

IDEALS AS A FACTOR IN THE FUTURE CONTROL OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY

GEORGE ELLIOTT HOWARD
University of Nebraska

It is an accepted law among social psychologists, I believe, that crises in human affairs clear the way for change, often with a view to preventing or to ameliorating future crises. Is it not possible that the present world-war—so frightfully and cynically destructive of the most precious material and spiritual assets of civilization - may afford a unique opportunity for such a social reorganization as shall prove a guaranty of lasting world-peace? That such a catastrophe as this could occur in the twentieth century has to very many seemed incredible. The vision of some persona is still dazed from the shock. Bewildered by the apparent wreck of ideals, they are inclined to despair of the utility of all idealism. In particular the dream of a world without wars is mocked and derided. Happily, on the other hand, there are many men and women with long vision, with true historic sense, who do not despair; who see clearly that the ideal, of peace is not futile; who understand that the present cataclysm is due to the imperfection of the social order; to the sway of false ideals of human welfare and to wrong systems of social relations which may be replaced by truer ideals and better systems. For a negative result of every war is to justify the ideal of human brotherhood born in times of peace. Accordingly, as never before in war time, plans are maturing to take advantage of the opportunity which will come when the conflict ends. The economist is resolved to find out and remove the causes of antagonism which lurk in false economic theories and in selfish commercial systems; the political scientist seeks a remedy in broadening the franchise and in democratizing the government of states; while the publicist finds a safeguard in an up-to-date, more thoroughly moralized code of international law or in a world-league to enforce peace.

Surely all this thought must have a precious value for the coming reconstruction of the social order. Possibly the sociologist may contribute his "bit" by attacking the problem from the viewpoint of creating a basis of control for a world-society, broader and deeper than that which now exists or even than that which legal, political, and economic readjustment can provide; though without such readjustment the foundation of international social control would be imperfect indeed.

Now, what is social control? In this presence, I take it, technical definitions may be spared. The "constraint of the one by the many"; the "dominance of the individual will by the group-will"; the "ascendancy of the social consciousness over the personal consciousness"—these and similar phrases convey a practical meaning quite well understood. They signify a control, if perfect, which has behind it the whole weight of the group or society, whether the society be a club, a trade-union, a nation, or an alliance of nations. They imply an authority which at its best rests on the free and

intelligent choice of all the psychically interacting personalities which constitute the society. It refers to a power broader, deeper, more complex, than political power. It means a unity of strength whose source becomes higher and purer as humanism advances. But under present conditions social control is never perfect, not even in a democracy such as ours, much less in an oligarchy such as the Prussian. There are many grades in the quality of social control, some lower and some higher, according to the source of authority or to the kind of instruments employed. Among the forces or agencies of social control there is one class which, I venture to suggest, is of supreme interest for the problem in hand. I refer to the rôle of ideals in the development of a true international society. To what extent is the war revealing the existence of certain false ideals regarding the basic social values and thus clearing the way for new ideals which may tend to conserve world-peace? A brief discussion of several of these ideals may, perhaps, give a partial answer to the question.

I. THE IDEAL OF THE NATION-STATE

According to the spirit if not the letter of the prevailing teaching, the state appears in reality as an unmoral, not to say immoral, being. It is an artificial personality without a conscience. Orthodox definitions of the state reveal it as an absolute, isolated, irresponsible, heartless thing, well fitted to violate the Ten Commandments or to become the facile instrument of a caste, a class, or a dynasty. Rightly considered the state is but a means of social control. Control by the state should not be confused with control by society. True, political, religious, economic, or even a wider control of society may fall into the hands of the state, that is, into the hands of the persons constituting the government which, for the time being, wields the power of the state. But that is not true social control. State control is social control only to the extent that the state, the government, is socialized, draws its authority from society itself.

In its genesis the territorial state, the nation-state, is the warrior-state; the instrument of a war lord, a king, an emperor, an ambitious heretoga. Its morality still bears the stamp of its predacious origin. Robbery, falsehood, deceit, statecraft, "might is right": what state is guiltless? Often it is righteous in word, in its bill of rights, but wicked in action. Clearly there is need of a revision of our moral philosophy, so that it may explain the actual facts of private and public life. We are floundering among four conflicting standards of ethics. In the descending scale we have a standard of abstract or private morality, a standard of business or commercial morality, a standard of national morality for home consumption, and a standard of international morality strictly for use with outlanders. Among them all the social conscience is bewildered. Is it strange that at home we are afflicted by industrial warfare and abroad by military strife? Are we not exaggerating the value of the "nation-state" as compared with "society"? The fact is nationalism is overdeveloped at the expense of internationalism. What crimes are not committed in the name of "political necessity"? According to Havelock Ellis, political necessity as a cause of war is increasing, while all other causes—racial, economic, religious, and personal—are diminishing. "Internationalism of feeling is much less marked now," he believes, "than it was four centuries ago. Nationalities have developed a new self-

consciousness, a new impulse to regain their old territories or to acquire new territories." Even "though the people as a whole are pacific, the danger of war is more permanently present now than most people were aware of previous to August, 1914"; and in proof Ellis pictures the military atrocities of the last three years as more unscrupulous, more "rigidly" efficient, than those committed by the ancient Vandals or in the Thirty Years' War.

There is truth in this statement, but it is not the whole truth. The indictment of modern civilization is too broad. The nations are not equally at fault. There has been progress where influence counts most. We of the United States, for instance, may justly protest against being classed among the reactionaries either as regards humanism in war or the sentiment of international fellowship. Are not the monstrous vandalism, the savage cruelty, and the worse than "Punic faith" of the present conflict due mainly, though not wholly, to the arrested morality of a German warrior-state, controlled, not by modern social ideals, but by a military autocracy which has deliberately and with amazing efficiency drawn all the resources of a great people into its hands? The scrap of paper" declaration, the Zimmerman note, and the sinking of the Lusitania alike reveal the character of the unmoral warrior-state at its best—or its worst. Hegel's dictum, "The state is reason at its highest power," is a mockery of history.

If we would clear the way for permanent world-peace, we must raise the ideal of state morality and interstate morality as nearly as possible to that of individual morality. Statecraft must give place to frankness and lying diplomacy to truth in the intercourse of nations. Our country deserves high honor for her share in the humanizing, the socializing, of international law and for the moralizing of diplomacy. But let us not be proud. We are not entirely guiltless of fostering causes of war. For example, we have not acquired all of our domain righteously; and what could be more naively in conflict with the Golden Rule, with the spirit of human brotherhood, than an economic policy which has excused the tax on the imported products of labor for the alleged reason that the "foreigner pays the tax"? It is not hard to understand the Kaiser's desire for a "place in the sun," though one may not approve of his method of winning it. When all peoples are free to choose a place in the sun for the unhampered exchange of their products or the treasure which nature has given them, there will be small excuse for mighty fleets; and they may at least glimpse the dawn of world-peace. In a word, the existing contrast between the state ideal and the social ideal must be modified. The state must become a faithful agent of true social control, so that the safeguarding of the welfare interests which its citizens share with all men shall become its primary function.

II. THE IDEAL OF THE FUNCTION OF WAR AND MILITARISM IN SOCIAL PROGRESS

The socialization of the state ideal, then, is the first task. The second task is to rid ourselves of a false ideal of the function of war and militarism, of physical force, in human progress, and to substitute therefor a true ideal of the real social values. It is, perhaps, not surprising, when a country is engaged in a great struggle for a righteous

cause, a struggle which calls for sacrifice on the part of every man or woman, that some voices should be raised in the praise of war as a good in itself, as nature's severe but beneficent method of sifting and refining humanity. But it is harder to understand how such a theory in time of peace can be defended in cold blood by reputable students of social progress.

In reality the false ideal of war as a good in itself is the basic influence, the chief factor, in preparing the German people to follow the Kaiser in his carefully planned drive for world-dominion. For many years the youth of the empire, and especially of Prussia, have been persistently schooled in this ideal. The historian has taught them to admire the showy deeds of the unmoral, predatory warrior-state and to glorify the virtues of the war-god. The biologist and the sociologist have beguiled them with the subtle, pseudoscientific war-struggle theory of organic evolution and with the far less plausible illusion of so-called "social Darwinism." Appealing to Charles Darwin, for instance, Bernhardt asserts that war is nature's law of growth. "War," he exclaims, "gives a biologically just decision, since its decision rests on the very nature of things." This false teaching has produced that sinister thing, the Prussian conception of *Kultur*. Never has a modern nation disclosed such a breach between ethics and scientific knowledge. At what a ruinous price in spiritual goods has the German efficiency in warfare been gained! Only when we appreciate the powerfully molding influence of such false ideals on the plastic minds of youth can we comprehend how a gifted people, marvelously efficient in the applications of science, can be capable of the savagery, the inhumanism, the perfidy of the present war of conquest.

Such being the case, what appears to be the duty of America and her allies? To fight on until the aggressor is thoroughly subdued? Or to accept the best terms of peace which may now be had? To fight on means further awful destruction of wealth and human life and a continued sacrifice or temporary suspension of some of our most precious social ideals, Nevertheless, can we afford to stop before the German people are cured of the obsession that "might is right," that war is a good in itself, and are ready to help make the world safe for humanity?

III. THE IDEAL OF RACE VALUES

A third fruitful cause of war, fostered by war, is the false ideal of race values. Every race deems itself superior to every other race and every race is mistaken. This race conceit is contrary to the Christian ideal, which is also the modern social ideal of the equal soul value of all races. Yet everywhere in practice that ideal is disregarded by Christian and Pagan alike. Race prejudice is the most hateful and the most harmful of human sentiments. It has justified cannibalism and slavery. It has excused tyranny, cruelty, and the merciless waste of human life. It has sanctioned economic exploitation and helped to produce the sweatshop and the slum. It has bred the spirit of caste and inspired religious persecution. Everywhere from the Mississippi to the Congo it is a sinister factor in world-politics. Without its removal can never be realized the vision of the dreamer, the brotherhood of man. Modern science repudiates the dogma of naturally superior races. It refuses to accept the color of the

skin, the curl of the hair, the slant of the eye, or the shape of the shin bone as a safe index of the relative worth of human souls. It is safe to say that among scholars competent to render an authoritative judgment the ancient doctrine that by nature some races are superior and others inferior has been rejected. Every argument advanced in its support has been tested and found wanting. Every year brings stronger support for the new doctrine of the potential equality of all races. Peoples differ in their planes of cultural development, not in their inherent capacity for development. Races are low or high according to their rung on the ladder, not according to their ability to climb. Under the eye of the expert the existing differences in mental or moral status between brown and yellow, black and white, oriental and occidental, appear as the resultants of variations in environment, institutions, experience, opportunity.

Needless to say as yet the new teaching has had little or no influence on international conduct. How intense is the race prejudice existing among the warring peoples of Europe! Yet these peoples are but branches of the same Aryan stock, while, among them, Prussians and English are Teutonic first cousins. Original race lines are blurred and blended. Yet differences in speech, custom, and inherited traits have been magnified by centuries of warfare and dynastic rivalry. Perhaps never has the inter-race hatred in Europe been so savage as it is at the present hour. Witness the hate songs produced in Germany since the war began. The Berlin Junker seems almost to enjoy his "hate lest." The other peoples are not guiltless. Can there be any enduring guaranty of world-peace unless, in some large degree among the nations, the false ideal of race values shall give way to the scientifically approved ideal of potential race equality? To bring about that change will be a hard task; and what people, because of its composite character, its humane policy, and its democratic spirit, is as well fitted as is our own to take the lead in achieving it? It is a splendid opportunity for human service; yet the American people will fail to grasp it unless first its own conscience shall be purged and its own vision clarified. American democracy must first become incapable of tolerating the lynching in Georgia or the massacre in Illinois of black citizens if it would be the successful apostle of race brotherhood in the world.

IV. THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRACY

Indeed an ideal of democracy, finer than that which now prevails, even in Great Britain or in the United States, must arise if democracy is to play its proper role as the conservator of peace. No doubt the democracy which now exists is a safer instrument of social control than is autocracy or class rule. Democracy, however imperfect, makes for peace; autocracy and class privilege at their best tend toward aggression and strife. Wars of conquest are not usually peoples' wars. More often they arise in some military ruler's lust for power or in class greed for increased possessions. With their President the American people are in this war to "make the world safe for democracy." For that end they will spend their treasure and their blood. In order that the safeguard shall be lasting, should they not offer to the world a type of democracy as free as possible from blemish? The English race on both sides

the sea has achieved much for social liberty; but there is more to do. Great Britain must abolish hereditary and other class privilege in political control and set free the soil for the use of all her people. America must cease to merit the taunt of Germany that she tolerates political corruption and permits race riots. Both countries must relieve economic oppression, stop industrial strife, and abolish the liquor traffic—a chief source of moral, mental, and social inequality—and in the future secure for the plain people a deciding voice in questions of peace and war. In every land which aspires to true democracy sex privilege in political affairs must cease to exist; and woman—the original social builder, the mother of industry, the first inventor of the arts of peace—must be granted, through the ballot, a full voice in social control. Surely in this war woman is earning her charter of liberties!

Shall not America take the lead in socializing as well as in safeguarding democracy throughout the world?

V. THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION

It is one thing to dream and another thing to make the dream come true. The changing of ideals is a delicate process. I know of but one sure way in which the vision of an international society controlled through right ideals of democracy may come to pass. It will come through the socialization of education; for education, including religious teaching and all institutional agencies for mental and moral discipline, for the building of ideals, is the most efficient instrument of social control. If its dominant ideal be selfish, as in Prussia, education may prepare a people to admire and obey a ruthless military caste. If its dominant ideal be truly social, education may prepare a people for peaceful, self-governing democracy. Fill the minds of youth with social knowledge and social religion; inspire their imaginations with true ideals of human relations; surround their lives with the molding influence of right social suggestion, that most potent and most constant trainer of the human mind and character; teach them that society is a conception much greater than the state idea; that true democracy consists not merely in politics, government, administration, in the conventional sense, but also in social service, plans for human betterment, care for the welfare of mother, father, and child; show them how much rarer and nobler is moral courage than physical courage; explain to them how aggressive war recklessly squanders the emotional energy displayed in the splendid devotion, sacrifice, and heroism which it calls forth, and how it depreciates the vastly harder tests of these virtues that are called for in the normal conflicts of peaceful life. When the new education shall kindle the vision of true democracy in the souls of youth, the hour of its fulfilment will be near.

For ideals are the lever of civilization. The idealist is the pioneer of social progress. It is the fashion for the cynic, the selfish, and the thoughtless to sneer at the dreamer while they lavish praise on the so-called "practical man," the man who "does things." Let us withhold no just praise from any man or woman who does good things, whether the things done be great or small. But let us beware of false evaluations of social service. As a matter of fact, the idealist who dreams on a full mind is the most

practical of men. All the great deeds which constitute permanent civilization are the achievements of a very few idealists. These are the inventors in the Tardean sense. All the rest are imitators, helpers.

The idealist is the creative engineer who dreams a bridge over a mighty river; a subway under a great city; a railway across a continental mountain range; a ship canal from ocean to ocean. The idealist is the inspired social architect who dreams a plan for the sanitary or moral cleansing of a great city; the campaign for purging politics of graft; a law for saving little children from the tigerish man of the factory or the sweatshop; a referendum for banishing from the commonwealth the saloon, that chief breeder of pauperism, sin, and crime; a conference for the rescuing from the hands of predacious greed, for the use of the whole people, of the remnant of our country's natural wealth. The idealist is the statesman—the head of a nation—who dreams a scheme for safeguarding democracy and guaranteeing peace throughout the world. Shall not America, my friends, in the war and after the war, by purging and raising yet higher her splendid ideals of human brotherhood, be found worthy of leadership in bringing the dream to pass?

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