single pattern of social, political, or economic life can be used for the diverse and complex mixture of races, peoples, and nations of the world will never find the road that leads to international co-operation. Certain economic ideals regarding minimum standards of food, shelter, and clothing, of full employment, and higher standards of living for all peoples of the world are challenging, and they lift us to higher planes of social thinking. But a sane realism demands that other peoples and nations interpret these ideals and apply them to their own level of economic and political life and of cultural development. As we make the effort, heroic to many of us, to think in terms of the whole world, we must learn the lessons of geography and economics; and we must also learn more about the people themselves—their cultures and traditions, attitudes, ideals, and necessities. We can never maintain the American way of life until we learn to co-operate with other people in their effort to maintain their way of life. International co-operation is doomed to failure unless Americans grasp the meaning of this fundamental fact in our world today.

Let us now look at the other three roads, namely, Anglo-American Alliance, World Balance of Power, and American Imperialism. For convenience, we can merge these three into one road to which we will give the name familiar to us all: Nationalism Based on Power Politics. This road follows the historical route which great nations have traveled in the past and are traveling today. There is a practical realism about this road which appeals to our common sense, and there is something almost magical about it which appeals to our national patriotism. Despite the fact that we know beyond doubt where this road has led,

and where in the future it will lead, our country may still take it one day. The road to international co-operation has grown a bit dim during the past decade. It is now filled with obstructions such as selfish economic barriers, dangerous political rivalries, and national and racial hatreds. It will be much harder to travel than it was twenty years ago.

There are many sincere men both in and out of government today who believe that even with complete victory won, it will take us twenty-five years to find again the road to international co-operation. Many of us now find our hopes for international co-operation tinged with doubt and fear. One writer expresses his attitude as follows: "I find on rigid inspection, that my feeling for internationalism, and my trust in it, are intuitive rather than reasonable. It is not so much that I have faith in the ability of nations to organize themselves, as that I mistrust what will happen if again they fail to do so."

A study of the reports of the Office of Public Opinion Research of Princeton University gives us grounds for a more optimistic outlook in so far as American public opinion is concerned. These reports, made over the past two or three months, indicate that the great majority of the American people are internationally minded; that they believe this country should take an active part in world affairs when the war is over; that they are not satisfied with an Anglo-American Alliance, but desire an international organization with teeth in it, which will be composed of all nations, including our present enemies. These recent reports are similar in tone to those made during the first world war by a small group in Columbia University as the result of a study of public opinion and the proposed League of Nations. They indicate that the majority of the American people still believe that the road to international co-operation, difficult as it may be, is the one this nation should travel. Perhaps if we had suffered more during the first world war, we would have had greater determination then to strive to follow this road. Increased suffering in this war will, in all probability, increase national support for such a world organization after the war.

At this stage of the war, one should not be too critical of our government for delaying announcement of more specific peace aims. The Atlantic Charter is a statement of war and peace aims, which indirectly supports the road to greater international co-operation. Many, however, believe it important, both for the war and for the peace, that the United Nations, as soon as practicable, set forth more clearly and concisely their war and peace aims. In the stress of the emotionalism of war, we are prone to forget that in past wars, peace aims have proved at

times more powerful in dealing with the enemy than have military forces.

Obviously the time has not yet come to prepare a blueprint for the organization and administration of the postwar world, although numerous agencies of the national government and many non-governmental organizations are engaged in planning how best to deal with the situation that will confront us. In all this planning, it is important to try to understand the vital forces that may be expected to operate within and among nations, to understand the meaning of these forces to the United States and to other nations, and to study the ways and means of relating our national life to international conditions.

The term "global war," as applied to the present military struggle, and the term "New World Order," as applied to postwar reconstruction, indicate an effort to achieve a world point of view. Approaches to such a point of view are implied in the use of such terms as "regional," "continental," and "hemispheric," which indicate the enlargement of our conception of "national interest" far beyond the former conception which embraced only political boundaries and narrowly construed economic interests. The ideal of world order, and resulting peace, has been expressed during many previous periods of history by poets, philosophers, and statesmen, but for the most part, we have had only vague notions as to the social, cultural, religious, economic, and political implications of such an ideal. The failure of the first real effort to construct a stable world order is sufficient proof of the difficulty of the task.

If we really want a better world after this war, then we are faced with the task of preparing the peoples of the world to understand the nature of a "world order," and of preparing the people of the United States to understand the inescapable part that they must have in the establishment and maintenance of such an order. The clear duty of our nation, as important as the task of winning the war—a duty which, in the language of Vice-President Wallace, ought to be "part of our all-out war program"—is to prepare for the peace by instituting an educational program in this country that will seek to make clear to our people the basic concepts essential to a world society, and the application of these concepts to our own country.

In conclusion, I wish to express one final reason for this long-term faith in the ultimate unity of human society, despite the darkness and doubts of the present hour. Although nations are now divided by economic, political, and ideological rivalries and are engaged in war on a world wide scale, this is not to be regarded as their permanent and final

condition. Raymond Fosdick in the 1941 review of the work of the Rockefeller Foundation expresses this thought as follows: "The process [of national separation] is never complete, because the intellectual life of the world, as far as science and learning are concerned, is definitely internationalized, and, whether we wish it or not, an indelible pattern of unity has been woven into the society of mankind."

His illustration, drawn from medical science, is most timely and appropriate. He points out how an American soldier wounded on a battlefield of the Far East will owe his life to the Japanese scientist who isolated the bacillus of tetanus; how the wounded Russian soldier will be saved by a blood transfusion—the discovery of an Austrian scholar; how the German soldier is shielded from typhoid fever by the aid of a Russian doctor's discovery; how the Dutch marine in the East Indies is protected from malaria because of the experiments of an Italian; and how a British aviator in North Africa escapes death from surgical infection because of a new technique elaborated by a Frenchman and a German. He reminds us also that our children are protected from smallpox by an Englishman's discovery; from rabies because of the research of a Frenchman; from pellagra because of the work of an Austrian; and from diphtheria by the work of a Japanese and a German.

I quote the closing paragraph from this section of Mr. Fosdick's report: "What is true of the medical sciences is true of the other sciences. Whether it is mathematics or chemistry, whether it is bridges or automobiles or a new device for making cotton cloth or a cyclotron for studying atomic structure, ideas cannot be hedged in behind geographical barriers. Thought cannot be nationalized. The fundamental unity of civilization is the unity of its intellectual life."

Higher education is dedicated to the task of expanding this pattern of unity until it embraces the social, economic, and political life of peoples and nations. Our war task and our peace task alike is to develop this larger unity until it encompasses the whole community of nations, by multiplying the areas in which practical co-operation is possible through realistic understanding of the interdependence of human society in this day of industrialism and technical development. We cannot now predict just when the road to Nationalism and Power Politics will be closed and the high road to International Co-operation will become the highway of humanity marching under the banner of human reason. But we can, and will, with unwavering faith in the ultimate triumph of reason over force, labor with diligent and undiscourageable zeal toward that goal.