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INTRODUCTION

THE New Fabian Research Bureau came into existence because of a conviction that a re-examination of socialist theory and practice, both in economics and politics, is necessary. Nowhere is this re-examination more necessary than in the field of international affairs. A Committee of the Bureau, of which I am chairman, has been at work during the last six months mapping out the ground for research into various problems of international relations. It is hoped from time to time to publish studies of these problems. But before getting down to the investigation of special subjects, the Committee considered that it would be useful to issue something dealing with general principles. Mr. Brailsford has been good enough in the following essay to deal with some of the most important general principles of international relationship, namely those which must be implied in any international system which aims at the preservation of peace.

LEONARD WOOLF.

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IF WE WANT PEACE

I

FROM SHANGHAI TO GENEVA

A DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE, as this essay goes to the printer, is opening at Geneva. To say that the world hopes much from it would be insincere: rather do men wish that they dared to hope. One need not prophesy; it is enough to say that this Conference, if it should, indeed, succeed, will rank as a miracle. Theologians do not in these days authorise us to expect a violation of natural law when we least deserve it. Rarely, if we are frank with ourselves, has our world done less to merit this particular miracle.

In what state of mind does one disarm? It is conceivable that the world, if emotion had free play, and if it found a great and resourceful leader, might disarm under the influence of widespread fear. Emotion, amid the dragging misery of our economic crisis, is dulled; great leadership is lacking, and fear is unevenly diffused. The greater Powers, which dominate the League of Nations, though they are not free from apprehensions, believe on the whole that their armaments are adequate to ward off any peril that might threaten their own borders. Short of a general and compelling fear, the state of mind which would normally bring about disarmament would be confidence—a conviction that safety is attainable without inordinate preparations, because we may rely on methods other than war for the settlement of our future disputes. That conviction might steal upon us under a combination of happy circumstances—if no nation of any consequence cherished a grievance sore enough to tempt it to bloodshed, if all of us felt a fraternal trust in the good sense and goodwill of our neighbours, if a high sense of international duty animated the public opinion of the leading Powers. In a

world so fortunate armaments would have become a superfluity and an anachronism, costly, dangerous, and offensive to reason. It would be easy to build security on a system of mutual and co-operative insurance.

This flattering picture does not mirror the world in which we live. Its behaviour through two years of economic crisis has furnished ample material for the study of national egoism, but little evidence of the spirit of mutual aid and international duty. Each country attempts to save itself by restrictions on mutual dealing, under which international trade must soon disappear. So far are we from removing by international agreement the main causes of the economic disturbance, that for months on end it proved impossible to arrange a conference to discuss them.

While we watch, as impotent spectators, the economic disintegration of a great part of Europe, events in the Far East remind us that we have failed in the more elementary task of staving off war. No realistic thinker would hesitate to apply that word to Japan's performances in Manchuria and Shanghai. If this be not war, it is certainly conquest. One member of the League of Nations, honoured by a permanent seat on its Council, has violated the territorial integrity of another, by deposing the Government of three of its richest provinces, driving out its armies, and setting up an administration under her own control. When one learns that Japan has not only taken over the police of Manchuria, but has found means to bring under her management a long list of enterprises, railways, electricity stations, banks and mercantile houses built up by Chinese capital, the motive of these operations is evident. All this she has done, moreover, with a consistent disregard of humanity, to which the fitting climax was the destruction of the Chinese quarter of Shanghai, in spite of the acceptance by its Mayor of her demands.

It cannot be disputed that these operations are a flagrant breach both of the Covenant of the League and of the Kellogg Pact, nor can it be urged that the victim of

these aggressions was slow in invoking the League's assistance, or backward in offering to submit herself to international regulation.

The failure of the League to prevent these aggressions, to reverse their consequences, or even to visit them with some sign of general disapproval, is only too painfully evident. To register that fact is not to call in question the conception of the League itself or even its actual constitution: the fault lay primarily with the British and French Governments. The means of action were not lacking. A threat to withdraw the embassies of the League's members from Tokio might have been effective at an early stage of the dispute. A resort to an economic boycott could hardly have failed—indeed, the mere threat of it would probably have sufficed, during the early period, when Japan was peculiarly vulnerable, since she was struggling to remain on the Gold Standard. That expedient, it should be pointed out, does not require a naval blockade: it would have sufficed to close the League's ports to cargoes from and to Japan. But the Council of the League, after naming without result a date in November for the withdrawal of Japanese troops, did not so much as discuss the possibility of using its imperative powers, under Article 15, until the aggression was fully consummated in February. It even delayed its enquiry until a report could serve no purpose, save to complete the historical record of a crime. Events in Shanghai did, indeed, move London and Washington to the use of firmer language, since white men's property and lives were now thought to be in danger. The contrast was remarkable. Justice goes with bandaged eyes, but she is not colour-blind.

Lit by the flames of Shanghai, the Disarmament Conference has met. As the delegations of the weaker nations journeyed to Geneva, can any of them have failed to ask whether the institution which invites them to disarm can make good the promises of mutual aid on which its Covenant is based? Has the League added anything save codified aspirations to their security?

The excuses for this failure are not satisfying. It is said that China had failed to build up a Government entitled to respect, which is unfortunately true. It is urged that her administration in Manchuria thwarted Japanese enterprise in various ways: undoubtedly it sympathised with the population in its passive obstruction to Japanese penetration. But it is from such conditions that disputes leading to war commonly arise. Serbia in 1914 was far from possessing a model Government, and its rulers also had close relations with the organisations which opposed Austrian expansion. Finally, it is said that in Europe, at least, the League's intervention would have been more effectual. We have no guarantee, however, that the next Serajewo will be located in Europe. Nor is the League's European record altogether clear in spite of its success in stopping the Greek invasion of Bulgaria. It was equally ineffective in preventing or reversing Poland's seizure of Vilna. It ignored, inevitably, it may be, the invasion of the Ruhr. It could, doubtless, be trusted to act, if the aggression came from the other camp, and threatened the gains of the victors in the Great War: but it would then be superfluous; they need no reinforcement. In two respects, however, this Far Eastern dispute was a favourable occasion for the League. America joined its deliberations: the aggressor, moreover, had no ally. In some conceivable disputes in Europe disarmed States would face a powerful armed coalition. It is obvious, then, that if in such a dispute, justice called for action against any member of this coalition, the relative level of armaments in the two camps might be the decisive factor. A general and proportionate scaling down is not enough. Disarmament must come in equal measure, if it is to bring a sense of security. But is there a prospect that this Conference will end the pariah status of Germany? Failing that, any reduction in armaments will be, at best, a measure of economy, an incident in the general deflation, which hitherto has spared armies and fleets, while it struck at all that is positive in civilisation.

II

PEACE MUST BE ORGANISED

THE level of the world's armaments betrays the general sense of insecurity, nor is it probable that the final protocol of the Geneva Conference can disclose a happier state of mind, even if it should make for economy, for the dread of bankruptcy is not an apprehension that excludes the fear of war. From these costly and oppressive measures of insurance one is inclined to infer that as yet there prevails among the statesmen of the Great Powers no firm conviction that the world has yet discovered the road to peace, or created the organisation which can ensure it.

While every civilised State has adhered to the Kellogg Pact, there is no tendency in Europe to regard it as an adequate basis of peace, and, on the whole, the Old World remains loyal (albeit with a growing indifference) to the League of Nations. The Kellogg Pact, invaluable as a simple statement of a principle so novel in the world's history that one must describe it as revolutionary, is riddled, none the less, with reservations, tacit or explicit, nor have its American authors shown any eagerness to complete it, either by a mechanism for the peaceful adjustment of disputes, or even by a promise to confer, if its principle should be violated. The League, on the other hand, is lamed by the absence of several non-conformist Powers. One of its leading members is so little satisfied with its ability to guarantee peace, even in Europe and among its own members, that she has sought and still seeks to buttress and supplement it, first by military alliances, then by agreements of the Locarno type, and now by the creation of some rudimentary United States of Europe. The effort goes on, with a measure of success, to

revise and strengthen its Covenant. There may be adherents of the League, or of the Pact, who believe in their adequacy. Time, they might contend, will suffice to bring a sense of security. One must allow a generation to go by before men can wholly discard their obsolete habits of thought. That is not a completely reassuring view, for old-world habits of thought are apt to perpetuate obsolete forms of behaviour. The optimists, moreover, would still be divided on the question, whether a mere promise to keep the peace can suffice, or whether we require a permanent, world-wide organisation.

That division of opinion raises the fundamental question, which this essay seeks to answer. *What are the conditions in which the world may hope for permanent peace?* Or, if that statement of the question seems impossibly sanguine, then: what are the conditions in which the world may so far reduce the risk of war, that the fear will no longer haunt us of a general conflict which might destroy our civilisation? We must make at the outset some large assumptions, which the biologist and the anthropologist would insist on discussing. We must assume that peace is the desirable, nay, the indispensable, condition for a civilisation so complex as ours, and that the prospect of attaining it appears so far within the realm of the possible, that humanity will, in cold blood, make efforts and sacrifices to achieve it. We will suppose, in short, that the world's Governments, when they renounced war as an instrument of national policy, were correctly interpreting the normal mind of the majority of their citizens. The psychologist and the historian may warn us that this general will to peace may yield, with surprising ease, to interested sophistry, under the stress of herd-emotion. That warning does but give to our question a deeper content. In what conditions, or by what changes in our environment, economic or political, shall we be less liable to these gusts of passion? What changes in the structure of our world will adequately reinforce the motives and calculations that hold them in check?

Europe, since 1918, has acted on the conviction that the problem is largely one of structure. It is significant that in this belief in the necessity for some permanent international organisation, the arch-dissenter does not differ from the rest of us. Russia is outside the League, but that is only because she has the ambition to create a world-wide organisation of her own, very much tighter and more highly centralised than the League itself. The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics is already its nucleus, an international federation which looks upon the League as its rival. Kant held that mankind could be united in a league for perpetual peace only when all the States within it had become Republics. The Russians are of his opinion, but they carry their demand for identity in political structure very much farther. Their league will include only Socialist republics, in which the Soviet structure reflects the victory of the workers in the class-struggle. Kant and Lenin were not alone in the belief that peace must be based on some approach to identity in political constitution. Mr. Wilson, the prophet and founder of the League, preached with vehement conviction that "autocracy" is incompatible with peace, and should debar a government from membership of the great society created to ensure it.

These opinions are interesting, for they serve to make us conscious of the daring assumption on which the League actually rests. It reflects the general belief of Europeans, a belief held in common by men who were poles apart, by Lord Balfour as by Lenin, that world-peace demands a permanent and all-embracing international organisation, with a constitution and a court, an assembly, and a secretariat. But whether from opportunism, or from reasoned conviction, the League has shed the basis of political uniformity. It includes States which have accepted the leadership of Socialist ministries, and side by side with these sit the representatives of Fascist "autocracies," which have banished or crushed their Socialists, and trodden democracy under foot. Conceivably the future may prove that Kant, Mr. Wilson and

Lenin were right. The League's wide tolerance increases the strain which its structure must bear. If no identity in political philosophy and constitutional practice unites its members, while the balance of power among classes varies indefinitely, one must enquire whether the external bonds, the sanctions or the benefits, which must serve instead of any social or intellectual harmony, are adequate to secure the necessary cohesion. One may without offence put that question in regard to Italy. Fascism rejects internationalism as contemptuously as it discards democracy. It is based, openly and defiantly, upon a cult of force. Its official Press habitually insults the League, and no one who reads the Duce's orations can do him the wrong of supposing that he keeps the peace, or remains within the League, from any motive save prudence. The test, then, to which the adherents of peace by organisation must submit, grows, as we proceed, in complexity. This organisation, which opens its doors to nationalists and internationalists alike, to democrats and fascists, must possess, if it is to cope with those who are in it, but not of it, the means of ensuring respect for that will to peace, to which fascist philosophy lays no claim. How shall the League ensure that it shall always seem prudent to these apostles of force to refrain from using it, at least outside their own borders? Thus there arises, inevitably, in the heterogeneous League, an acute problem of "sanctions," which repeats itself in varying forms round the map of Europe. A disarmed, democratic republic may fall under the suspicions of its neighbours, no less than a fascist autocracy. Nor is the problem merely theoretical. The League has its strategists, whose study it is to enquire whether a surplus of force, capable of prompt application, will always be available in the event of a threat to its authority. That question, when once we begin to explore this conjectural region, is unavoidable, but it carries us back to reckonings which distantly echo those of the old days, when a Balance of Power was frankly accepted as the only available guarantee of peace. If no more than this were implicit in the

European conception of peace by organisation, it might deserve the reproaches of its American critics, who affect to see in it a preparation for war, not too subtly disguised.

The American solution for the problem of war is enshrined in the Kellogg Pact. Renounce it: that is the essential. For the rest, let us recognise a World Court, which shall, as far as may be, render its judgments in accordance with a codified system of international law. By the stricter interpreters of this doctrine, no advance is contemplated beyond this simple position. Any suggestion of a permanent organisation is rejected, whether to enforce peace, or to impose the judgments of the Court, or even to determine whether a belligerent is engaged in legitimate self-defence. This school is suspicious even of an agreement for consultation among the signatories of the Pact, if war should break out, nor does it approve of any declaration in advance which would imply that the United States will discriminate between Powers which may find themselves engaged in hostilities, in such a way that it would grant to the innocent economic facilities which it would refuse to the guilty party. Confronted with that question, the rigid exponents of this plan to "outlaw war" would propose to deny such facilities impartially to all belligerents—a measure which might operate unjustly if the more innocent were also the weaker and poorer Power.

What, in fact, the United States would do in a grave emergency is a wholly different question. Any Power which contemplated warlike action, which it could describe to its own satisfaction as defensive, would assuredly, before it acted, take soundings in Washington, and perhaps in Wall Street. Everything might turn on its prospects of obtaining raw materials, foodstuffs and credit, to say nothing of munitions, from America. A Power which disposes of her unparalleled resources could use them to veto almost any conceivable war at sea, and many possible wars on land. That she could always refrain from using this power is inconceivable. That in some cases she would be compelled, from self-regarding, if not from disinterested

motives, to discriminate, is more than probable. But as yet she is not prepared to pledge herself to any line of action, either alone, or jointly with other Powers. Whether she will act is uncertain : how she may act unpredictable ; nor can even those, who are convinced that in some cases she would be driven to discriminate with decisive results, feel sure whether she would declare her course in advance of the actual outbreak, or wait until the pressure of events compelled her to intervene. It is highly probable that she would consult other Powers, but she is bound by no pledge to consult. If she acts, her action will be improvised. While she retains her unfettered discretion, all the consequences follow which Europe has by organisation sought to avoid. One may hope for the better, but one must prepare for the worse event. A Power, or a group of Powers, even if it sincerely intends to avoid aggression and to utilise every expedient for the pacific solution of disputes, cannot certainly reckon the military and economic resources of America among the forces which will actively prevent or penalise war, whether before or after its outbreak. That uncertainty may affect the whole scale of the world's armaments. Theory is here, it may be, at issue with practice. Alliances never have, in fact, tended to a lower scale of armaments, nor can we make that claim, as yet, even for the loose defensive alliance which we call the League. In theory, however, the European principle of co-operative defence, were it adopted whole-heartedly, and universally, ought to make for a sweeping reduction of armaments. A Power which had an equal belief in its own good intentions and in the readiness of its fellows to support it, could no longer justify a level of preparedness which might be reasonable if it stood alone and unsupported amid indifferent neighbours. It has often been argued that the war of 1914 would have been avoided if both of the opposed combinations had been certain that Great Britain would have thrown her weight, actively, against either of them, on the sole ground that it refused settlement by conference. The uncertainty as to whether

the United States may be counted as a balancing factor in the maintenance of peace may, one day, seem in retrospect no less unfortunate. This uncertainty, in the first place, lessens the authority of the League, and raises a doubt whether the peaceful majority among its members would possess the force required to overawe one of the greater Powers. Worse still, it might actually make for hesitation within the League in an emergency that called for prompt action. For one does not know what view America will take of an embargo or blockade declared by the League against an offending Power. America might conceivably insist on maintaining against the League the extremer doctrine of a neutral's right to trade with the offender. The danger is not so much that the League can ever be involved in war with America over the Freedom of the Seas. It is rather that Great Britain, realising that she would have to act as the Admiral of the League, and determined to do nothing which might compromise Anglo-American friendship, might use her influence on the Council of the League to prevent the issue of any unanimous recommendation, or to delay effective action. It is such considerations as this which justify European logic in this matter of organisation for peace. Any hesitation to give binding pledges, whether it be to arbitrate every dispute, or to permit, if not to further repressive measures against a criminal Power, compels one's fellows to act on the assumption that on some occasion arbitration may be refused, and the innocent Power left to protect itself as best it may.

It would be naïve to discuss this difference of opinion between Europe and America, as if it could be settled by academic reasoning alone. America is relatively well able to bear the consequences of her more individualistic view. She is strong enough to stand alone. She has no neighbour whom she need fear. She is, in the economic sense, nearly self-sufficing. She has little to gain from co-operative defence. Her problem of security, if she has one at all, narrows itself to the simple one of maintaining peaceful relations with the British Empire and Japan. What need

has she of an elaborate international organisation? And if it be argued that even America might suffer disaster from another conflict in distant Europe (a difficult argument to maintain, in the light of her fortunate experience on the last occasion), the answer is ready, that in her economic resources alone, relatively and absolutely so much greater than they were in 1914, she has, if she chose to use them boldly, the ability, without binding herself in advance, to veto any considerable conflict among civilised belligerents. Her isolation appeals to schools of thought which reason from opposite poles. It suits an ideal of pacific modesty, but it might one day manoeuvre her into the rôle of a dictator. Organisation is much more than an expedient for banishing war. It is the only conceivable foundation for international democracy. Without it only the strongest can reckon, and that doubtfully, on security. The weaker must surrender to the stronger the decision of every vital issue in world politics.

There are, of course, other factors which explain this rooted American dislike to any elaborate organisation for peace. It is part of the temperamental outlook which we share with her. This impatience with too much "system," this contempt (to use Sir Austen Chamberlain's famous phrase) for "logic," is an Anglo-Saxon foible. For long we supposed that the Channel was broad enough to fend off "logic": it is intelligible that Americans still rely on the Atlantic. They are accustomed, moreover, in their own internal affairs to trust to political action and the mechanism of the State so much less than Europeans do, that the conception of anything even remotely resembling an International Commonwealth seems to them less natural, less inevitable, than it seems to us. Their nationalism is of recent growth: their fear of their own unassimilated racial minorities renders it uneasy and liable to exaggeration: it tends to isolation because it is not yet sure of itself. But there is another difference which distinguishes American thinking about war fundamentally from that of many Europeans.

America is a satisfied Power. She has never sat in frustrated impotence, watching the oppression of her kinsmen under an alien rule, never sighed for the reunion of her sundered race divided under many flags. Her expansion within her own continent encountered no barrier which would not yield to a kick. She has not felt the explosive pressure of population, nor read across the horizon vetoes which forbade her to be great. There is in her history no Alsace, no "irredenta," no struggle for ice-free ports, above all, no Versailles. Nothing in her experience has ever compelled her to demand, as the alternative to war, an organisation of the world which can secure peaceful change. Inevitably her view of international life tends to be static. War is merely unreason and crime, a moral obliquity, a thing to be outlived and outlawed. Into this view all satisfied Powers readily relapse. It would be our British view, were we not ourselves under the shadow of Versailles, and already involved in the first efforts to revise its legislation. It is very nearly the French view, in spite of the lesson of Alsace. But its typical expression is in the American movement for the Outlawry of War. A Court it will provide (though here it cannot convince the Senate) for the adjudication of disputes according to a written code of law, and for the interpretation of treaties. It is perfectly aware that many disputes must arise, which will be incapable of settlement by this method, and it is content that they should "be left to time to settle, or not settled at all."¹ This attitude, indeed, is reflected in the negative wording of the second clause of the Kellogg Pact, which imposes no positive obligation to submit to the settlement of every dispute by peaceful means. It is content to forbid their settlement by other than peaceful means. It forbids brawling or rioting, but it neither promises nor organises redress. One asks how many national communities would have survived with a provision so meagre and uncertain for the removal of discontents. If one could banish war by such simple means must it not reappear as rebellion?

¹ *The Outlawry of War*, by Charles Clayton Morrison, pp. 68-9.

III

THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE

OUR conception of an organisation which may prevent war is broadening as we consider this American attitude. Such an organisation, we begin to perceive, must be capable of ensuring, by peaceful means, those necessary changes in their environment which dissatisfied Powers have usually sought by war. In proportion as we fail to provide it, some part of the world's population will suffer from a sense of injury and helplessness. It may suppress its wish for war, but in the life of nations, as of individuals, suppressed wishes are still active, and have the power to poison and distort. Though they make no war, they can thwart the evolution of peace. When at last crisis and temptation overtake the nation which has harboured them, they may magnify a trifling occasion into a challenge of destiny. But if the occasion never comes, if war be impossible and change beyond the horizon of hope, still the suppressed wish will work to lame the will, to sap the energy of that nation till it grows listless, neurotic and decadent. A skilful psycho-analyst would have discovered below the consciousness of the European peoples in the years before the catastrophe of 1914, everywhere wishes for war which prudence or morality had censored, and all of them had for their origin and justification the knowledge that some change, which interest or self-respect or a worthy ambition demanded, was inconceivable without war. It was not the French wish for Alsace, nor the South Slav demand for unity; it was not the Polish longing for independence, nor the Russian ambition to control the Dardanelles, nor even the German wish for colonies which precipitated the war; its occasion was a Serbian murder. But had not

these suppressed wishes worked, through jealousy and suspicion, through armaments and alliances, to close the road to constructive peace? Were they not the unspoken arguments which twice, at the Hague Conferences, confuted the case for disarmament and arbitration?

A liberal mind, if one refrained from raising cases which touched the pride or the interests of its own nation, would readily assent to this argument. Few Englishmen would object, if the League were to insist, for example, on the restoration by Italy to Austria of the indisputably German districts of the South Tyrol. Most of us would rejoice if it could liberate some of the unhappy minorities of Poland, by redrawing her frontiers. But there would be a sharp division of opinion among us, loud appeals for caution and moderation, and angry cries that the League was exceeding its functions, if it were to point out to the Australians that their restriction of immigration is an offence against the world's peace. And yet, a powerful case might be built up to justify that opinion. Does priority of discovery or of colonisation give to a small population, with a low rate of natural increase, the right to monopolise a Continent, in which are vast and potentially wealthy regions, where only a dark race can labour with its hands? Would a world firmly organised for peace tolerate this anomaly, in view of the over-population of China, India, Japan and Italy? The Duce, for all his oratorical truculence, is much too prudent to raise this issue, but would not a vigilant League be driven to raise it, if it were to attempt in earnest to remove the causes of war? There is one realistic explanation for Italy's restlessness: the rest is froth. Over-population accounts for inflated armaments and speeches, for the efforts of which she is suspected to recruit a league of dissatisfied Powers, for her ambitions that wander round the map from Tunis to Asia Minor, from Abyssinia to Angola, in search of some relatively empty land which she may penetrate or colonise. Well aware that Italy is over-populated, relatively to her industrial development,

Fascism none the less discourages birth control ; because she has no hope of a peaceful remedy she cherishes her military man-power. Theoretically, the League, if this restlessness were to end in a breach of the peace, could coerce her. That, indeed, might be easy : it would suffice to stop her imports of coal and wheat. But from any radical cure the League is debarred. It dare not inquire whether France, with a stationary or dwindling population, has the better claim to the more habitable part of North Africa. Nor could it summon Australia to make room for an Italian settlement in the Northern Territory, or in Queensland. It is possible to imagine an easier solution : Italy might develop some of her exports. But the League, though it may carry on propaganda for freer trade, has no power to assist Italy in an attempt to secure open markets. Even if it were unanimous, it could no more require Australia to lower her tariffs than it could command her to receive Italian immigrants. But until the League dare intervene in this way, there is a startling disproportion in its means of action. For purposes of police it may command and coerce. It could stop a mobilisation, if it chose to use its powers resolutely : it could even halt an invading army which had crossed the frontier of a neighbour, as it did when the Greeks advanced into Bulgaria. But for the purpose of removing the causes of discontent, and imposing a constructive remedy, its powers are more limited. It cannot as yet bring about salutary and necessary changes in the environment of a dissatisfied Power : at the utmost, and only in some cases, it may suggest or recommend.

There are many reasons for this disproportion in the League's means of action. In the first place, it reflects the balance of power in the world at large, and within the League itself. The satisfied Powers, which demand no large changes in the world, and suppose that from a more fluid condition of the map they could only lose, are in wealth, prestige and armaments the masters of the earth. That will always be so, so long as physical power is the

decisive factor in international relations. One cannot at Geneva, by polling heads, create a majority of proletarians and pariahs. Dissatisfied impotence faces conservative power, for the discontented States are either disarmed, or poor, or small or backward. The League was the creation of the great victors of 1918, who supposed that in the settlement of Paris they had stabilised Europe, if not the other continents, for ever. Its constitution, though it created an Assembly, which resembles a Senate, and a Council which in part is elective, is not democratic. For the rule of a majority, whether of States or of populations, it makes no provision. Its foundation is the contrary principle of unanimity. Save in questions of procedure, the Council, which is its Executive, can act only when its fifteen members are unanimous, subject, however, to the important exception, that members are debarred from voting when it takes action, or pronounces a verdict, in a dispute in which they are directly involved. The Assembly which is its Legislature, cannot enact laws which will bind its members without their individual consent and ratification. The Assembly may, indeed, pass by a majority a resolution, or *vœu*, but this has no binding force, though it may have a moral value, as an indication of international opinion.

In describing these limitations, one is not criticising the League, or its pioneers. On no other basis could it have been founded. None of the Great Powers, and few, if any, of the smaller Powers, would have consented, even within a strictly limited field of subjects, and under carefully drafted safeguards, to such an abandonment of sovereignty as a decision by majority would imply. The League is based on the recognition of national sovereignty, and can arrive at decisions only by the general consent. A sovereign State is by definition a unit which bows to no will but its own. Even to-day this high doctrine of sovereignty was again proclaimed by M. Briand, in his proposal for the creation of a European Federation, and many of the European Governments were at pains, in

their replies, to underline it. We may agree that the League had to start by bowing to this old-world doctrine, but we may discover, as we proceed, that it is the arch-enemy of peace, since it forbids any radical approach to the problem of organic change.

Let us, to test this suspicion, suppose that the League had been in existence when the Serajewo murders hurled Europe into war. Its mere presence might have deterred Vienna from sending an ultimatum to Belgrade. In any event it is probable, or at least possible, that the Council could have arranged for a judicial enquiry which would have determined the degree of Serbia's responsibility. War would have been averted, but none of the discontents which led the Allies at the close of the war to destroy the Dual Monarchy, and create a great South Slav State, would have been removed or even lessened. The Council could not have recommended, still less commanded, the surrender by Austria-Hungary of any of her Slav territories. The League is based on its Covenant, which in Article 10 guarantees the integrity of its members' territory. Nor could it, even by a *vœu* of its Assembly, have advised her to concede a wider measure of autonomy. That, also, would have been an infringement of the League's Constitution, for it would have been a flagrant interference with a matter of domestic jurisdiction.¹ The League, in short, might have done, in a more systematic way, through permanent machinery, what the old Concert often tried, by improvised action, to do: it might have imposed on discontented States or races respect for the unalterable *status quo*, but organic change it could not have imposed. The League seems, indeed, in its Constitution to have debarred itself from any radical treatment of the chief causes of war. It may adjudicate on a disputed title to territory, where that depends on evidence of occu-

¹ Did the decision of the Aaland Islands' question make a precedent which broke down this latter rule? I hardly think so; a disputed title to territory was settled in the main on historical grounds: autonomy already conceded, was, indeed, guaranteed.

pation or the interpretation of a treaty. But it cannot go behind titles, to discuss the ethics, or even the expediency of any established claim to territory. But no one would dispute Italy's legal title to the South Tyrol, while few would admit her moral right to hold it. As little can it mitigate the mischiefs of a wrong allocation of territory by imposing political autonomy, nor can it even suggest cultural autonomy (which might render the plight of the Tyrolese endurable), save where the Peace treaties expressly authorise its interference.

But what, in the modern world, are the probable causes of war? Without attempting a scientific or exhaustive enumeration we might certainly say: the unsatisfied claims of nationality; the unsatisfied demands of growing industrial Powers for raw materials, markets or fields for capital investment; the pressure of population within a confined territory. With none of these can the League, save with the consent of its members, deal adequately. It cannot redistribute territory, whether to satisfy a wronged nationality, or to bring about a more equal division of coveted raw materials. It can no more tear up tariffs, than it can redraw maps. Nor may it infringe on the sovereignty of its members by requiring them, within their inalienable territories, to admit immigrants, or to ensure to their unwilling subjects of other races a life of freedom and self-respect. This organisation for peace is better equipped for the short-range task of preventing an outbreak of war, than for the long-range task of removing the causes of war by timely changes and the satisfaction of legitimate discontents.

This may seem an overstatement of the case, and to correct it we must estimate the value of three provisions in the Covenant which were designed to facilitate change. It is itself capable of amendment, and for this purpose a majority of the Assembly is sufficient, provided that the Great Powers (the permanent members of the Council) are all content. One cannot rate this concession very high, for one Great Power may block any advance. Secondly, it

may be asked whether under Article XI (2), which declares it to be "the friendly right" of any member to draw the attention of the Assembly, or of the Council, to "*any circumstance whatever* affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations," it would not be possible to initiate a debate (say) on the condition of the South Tyrol, or the immigration policy of Australia, the wider opening of markets, or the distribution of raw materials. Such broad issues as the last two are certainly covered, and a general debate on migration would be possible. But would it be possible to raise a specific question, like the first and second of these, which lie within the domestic jurisdiction of a particular Power? One is not sure: the attempt has never been made. But even if this possibility be open, it seems certain (from the wording of Article XV [8]) that the Council could take no action, even if the debate were to disclose a strong consensus of opinion. There remains the right of the Assembly under Article XIX to "advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable." Of that right it has never yet availed itself. The chief difficulty in doing so cannot be made a reproach against the League or its constitution. It is none the less formidable, and may confront us throughout the lifetime of the first post-war generation. Many treaties and many chapters of the Versailles settlement stand in need of revision. So much, in moments of candour, ex-Allied opinion and even French opinion, would concede. But the first breach in the sanctity of the settlement would lead to others, and therefore the French *bloc* in Europe has become a closely knit conservative group for mutual support, which maintains as a dogma the intangibility of the entire territorial settlement, though the pressure of economic forces drove it long ago to modify the provisions for reparations. One may hope for the slow growth of a sentiment favourable to further revision, but even when a debate may be risked in the Assembly, its "advice," even were it backed by a

considerable majority, would have only a moral effect. The Council has no power to enforce its recommendations. The most one can say is that a Power which disregarded its advice could not rely thereafter on the whole-hearted support of the League in any perils or difficulties which it might bring upon itself by its recalcitrancy.

IV

SOVEREIGNTY AND OWNERSHIP

ACROSS our path in this summary glance at the first organisation which endeavours to knit up our international life in a co-operative league for mutual security, we have encountered the sovereign national State. It resists dictation. It does not yet conceive the Great Society as an organism which should overrule the individualism of its members. Rather is it an association which watches over their relations, which remain external, advising and recommending more social conduct, but never issuing a command, save when peace is threatened by overt violence. Statesmen repeat, and will for long continue to repeat, that the sacred myth of sovereignty remains inviolate. That is an amusing pretence. The world is manifestly involved in a rapid process of evolution, which has already rendered the old conception of sovereignty obsolete. All along the line, the national state has been shedding one cherished attribute of sovereignty after another, though much remains and something will always remain. The original Covenant left standing a mere vestige of the ancient right of the sovereign to make war at his own unfettered discretion. In theory, at least, even that vestige was swept away by the Kellogg Pact. It is true that Mr. Kellogg himself and Sir Austen Chamberlain seemed to keep it alive, when they insisted that the sovereign State is the sole judge of the circumstances in which it may resort to arms for self-defence. That claim was a flat denial of the whole tenor of the Covenant. That document means nothing, unless it means that the final judges of such an excuse for engaging in hostilities are the sovereign's peers, represented in the Council of the

League. The Covenant registers several complete surrenders of the sovereign's discretion, some of them absolute, of which perhaps the most notable is the obligation to participate in the general boycott of a State outlawed by the League. (XVI, 1.) In some other matters of vital importance, the wording of the Covenant allows to its members a wider sovereign discretion. The Council can only "recommend" to its members what force each shall contribute to the League's operations against an outlawed Member. It has no express right to order disarmament, though it is to "formulate plans for such reduction (of armaments) for the consideration *and action* of the several Governments." The clause (VIII, 2) is subtly worded, and while it seems to leave the decision to the sovereign national State it implies that action to conform with the Council's plans is expected. The pledge to submit justiciable disputes, under the Optional Clause, to the decision of the Court, is another important surrender of sovereignty, not the less significant because it is voluntary. The State which has taken these pledges and submitted to the discipline of the Covenant is no longer the sovereign cyclops of the old order, who was a law unto himself. Sovereignty, indeed, is safeguarded by the right of secession (I), but in proportion as the League develops on its positive and constructive side, the exercise of that right should become, first difficult, and then unthinkable.

But, indeed, over a wide range of the League's work, one notes a diminishing tendency to insist on the old jealous reading of sovereignty. It is still the unquestioned privilege of the sovereign State to impoverish itself, and to injure its neighbours, by adopting any fiscal policy, however narrow and exclusive. Yet the Economic Conference of Geneva took the notable step of declaring that tariffs are a matter of general concern. It was a further gain that a proposal to stabilise tariffs for a time by general consent could even be considered, though it came to nothing. Progress is slow, and the League, in economic questions, can do little more than employ its machinery

of research and publicity. It must exercise great prudence, lest it should alarm the partisans of sovereignty and isolation. But insensibly the League is extending the field of international co-operation, deepening our consciousness of solidarity, and breaking down the ultra-nationalist conception of sovereignty.

The decay of that conception must proceed very much faster than seems probable in our lifetime, if we are to approach the difficult ideal which the need for change seems to impose upon us. Bearing in mind the typical cases which have seemed to us to be the crux for any international organisation bent on conserving peace by means less elementary than the big stick, it would seem that the chief obstacle to salutary changes, which the League might first suggest, and eventually impose, comes from the possessive attitude towards territory. One may do what one will with one's own. This right may be stretched to include the forcible denationalisation of unwilling subjects, the exclusion of immigrants from empty or but partially utilised lands, and the monopoly of raw materials which others can purchase only on onerous terms. Without moralising *in vacuo*, can we detect at work tendencies which may weaken this jealous sense of ownership, or suggest extensions of international policy which should have the same effect?

Why, in Europe to begin with, should a State desire to possess territory inhabited by a majority of unwilling subjects of another race? In so far as the answer is "mere megalomania," one can but wait for the child to grow up. But there are usually realistic reasons, which may appeal to shrewd minds living on a low level of social morals. These reasons are (1) partly strategic: the territory may include useful obstacles to invasion, or salients which convey a visible threat: its population will serve as cannon-fodder. Next come (2) the economic advantages—this territory may become a closed market for home industries: it may also contain raw materials, a coal-field or what not. Finally (3) it may contain a minority of the

ruling race (as do the White Russian and Ukrainian districts of Poland) which its brethren are reluctant to leave unprotected.

Evidently we are involved in one of those circular complications, so familiar in international affairs. One ought not to resent them: they are part of the evidence which proves international society an organism. If we could organise security, the force of these strategic arguments would disappear: yet can we establish security in Europe, while several States insist on antagonising their neighbours by holding down unwilling subjects? If the League could abolish the economic basis of nationalism by promoting freer exchange within Europe, again the economic arguments would be weakened: but this the League cannot do, while nationalism rages. Again, the third order of considerations which justify the inflation of national boundaries would lose most of its weight, if the League could ensure full cultural rights to every racial minority: but once more the jealous tradition of sovereignty stands in the way. *Solvitur ambulando*. One can but push, simultaneously and tirelessly, along all these roads. This jealous, possessive sense of ownership has several roots: one begins to starve it by lopping any one of them. Freer exchange of goods and services may surprise us by easing the lot of an oppressed nationality. Some progress in disarmament, or some advance towards co-operative security, may astonish us by promoting the redrawing of a frontier.

That, incidentally, is a reason why it may be unwise to refuse guarantees of security, even when these seem to stereotype the *status quo*. If Italy felt perfectly secure, and (what is, in her case, more important) certain that Europe were tightly and permanently organised against any military adventure of her own rulers, would she insist on retaining the South Tyrol, which has for her only a strategic significance? When France at last loses her fear of a German *revanche*, will she continue to veto the union of Austria with Germany, or back Poland in a refusal to re-

consider the Vistula corridor? One tends to oppose, as dialectical opposites, the conservative view of peace, which treats it as a problem of police, and the radical view of peace, which treats it as a problem of change. There is no such absolute opposition. A firmer system of police may actually make change easier, even where it looks all but hopeless, in the redrawing of frontiers. Men are unjust because they harbour fear: but equally, while they are unjust, they have good reason to fear. It is sometimes easier to remove their fears, than to lead them to a quixotic act of justice. Yet when once their fears vanish, they may astonish us by a sudden lapse into righteousness.

We are now in a position to name some of the *desiderata* which would make feasible at least a cautious attempt to make timely changes in the environment of dissatisfied States. Every advance to co-operative security and disarmament (especially if it modifies or abolishes conscription), every extension of the areas of economic co-operation and exchange, every step towards the ideal of cultural freedom, must weaken the significance of ownership, and break up the anti-social elements in the nationalist complex. Frontiers, in short, as this advance proceeds, tend to become unimportant. One looks no longer to the hills for salvation. Political divisions are no longer the limits of one's market. On either side of the frontier one may count on respect for one's mother-tongue, and the culture it enshrines. One may add yet another factor. In proportion as the International Labour Office raises the conditions of the worker in backward countries to the level of his more fortunate fellows elsewhere, while the Health Section standardises the services which attend to his bodily welfare, it must cease to be a matter of tragic importance to the mass of men on which side of a frontier they reside. One may still love the old flag and the venerable traditions, but if one may trade freely across the imaginary line, if one is not conscripted into a foreign army, if one's child may attend a school based on the familiar culture, if the

same level of wages and the same type of social services prevail in both countries, would one risk one's life to change one's flag? Change, even territorial change, would have become easier. Why resist it? But equally change would have become unimportant. Why demand it?

This slow process of sapping and undermining is proceeding, and along all these roads. The international society, whose foundations the League has laid, will not be baffled by the problem of change, if the building can but proceed at an accelerated pace, through a generation of peace. Much might be won by generous leadership to extend the sphere of international control, which the League has already partly demarcated. It might have been wise to have included in the Covenant some general charter outlining the minimum rights of national minorities in Europe—the suggestion was made and rejected at the Peace Conference. The procedure which the chief Allies chose to adopt divided the Powers into a class of aristocrats which may do what it will with its own, and a class of parvenus, which must answer to the League for its treatment of minorities. Inevitably this invidious distinction is resented. The South Slav kingdom will not readily admit the League's right to watch over its Italian, German, Magyar, Albanian and Bulgarian subjects, since no one can call Italy to account for her treatment of South Slavs and Germans. As little may Catalans or Flemings appeal to the League, though one need not assume that it would be wise for them to do so. The entire procedure for the protection of minorities stands in need of drastic reform; but might not its atmosphere be changed at once, if a Great Power volunteered to submit itself to the League's control? We have no exactly comparable problems of our own. But might we not announce our readiness to allow the minorities on British territory in Europe to send petitions to the League, on the same terms as the populations of the "Succession States"—the inhabitants of Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, even, if you will, the Welsh and the Jews? Would France be great enough to

make a like offer to German-speaking Alsations? In this way one would mollify the pride of Poles and South Slavs, and might with a better conscience make the League's control a reality. Eventually Europe might rise to the courage required to bring Italy's vicarious conquests under the searchlight of civilisation.

V

HOW TO SAP IMPERIALISM

ALL that has been said about the need for a weakening of the possessive attitude towards territory in Europe, or in lands with a European civilisation, gains in force when we turn to colonies and dependencies. The solution of the problem of Imperialism may turn out to be the evolution of the idea of ownership into that of trusteeship. This is manifestly all-important, when we consider the welfare of those peoples as yet incapable of full self-government, but it has its reaction also on problems which we are apt to consider exclusively in their European aspect. Disarmament is not simply a question which turns on the relations of civilised and self-governing States towards each other. Some part of their armaments is retained, because, in some of their dependent, overseas "possessions," ownership has not yet evolved into trusteeship. Where there is disaffection, which requires a strong garrison, one suspects some form of exploitation. One need not discuss here whether, or when, or how, it would be wise or safe to concede full Dominion Status to India—or, in other words, to allow the safeguards and reservations in the Round Table Constitution to lapse. It is enough to note that any difference of opinion between Delhi and Westminster on the matter of date must in some degree affect our armaments. If our relations with India had permitted an earlier and more rapid "Indianisation" of the army, again the difference would be perceptible. Finally, were India the mistress of an adequate native army, capable of assuring, with the support of Indian public opinion, the defence of the Peninsula against any external invasion,

would not that affect the level of our military, and even, in some degree, of our naval forces?

But the relation of ownership to armaments goes further than this. Ownership is sought, cherished and defended, largely because it confers on the metropolis, or on some class or interest within it, some exclusive economic advantage—the monopoly of a market, the power, financial or strategic, which comes from the control of a raw material, the gains of a closed field for capital investment, or, worst of all, the profits of exploiting submissive and unorganised native labour. What is exclusive must commonly be defended. That economic imperialism contributed immensely to the growth of European armaments, both by land and sea, during the half-century before the Great War, few would dispute. The possible partition of China, the acquisition of Egypt and Morocco, the division of Persia, the building of the Bagdad railway—one could assign roughly to each of them its share in inflating Russian, Japanese, French, British and German armaments. The scale of preparedness does not rapidly diminish. In spite of Covenant and Pact, is not Economic Imperialism still a potent factor? It is not true that the fleet is simply an insurance for our food supplies in time of war. It is also, even in peace, an insurance for our capital investments overseas. Again one realises that the linked and inter-related problems of the international society are those of an organism. If it can hasten the evolution from ownership to trusteeship, it will lessen some of the strains and rivalries among the Imperial Powers, which find expression in swollen armaments. Trusteeship is a high and difficult ideal, but in proportion as we realise it, and renounce the direct and exclusive gains that flow from ownership, the economic motive, at least, must disappear, which causes nations to covet the colonies of their neighbours, and compels the owner to defend his property.

In the Mandate the League has invented its technique for the realisation of the idea of trusteeship. These mandates had an origin which it is difficult to describe without

cynicism. The Allies carved up Turkey, and Mr. Wilson said grace before meat. It was then found that Providence had thoughtfully arranged that the wishes of the victors, recorded in the Secret Treaties, should harmonise exactly with the preferences of the inhabitants of these regions. The event showed that the peoples of Syria and Iraq were imperfectly conscious of any preference for the Mandatory assigned to them, and some armed help was required to clear their mental processes. This chapter of history stank with hypocrisy. Yet, after a decade, the idealistic pigment, which Mr. Wilson injected, begins to colour the corrupt mass. Who would have predicted the voluntary surrender by one of the conquerors of his Mandate? But the British Government has negotiated a treaty with Iraq which provides for its termination, and promises in its place all the privileges of League membership. The mandate system not only protects, or aims at protecting, the natives of these territories against exploitation by forced labour, it prohibits the Mandatory from drawing any direct economic advantage from his charge. That may be difficult to prevent, but at least he cannot impose a differential tariff on imports, as France invariably does in her colonies. He cannot by export duties or prohibitions monopolise its produce for his industries, as for a short time during and after the War we did in the case of certain West African raw materials. France incurred the censure of the Mandates Commission when she linked up the Syrian currency with her own, and to that extent favoured her own bankers and merchants. Finally, the history of the Mosul oil-field registers the pressure of the world's public opinion in holding the mandatory to a relatively disinterested line of conduct. We had, presumably, two reasons for conquering Iraq. It is a station on the road to India, and it contains much oil. But the concession to exploit this field had soon to be shared with American, French and other European interests. A rival group which has since competed for this privilege is equally cosmopolitan. That precedent has been decisive. A Mandatory Power

cannot grant a concession to any syndicate in which its own subjects hold the majority of the shares.¹

It is true that the strategic motive remains in Iraq as in Egypt. The ward, on attaining his majority through membership of the League, remains the military ally of the Trustee, to whom he accords facilities for his aircraft. The same relationship of alliance will certainly be the basis of the eventual settlement with Egypt, qualified in this case by arrangements for the police of the Suez canal. This equivocal status of an ally (whose choice of her great partner may not spring from the untrammelled working of any elective affinity) marks a stage of transition between the protectorate and unquestioned independence. To impose it may become unnecessary as the British Empire loses its historic anxieties about the road to India. The liberation of India would hasten that progress, and so would every advance towards disarmament and security. It is the usual circular process of organic growth. But in spite of this strategic precaution, the treaty which Iraq signed and the treaty which Egypt rejected were notable stations in the slow retreat of force in the modern world. When Iraq and Egypt join the League, especially if they have the wit to sign the Optional Clause, they will have the protection of Covenant and Court in every future dispute with the Power which once patrolled their cities, spread its wings above their streets, and anchored its warships off their ports. Prestige and wealth may still confer some advantage, but it will be, in every future conversation, an irrelevance that one of the parties to it has a great navy, while the other goes to sea unarmed. Armaments are ceasing, even in the East, as the confidence in arbitration grows, to play an audible *obbligato* to every diplomatic discussion, and the ultimatum (of the type, at least, which implied armed action) belongs to an obsolete technique. It will soon be difficult to remember that so

¹ Do the Dead Sea concessions and one or two others granted in Palestine contradict this principle? I hardly think so, since the beneficiaries are Jews.

recently as the days of the late Lord Salisbury we threatened to use the navy to extort a railway concession from China. When it is generally realised that for such a purpose a battleship is now as useless as a blunderbuss, we shall not be far from genuine disarmament.

The conditions attached to the League's Mandates have given precision to the vague ideal of Trusteeship, which had begun to figure, with more or less sincerity, in the apologetic literature of Imperialism, long before the War. We can no longer deceive ourselves with the old complacency. A trustee must draw no exclusive advantage from the management of his ward's estate. A glance at the tariff schedules would in many cases suffice to reveal the owner. A scrutiny of the capital sunk in railways, ports and plantations would disclose the true nature of the relationship in many more. In Kenya no native would mistake us for trustees. But it is not impossible to imagine an evolution in this direction. To welcome foreign capital, still more to insist on its participation in our "own" dependencies, may seem to some minds a fantastic excess of disinterestedness. Is it more improbable than the abolition of plantation slavery? After all, it is not mere loss: it would accelerate the development of the tropics, and would tend to become mutual. Might not the League even now recommend it? The Allied Socialist and Labour Parties on the eve of the Peace Settlement at one moment suggested the handing over of all tropical colonies to the League. That was, as they soon realised, an impossibly hasty proposal. But might not the Imperial Powers encourage the League to embark on inquiries, which might pave the way for a system of inspection and eventually of supervision? It already studies tropical diseases. It has a vague general right of control in certain "humanitarian" questions. Might it not usefully institute a series of comparative studies of colonial administration, which would enable each Power to profit by the experience of its fellows? In the long run it may come to seem barbarous to "own" colonies, and we may make mandates the nor-

mal tenure. But there are many ways in which the Imperial Powers might display their sincerity as Public Trustees. There is a long-standing difference of opinion between Egypt and the British Empire, as to which of them is the more eligible "trustee" for the Sudan. Were either of them disinterested the competition might be less acute. But would it be asking too much of a British Government to suggest that it might propose a reference of this question to the League? Let it draw up a mandate for the Sudan, and name a Mandatory.

In yet another way an organised international society may render Imperialism superfluous. Every Empire can point to entries on the credit side of the ledger of history. If Imperialism sometimes exterminates and often corrupts a backward race, if it has robbed tribes of their lands, and degraded millions of helpless villagers in factories which now reproduce in Asia the worst excesses of the early European Industrial Revolution, it has also made war on the slave-trade, banished bloody superstitions, grappled with malaria, built beside its barracks and its prisons its hospitals and its sewers, taught savages how to till, and applied its economic science to organise co-operative settlements of thriving farmers in former deserts which owe their present fertility to its engineers. Must backward natures continue to endure the humiliation of penetration or conquest for the sake of these by-products of Imperialism? Is there no other way of financing progress, and ensuring efficiency with order?

There have been recent developments in the activities of the League which suggest that at least in the backward countries of the East which have been re-awakened by the spread of nationalism, the League might perform all the services which expanding empires have commonly thrust upon them in the past. The process of subjugation often began with a loan on usurious terms, followed by default and an occupation. The League raised loans for Austria and Hungary, and reorganised their finances. It carried out a remarkable programme of land-settlement in Greece.

Why should it not repeat these successes in Asia, or possibly in Abyssinia? Indeed, it is already, in spite of civil war, assisting China to organise a modern service of health, and negotiations have begun for the restoration of her finances. A backward but ambitious nationality can now borrow in Geneva all the administrative and technical help which it requires, even the credit which it lacks, and risk nothing of its independence in the process.

VI

GOLD TURNS TO DYNAMITE

IN sketching the international organisation which, if it is to promise us security, must provide for us many other desirable things as well, we have allowed ourselves a generous licence in prediction and suggestion. We have supposed that the sovereign national State will at last acknowledge the moral authority of the greater society to which it belongs. We have asked from nations a less possessive attitude towards the territories they own. We have demanded from Imperial Powers in their dependent colonies an advance from the attitude of ownership to that of trusteeship. We have made it a little easier to conceive these immense advances, by reminding ourselves that we are dealing with an organism in which every modification induces others. Disarmament and the tightening of obligations for co-operative defence must weaken the possessive and exclusive elements of nationalism. In the process we saw that some of the present obstacles to fundamental change would grow less formidable. All this is a flattering prospect, and much of it is in accord with actual tendencies in contemporary history, but it is little more than an attempt to render explicit what is latent in the ideal of an international society.

Dare we be more realistic? Can we point to forces in our economic environment which are actually driving us in this direction? As men work, so will they think. Their political concepts, whether of nationality, ownership, or sovereignty, must conform in the long run to their daily experience in field, factory and counting-house. The romantic and the pedant who lurk in most of us may delay this adaptation, until at last it becomes clear to the more

active minds that the forms of our political structure have ceased to correspond to the economic reality. The old political units no longer coincide with the areas within which we buy and sell. The movements which decide our fortunes, whether as individuals or in the mass, gain their momentum in areas far beyond the control of any national government. Over the values that chiefly concern us, some degree of human control, municipal or national, used to be possible. The price of wheat could once be fixed by magistrates, after a glance round the market-place. To-day wheat has its world-price. The King's features still appear on his coins and notes, but their purchasing power, so long as we remained on gold, was fixed neither by his Ministers, nor even by his chartered Bank. The value of gold is determined by the growth of the mountainous reserves which lie, useless and sterile, in the vaults of Wall Street, and the aeroplanes which daily transport this metal to increase the equally idle reserve in Paris. Life has grown unendurably complex, when hundreds of thousands of British miners must face the degradation of permanent idleness, because the world's output of coal steadily exceeds the world's demand. Everywhere, in farm, factory and mine, we are faced by problems which the national government, though it may alleviate the distress, cannot hope to solve. The unit which calls out for constructive statesmanship long since outgrew the range of our national efforts. Our technical advance has been so rapid, that it has far outpaced our political progress.

It is now the commonplace of our daily politics to ascribe the present scourge of unemployment to "world-causes." As yet that phrase is merely a cloak for fatalism, and we face the general calamity with as much resource as the Middle Ages mustered against the Black Death. Everyone agrees that the cause of this world-wide disturbance must be sought in the catastrophic fall in the wholesale prices of raw materials and foodstuffs. These fell on the average by over 30 per cent. between the end of 1929 and the end of 1931. There are broadly two ways

of accounting for such a fall of prices. The older school of economists supposes that there must have been general over-production, though it is difficult to believe that accident or miscalculation could have conspired to produce the same effect over a range of commodities so wide, raised under conditions so various, in every quarter of the globe. If this were the true explanation, the remedy through international organisation could be neither easy nor prompt, but for some articles at least, it is conceivable. Reserves can in some cases be built up, and quotas of output assigned to every organised group of producers. In this way some rough relation might be established between actual supply and probable demand, and some approach made to the stabilisation of prices. There are cases, notably that of coal, in which some such procedure is imperative, and in this instance, within the European area at least, it may, before long, become possible.

There is, however, a much easier explanation of this world-wide fall of prices, which has become, since the Macmillan Committee and the League's experts reported, the orthodox view. It is due to the misbehaviour of gold. We are in the grip of a slow but continuous process of deflation, which quickened its pace, for reasons that can be traced, since the autumn of 1929. It is gold which has appreciated in relation to other commodities. For that there are two sufficient explanations. Purchasing power should expand, as the volume of goods and services increases, if the price level is to remain stable. But we have no assurance that the output of gold will keep pace with the normal annual growth of production in industry and agriculture, which is thought to proceed generally at the compound rate of 3 per cent., or in the United States of 4 per cent. This inconvenience might be overcome by economising the use of gold in international transactions. But, in fact, the great creditor Powers have, by high tariffs which made the payment of international debts in goods impossible, compelled its use on an unprecedented scale. When America ceased to lend to Europe, gold

became so congested in New York and Paris, that nearly 80 per cent. of the world's stocks were "cornered" there. The over-valuation of sterling due to the mistakes of Mr. Churchill and the Bank in 1925 was also a contributory cause of this disaster, since it made it difficult to attract gold to London, or to keep it there without the lure of an injuriously high bank-rate. These French and American hoards of gold, originating in war debts, served no monetary purpose: this gold was sterilised and ceased to act as a basis for credit. The world's purchasing power, in consequence, so far from expanding to keep pace with the progress of production, actually contracted.

Equilibrium could be re-established only by a fall in the general level of prices, and this in turn brought about depression, the slowing down of production, a crisis of unemployment, and frenzied efforts to cut costs and wages.

This explanation is at once the more hopeful and the more depressing of the two. It exposes us to the certainty, if no remedy can be applied, that this deadly process of deflation must go on (with occasional halts and brief intervals) year after year and decade after decade, steadily robbing us of the fruits of our technical progress, while at the same time, by altering the distribution of the world's income to the advantage of that part of the creditor and rentier class which enjoys fixed rates of interest, and to the disadvantage of the active producers, both workers and *entrepreneurs*, it aggravates social inequalities. On the other hand, if we accept this explanation, the remedy for our miseries seems easy. We are no longer compelled to contemplate the regulation of a vast number of commodities, many of which spring from unorganised producers. The general price level (if gold retains its prestige) can be regulated by controlling a single commodity, of which a few central banks hold the great mass of the world's supply. The principles of this control were outlined several years ago by the international conferences which met at Genoa and Brussels. Gold can be

“ managed ”—though the opinion gains ground that it is a useless complication, and that stability of the price level could be achieved more easily without it. But to achieve that ideal, the world’s central banks must follow a common policy, and work in close consultation. It is astonishing that nothing has yet been attempted to give effect to the Brussels resolutions which advised this course. All the governments of the more advanced nations are confronting unemployed workers and impoverished farmers: many of them have been driven off gold: some are in a condition of undisguised bankruptcy; all face social unrest and a disquieted electorate: most of them must raise with difficulty great sums for purposes of relief, and to balance their budgets must starve their social services. Yet none of them has taken the initiative in proposing the international remedy, simple though it seems. Is it that politicians, trained to work to the national scale, cannot conceive the possibility of an international control? Does it offend their jealous conception of sovereignty, or their prejudices in favour of *laissez-faire*? Or do they suppose that the world lacks the means to put pressure on the two or three banks which might resist the general view of the common good? Historians, when they come to depict our epoch, will be startled by the technical competence of barbarians who could defy gravity, as they transport their gold in flying machines, while for lack of the civilised power to confer and combine they permitted half a dozen men, who were not even the owners of this gold, so to impede its use that they checked the pace of a planet’s activity, thwarted the promise of invention and the bounty of nature, loaded its governments with care, increased the burden of its debts by a half, and plunged into anxious idleness twenty millions of its workers.

This chapter from contemporary history may serve to illustrate the contention that our economic environment has outgrown our political equipment. The regulation of the currency was one of the earliest functions of the sovereign national state, and one of the most funda-

mental. It can no longer perform it. Any effective regulation in the modern world must be international, even were it to begin only with a group of States ; yet until we can achieve it, we are exposed to miseries which every advance in technique, since it must further disturb the ratio between gold and goods, can only aggravate. For want of this elementary advance in the world's political structure, the whole promise of civilisation is neutralised. The Secretariat of the League was well aware of our plight, and undertook research into the whole problem of stabilising the purchasing power of gold. Its report should have done something to enlighten opinion. But, one asks whether, even now, action will follow. The League at best can issue only a recommendation. To one of the raw materials which most urgently calls for international control, the League has also devoted attention, for it has published a most suggestive report on coal. Here again, though it analysed the facts in a masterly way, and formulated sharp conclusions, it felt constrained to leave the initiative in action to others.

Our economic environment is rapidly driving us to improvise forms of organisation for international action or control, which must transcend the boundaries of the national State, as they must ignore, over-ride or circumvent its sovereignty. Necessity drives us. We shall invent these forms, or succumb, for lack of them, to revolution or decay. Gold may destroy us as easily as high explosives, though in a less dramatic way. But it is not clear whether this new framework of our common economic life will be subject to the general will of mankind. There grew out of the previous phase of the reparations controversy an institution which may become the nucleus of a world-bank. Designed to facilitate the payment of international debts, this Bank of International Settlements might do much to economise the use of gold, to bring representatives of the leading central banks into habitual consultation, and so to promote the framing of a common policy. No such effects are observable as yet : the United States

is represented on it only unofficially : it may seem absurd to cherish alarm over the possible misuse of power which it is in no hurry to use. It was, none the less, remarkable that governments (two of which, the British and the German, had at the time Socialist ministers of finance) should have combined to create an international bank over which no government will be able to exercise any measure of control. Yet this institution, if it should realise the general hope by developing some sense of solidarity, could control the world's fabric of credit. It might stabilise the purchasing power of gold at a reasonable level : it might inflate, a course which all bankers abhor : it might continue to enforce deflation, a course to which most bankers incline. The first of these policies alone conforms to the general interest and the demands of economic science. The second would suit debtors and, for a time at least, producers. But the last of these policies serves the interests of creditors and *rentiers*, and increases their relative share of the national income. Of this class bankers are the natural leaders and guardians. Falling prices increase the money-lender's gains. It is to shareholders drawn from this class that they are responsible. The social pressure and the public opinion of this class, based on its fears, its prejudices and its jealous possessive instincts, envelop them. Why should we assume that a bank constituted in this way will stabilise, when it has the power to deflate ?

In other directions our economic environment has gone further in throwing up institutions which aim at creating order and organising combination on an international scale. Few of these trusts, cartels and holding companies have yet achieved a world monopoly. But the steel cartel, while it was in full vigour, rationalised the production of iron and steel for the whole continent of Europe : it prescribed the output of each national group, and allocated markets. Rails and wire came under the same system, and in one degree or another international combination prevails in the electrical and chemical industries, and governs the trade in matches, tobacco,

cotton thread, dynamite and oil. European coal may be "rationalised" in the same way in the near future. In the more elaborate of these combinations the producers eliminate competition, aim at restricting output so as to create a just perceptible scarcity, which enables them to maintain their prices: allocate markets so as to economise transport, and often conduct their operations in such a way as to circumvent tariffs and the economic policy of national governments. If this immense power, vested in these capitalist combinations, were to be abused, no single government could control them. The Secretariat of the League is charged with the duty of watching their operations, and reporting from time to time. But it has no power of control, nor could it even require them to produce their books, or give evidence on oath.

We are moving, it seems, into a deeply interesting period, which as yet confronts us with an unsolved riddle. Our economic environment favours international combination, and even compels it, and trains men's minds to conceive control on a world-wide scale, and with partial success to organise it. But as yet these combinations contain no element of public control, and no representation either of the consumers or the workers, though side by side with them there exists the consumers' co-operative movement, which has achieved some measure of international collaboration. The danger is manifest. A combination of central banks may achieve a control of gold, and therefore of the general price level, with a bias in favour of creditors and *rentiers*. Any species of control may be preferable to the present anarchy, but this is not the interest which most of us would select as the arbiter of the world's economic life. As little is it satisfactory that the sole interest of the producers should effect the control of commodities like steel, which are the basis of our material existence, through international combinations that tend towards monopoly. Apart from the economic consequences of their operations, these vast international concerns cannot fail to exert, sometimes through the Press, sometimes in

the lobbies of Parliaments, sometimes by disguised contributions to party funds, an obscure influence upon international policy. It may promote peace : it may make for strife : its tendency will depend on a reckoning of gain. The *rapprochement* between the politically influential heavy industries of France and Germany which ended in the formation of the Steel Cartel, marched parallel with the political reconciliation which was registered at Locarno. On the other hand an acute struggle over prices and markets between the great oil trusts and the Soviet Union coincided in time with the rupture of diplomatic relations in London and the disgrace of the Soviet ambassador in Paris.

It seems, then, that as we move into the era of international combination, one vital element after another in our economic life will escape from any possible national control. Order must come, but it may not come at first through international organisations which represent a balance of interests, and aim at serving the common good. These vast combinations will represent in the case of gold and credit the creditors alone ; in the case of other commodities, the producers. That may seem a fate so usual that the prospect does not alarm us. But there is a complication which may come to disturb us. The producers will usually be a group of national industries : the consumers may have as their spokesmen certain consuming countries, whose governments may conceivably, at some stage of the process, demand some form of control in which their interests will be represented. One cannot assume, then, that the movement towards international economic organisation will be halted for ever at the present stage. The national State, perceiving that its sovereignty has been infringed and eaten away by the growth of private combinations beyond its control, may prefer to surrender some of its functions to a representative international organisation. One watches the first tentative efforts of the League in the economic field with impatient sympathy. It summons economic conferences. It undertakes the study of

the problems of gold, coal and sugar. It watches the development of international trusts and cartels. It has a mission to promote freer exchange. The range of these enquiries and studies will certainly grow. From suggestion it may proceed to a quasi-diplomatic activity, by way of promoting consent or compromise among its members. That is not necessarily the last conceivable step in the evolution of its functions. Within its framework governments may one day combine to create representative boards of control which will manage gold, conserve the world's sources of oil, regulate the production and stabilise the prices of some of the more vital raw materials.

VII

A VISION OF PEACE

OUR conception of an organised International Society is advancing, as the idea of the State itself advanced. We began with the rudimentary notions of order, justice and security. The League in its first sketch was the international analogue of the obsolete police states of the eighteenth century. As they provided for justice, order and the defence of the realm, but for little else, so it would set up its international court, organise arbitration, and act for the protection of its members against a lawless aggressor. It had hardly assembled, when the realities of international sympathy burst these narrow limits. It was caring for prisoners of war and refugees. It was fighting epidemics. It built up a Health service. It assumed financial tasks. It began to survey commerce and industry. Above all, it has its labour office. Even intellectual co-operation has been included. In a rudimentary form its sections ignore none of the concerns of a modern community, and correspond roughly to the ministries of a progressive State, which organises the social services and plans economic development.

This evolution is of the first importance. It creates the atmosphere of mutual aid among peoples. It trains governments in new habits of intimate collaboration. It gives to the conception of the common good of humanity a visible focus, a definite meaning. The League is no longer merely a policeman. It is a physician, an educator, an economist, a guardian of the weak, a helper in time of trouble. These services, the reader may object, are as yet luxuries: they are not indispensable. So we may think, in the insolence of our wealth and power. But they raised

Austria from her death-bed : they meant life and hope to Greece in her defeat. But this objection, which I have put into the reader's mouth, goes, none the less, to the root of the matter. The success of the world's adventure to achieve peace by organisation will be assured only when the League is rendering, even to the greatest Powers within it, services and benefits which are felt to be indispensable. As yet we are nowhere near this stage. We could improvise arbitration without its aid, as we did, on occasion, before it existed. We could assure our own safety, or we suppose that we could (though this is more than doubtful), at a great cost, by the old technique of armaments and alliances. In our economic life we have hardly felt its benefits as yet. It would be mourned, if it were to perish, but rather because it is hopeful than because it is necessary, rather because it promised progress to the world at large, than because it had realised measurable gains for our own population.

There are two tests of its indispensability, which we may one day apply to it. Should we feel ourselves secure without it? Would a threat to its life strike us with panic, because we should doubt our ability to provide for our own defence? Again, do we look to it for our daily bread? Would our economic fabric stagger and crumble without its aid?

These may seem severe tests. They are probes, none the less, which reveal whether the parts are firmly integrated within the organism. The relationship is necessarily one of dependence. But they are not so fantastically remote and inconceivable as one might suppose. One might even accept literally the test of "daily bread." Italy (not yet a Fascist State) proposed in the first Assembly of the League that it should continue and develop the international control of raw materials which the Allies exercised during the war. That would have suited consuming countries, for prices were unduly high : control might have meant some check upon them, and Canada, accordingly, led the successful opposition of the

producers. She probably regrets it to-day, for control would have meant the stabilisation of wheat prices at a remunerative, though not at an extravagant level. When one surveys the many national experiments or proposals aiming at price-control, all doomed to failure because they include only one group of producers, can one say that an international control of wheat will always be an unrealisable vision? To create an international control over gold and credit is at once a more urgent and an easier task. One does not doubt that it must be done: one is only doubtful whether the League will be allowed to achieve it. Yet this service would alone suffice to make the League indispensable, to the greatest Powers as to the weakest. Once it were established, the motive of self-preservation would convert every banker, every merchant, even every worker, who wished that his wages should have a constant purchasing power, into a loyal subject of the League. Cæsar was Cæsar not merely because the legions obeyed him, but also because the coins bore his "image and superscription."

In this element of indispensability lies the clue to the problem of peaceful change, which has vexed us in the earlier pages. It seemed insoluble because the Sovereign State would never tolerate an intervention in a matter of domestic jurisdiction. Even this would be easier, if the League were in a position to guarantee great economic benefits to its Members. Australia (to recur to that illustration) would scorn a "recommendation" that she should open her doors to South European or Asiatic immigrants, even if it were accompanied by an offer to finance her development by irrigation—a method of assuring peace which would enable the world to save something in armaments. But Australia has faced bankruptcy because the prices of her wheat and wool fell in a catastrophic plunge. Would she steel herself with the same determination to resist the League's advice, if she were dependent on a League which could guarantee to her a stable price for her produce? The further the League can go in assur-

ing real benefits to its Members, the more may it risk, at first in the form of advice, and eventually, if necessary, as a command. That is true; not merely in this difficult matter of organic change, but also in the League's more elementary task of guaranteeing security.

Progressive opinion, at least in our own country, has grown doubtful over the military sanctions for which the Covenant makes a deliberately indefinite provision. The threat of "Non-Intercourse" against a State which had broken the Covenant by waging war in defiance of its provisions is a tremendous weapon, which would usually suffice, if the League held together, to impose discipline even on a Great Power. But even this threat, terrific as it is to-day, would gain in force, in proportion as the League can multiply the benefits of organised intercourse in time of peace. The more the League gives, the more can it withdraw. A society which habitually looked to Geneva to assure the smooth working of an orderly economic system, based on a stable measure of value, with none of the jerks and depressions that school us to endure disorder to-day, would contemplate war, and risk the anarchy that must follow from a League boycott, only if it were in a mood for revolution.

VIII

CO-OPERATIVE ARMAMENT

By the process of pushing imaginatively down many parallel roads of simultaneous advance, we have arrived at the concrete model of an international society which might avail, if we could create it, to ensure peace by removing the motives and occasions for war. We have given a wide range to its activities, both political and economic. We have endowed it with the power to sap nationalism by ensuring to every race and minority in Europe a minimum of cultural autonomy. We have supposed that outside Europe it may undermine Imperialism, partly by an extension of the Mandate idea, partly by itself supplying technical and financial aid and advice to weak or backward States. But to the greatest and most advanced Powers also it must know how to make itself indispensable, partly by enlarging markets through the promotion of freer exchange, partly by such constructive services as the stabilisation of the price level, or the control of raw materials. Again, by its health service, and its labour office it wins a title to the loyalty and gratitude of the masses. In all these ways it is breaking down frontiers, checking the jealous spirit of ownership, diminishing the exclusive privileges which make for rivalry and armed competition, and hastening the decay of those elements in the conception of sovereignty which resist the growth of international order. Every advance in this direction makes it easier to conceive that such an international society as the League may contrive to prevent war. Its authority is enhanced by the immense benefits it confers. In proportion as its direct services become indispensable, it may even advance from suggestion to command, from com-

promises and adjustments proposed by a process of conciliation, to bolder organic reforms, which will ensure to dissatisfied States major changes in their environment, when change is manifestly due. It will be obeyed, even here, when life outside its ranks would mean for the outlaw and the rebel an unthinkable relapse into economic anarchy.

In such a highly organised society the problem of "sanctions" would never arise. But we are very far from this goal: history may repeat itself: we cannot repress the proper question, What will the League do to-morrow, if its means of prevention should fail, and it is confronted by the imminent danger or the actual outbreak of war? It would be disastrous to conceive our international society as a mere system of police, but to ignore police problems may be equally ruinous. When all that we can do for prevention is done, by the signing of the Optional Clause, by adhesion to the "General Act," by strengthening and amendment of the Covenant itself, the haunting possibility remains that one day the triumph in one or more of the dissatisfied Powers of a violent fascist romanticism may confront us with a peril of war which will yield only to a visible superiority of organised force. It is no answer to say that we shall resort to non-intercourse, and what is absurdly called "pacific" blockade. Much, indeed, in a nearly unanimous world might be achieved, without the use of naval or aerial force, by applying economic pressure through embargoes at the sources of supply. But to declare non-intercourse is morally an act of war: it may be impossible to render it effective without measures of naval or aerial police: and in any event the League must be prepared to protect its weaker members, who obey its orders, from the resentment of the outlawed State. One may deprecate too detailed consideration of such problems. One may leave it to the discretion of each Power what forces it shall contribute to any eventual League operations. One may prefer to work out rather the means by which the loyal members of the League will

render financial assistance to a State threatened by aggression. But in proportion as it remains uncertain what aid an innocent State may command in its hour of peril, or even how far other States will refrain from aiding the aggressor with credit and supplies, to that extent do we delay Disarmament. An international society cannot be built on the principle of "Each for himself, and the Devil take the hindmost."

As usual, our arguments turn in a circle. Until the Great Powers disarm, who would care to join in tight commitments to reinsure them against the risk of war? Their very armaments are part of the peril, by the atmosphere of fear which they create, and the militarist mind which they perpetuate. Their present scale is an obstacle to co-operative defence. Would the European Continent, even if it were solidly loyal to the League, care to cope with the British navy? Would the rest of us be prompt to obey a League summons, if it meant a conflict with the French army? On the other hand, if we all hesitate to give pledges of mutual defence, has not each Great Power an excuse for the maintenance of armaments at a high level?

It is hard to escape the logic which dominated every attempt to debate this problem broadly at Geneva. Security, disarmament and arbitration are an inseparable trinity. Until the general level of armaments is scaled down, and that drastically, we shall be slow to rush to each other's defence. But until we can count on mutual defence, there are depressing limits to the readiness to disarm. And again, until there is general confidence in the mechanism of peaceful settlement, it would be folly either to disarm or to reinsure the safety of others. The advance must be simultaneous and concerted, and we need hardly remind ourselves that in some degree every progress towards higher social and economic organisation in the international world has its bearing on this specific problem of disarmament.

It may seem a paradox, and yet the final truth of this matter may turn out to be that we must substitute for

disarmament the conception of co-operative armament. Some length we may go, it is true, by eliminating types of armament which have become both obsolete and offensively costly, notably the capital ship. Something may be attained by arrangements of absolute or conditional parity between pairs of rival Powers. There are in the foreground of this problem many detailed possibilities which deserve to be explored. Less burdensome, less alarming armaments are certainly attainable, even as our organisation for peace stands to-day, and with courageous leadership a lower level can be attained, and often competition can be eliminated. A more fundamental problem remains. What is the purpose of these armaments which we retain? One answer, in the past the only honest answer, is ruled out. They are not maintained for aggrandisement, as an instrument of national policy, as the Kellogg Pact puts it. Then is defence an adequate answer—defence against Powers which have taken the same pledge? The late war compelled us to give to the old limited conception of territorial defence a vastly wider meaning. We told ourselves that we were defending the law of nations, the sanctity of treaties, the rights of little nationalities—but memory shrinks from recalling all the majestic abstractions that we inscribed, sincerely or otherwise, upon our banners. If peoples armed for territorial defence alone, the late war would have been nothing but a skirmish in the suburbs of Belgrade. Nothing has changed since those days, save that the links of policy and finance have grown into a still more complicated web. If “defence” begins again, infallibly we shall all be “defending” one another. So much we all know in our hearts. And yet we hesitate to make the moral advance which alone can give reality to conferences on disarmament. So long as the Powers sit down round the table to listen to calculations which demonstrate what minimum armament each still must possess, if it, unaided, is to repel the assaults of every possible antagonist, so long shall we fail to disarm. These calculations assume that armaments are comparative and competitive. On

that basis only the strongest is safe. The calculations are as unreal as they are immoral. None of us, save by insantly wicked conduct, will in fact stand alone : none of us, save by his own crime, ought to be left alone.

From this old-world individualism we must advance to a social conception of armaments. The question round the table must be put in wholly different terms. The Chairman must no longer ask each Power in turn : " What arms do you require for your own defence ? " He must ask rather : " What arms does the Great Society require each Power to provide for the general defence ? " If we could but take this step, our debates on disarmament would soon be laughably inverted. It was not to ensure the general safety that nationalist and imperialist groups in every country have clamoured and organised for strong navies and great armies. If once the startling idea could penetrate their minds, that armaments are not a means of national aggrandisement, but a contribution to the general good, they would become the protagonists of economy. If instead of disarmament conferences we were to summon periodical meetings of the Common Council for Mutual Defence, it might one day become necessary to check the pacific excesses of our neighbours. The Continent would be heard protesting that it would hardly feel safe, if Great Britain continued to reduce her fleet of small cruisers to vanishing point, while from us might come a warning that France and Germany were neglecting their artillery unfairly. It may even be a question, when we near this stage in our advance, whether we might not cut down all national forces, military and naval, to the level required for internal police, reserving all the more formidable arms for a common defence force of the League, which would police the high seas, protect the narrow straits and the maritime canals, and overawe, if the need arose, any obstinate aggressor. That solution, however, lies in the distant future, and it may never be worth our while to consider it seriously. If ever the League adopts sincerely the principle of co-operative defence, the reduction will

be so rapid and so drastic, that armaments will no longer constitute an anxious problem. But this ideal we shall not adopt, until further experience with arbitration and conciliation, a more adventurous realisation of the necessity for peaceful change, and a higher sense of our economic interdependence, shall have sapped the nationalism which finds expression in armies and fleets.

IX

THE CONCLUSION

OUR positive solution, then, is the deepening in daily life of the spirit of co-operation, its translation, especially in the realm of economics, into a discipline of control, regulation and mutual aid : to such a society it will seem natural and inevitable to unite for common defence. One may, and indeed one must, face the negative aspects also of this evolution. This Great Society can develop only as the pride of sovereignty decays. But, indeed, sovereignty to-day, as juridical theory and international courtesy conceive it, is no more than a myth. How many States in the world to-day are effectively sovereign in the sense that they move without external prompting on the world stage, and frame their policy to suit their own interests alone ? Are the new States of Central and Eastern Europe in that case, which must look to Paris for loans, armaments and protection ? A proud Dominion might suppose itself to be sovereign, until a director of the Bank of England lands upon its shores. There remain, perhaps, the Great Powers, which are relatively self-moved and effectively sovereign, though even their governments and democracies are the puppets of uncontrolled finance. But of power at least they dispose. Subject in the economic realm to subtler modern influences, this barbarous relic of sovereignty they retain : they wield great forces. There, since religion declined and the king ceased to be the High Priest, has always lain the kernel of sovereignty. There is its last refuge, and the ultimate enemy of the great international society. In all our thoughts of it we presuppose the decay of this power complex. The ideas which revolve around armies and fleets must be weakened and dissolved, till at last the

physical things stand useless and meaningless in a world organised on another foundation. They are not useless ; they are of the first importance, so long as one may employ them to impose one's will upon others. Of that use, even to-day, if we mean what we have signed, but little remains. We cannot by ultimata and the threat or use of force impose our will, where a court and a recognised procedure of arbitration and conciliation stand in the way. They still, it may be said, defend exclusive privileges which we value, in lands beyond our native shores, to which we lay a claim of ownership. That also is threatened by the idea of trusteeship, by the extension of every international code which limits the exploitation of weak populations, as by every advance of these peoples towards equality with the master races. The utility of armed power is actually diminishing in the world. To reduce it to zero is perhaps the chief function of an international League. As that process continues, we shall cease to think of Governments as Powers, and conceive them as associations which organise the general welfare within a recognised territory. So conceived they will take their appropriate place as units in a federal League.

This League is ceaselessly evolving organs of the social consciousness to which the Sovereign State must bow. In proportion as these are felt to transcend it, we shall have peace. Its Court and its system of international law are the first manifestations of a principle before which national sovereignty must bend. They are its surest and its deepest foundation. They repose in the conservative conception of an ordered social life. They maintain what has been won. They will always have behind them the instinctive support of the greater masses of wealth and population. To support them will always be to the interest of the satisfied Powers. Yet Law is the antithesis of Power. It is only to a principle antithetic to itself that Power, without humiliation and a sense of defeat, may bow. The supremacy of Law is in substance won. The more adventurous task of international organisation is

to find yet another principle, to which on the shifting edge of the world's movement, where the *status quo* must yield to the imperious need for change, the Sovereign State will bow as readily. What can this principle be save Opinion, the deliberate conclusions of an organised world as to the common good? It has as yet no adequate organ, for the Council, and even the Assembly of the League, are but first essays in an attempt to give to the world's opinion an expression by representation. As Power loses its insolence, it will be possible to strengthen these organs of world-wide opinion, until, in the name of the organised mass of humanity,¹ they dare to dictate the changes which its peace demands. Peace, ere we reach this stage, must come to mean for us infinitely more than the avoidance of war. It must become the outward sign that civilisation has ordered itself, with success, as a co-operative society, ceaselessly adjusting in a changing world, for the common weal, across inconspicuous boundaries, the relations of States which rejoice in their mutual dependence.

¹ Whether this principle of representation requires further development within the League is discussed at length, as is also the economic side of Imperialism, in my book, *Olives of Endless Age* (Harpers). It is clear that any ambitious development of the representative principle, which sought to make of an organised world-democracy the ultimate sovereign, would confront us sharply with the question that interested Kant, Lenin and Mr. Wilson. Must we then presuppose some common foundation of democracy? Can we conceive it without an approximation to social equality? And must not this organised democracy possess adequate control over the international organs of capital which might build up, each in its own field, a rival system of order? In short, have we in this sketch of the conditions which must be satisfied before the world can enjoy peace, presupposed a degree of subordination of national and private interests to the general good which may be attainable only in a world organised on a Socialist foundation? I am reluctant to give to this demand a pedantic or dogmatic statement: it is enough to say that the Great Society must have the right and ability to control, wherever a private interest can affect international or inter-racial relations. The reader must decide whether this whole statement of the conditions indispensable to peace is a *reductio ad absurdum* of our hopes.