# THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS*

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For spiritual foundations we look to religion and its organized expression, the Church. The nations in the war for seven or five years are terribly tired, and even in this country military personnel and civilians feel the strain. We are winning the war, but now and after it is won we shall need not only a solidity of foundation, but the lift into the clear fresh air of the lofty cathedral spire. That need is an ache inside of us all, of which we may or may not be conscious. The question for a group like this is whether the Church is giving that base and that aspiration.

The Church has given, among others, three answers to this problem of war and evil. The first is the answer of the extreme Augustinian that evil is inevitable in a world like this, and we can only look for relief to the world to come, where the select, saved by grace, achieve blessedness. That does not cheer most of us, though it may be natural enough in a destroyed and suffering Europe.

A second answer is pacifism. No one responsible for the decisions of government, even the small ones, can take that course. It is a rejection of responsibility.

A third and more frequent answer from the Church is an attack upon the citadel of big business, the dollar imperialism and the capitalism of evil motives which is said to drive the world into war by fighting for narrowing markets and depleted natural resources.

None of these answers meets the challenge to the Church today, and to some degree they suggest in themselves the Church's shortcoming in this crisis. It is true that the Churches have given deep thought to the problems of international organization, and in the "Six Pillars of Peace" have set forth a noble and intelligent statement of objectives. But it is far, far away from both the actual decisions of high policy made in this increasingly critical period of the war, and the daily decisions of the operating administrators of government or of business, which, accumulated, come pretty close to making high policy without any decision from on high.

The extreme emphasis on the economic causes of war seems to me a clear distortion of the facts. It is just as much a distortion as the similar answer of Karl Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto of 1848. It is not only deeply materialistic, but it is anti-Christian in its creation of capitalism or business or economics as a scapegoat, and its attribution to capitalists and businessmen, of motives that are quite unbelievable.

It just doesn't stand up under investigation any more than the materialist interpretation of history stands up. If you take the wars from 1815 to 1914 or even to 1944, only relatively minor conflicts were due to trade. Never once in their colonial expansion into Africa, and their economic penetration of China did Britain, France, Germany, Russia or Italy come in conflict. Neither trade nor imperialism really explains the important wars in that period, the Crimean War, the Civil War, the Franco-Prussian War, World War No. 1, or this conflict. The have and have-not theory was always German propaganda. Sweden was just

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*** Address delivered by Mr. Taft before the Denver Council of Churches, November 16, 1944.**

as much a have-not nation as Germany. Politicians of the great powers follow their own judgment, not that of armament manufacturers.

The causes of war are deeper in the human spirit. The most interesting analysis I have seen of the causes of war is in a symposium published six years ago by a group of young British socialists. They held that war must be regarded as one species of a larger genus, the genus of fighting, a rather universal form of human behavior. So they studied fighting in its simplest forms, among apes and children. There were three main causes, apparently: (1) fighting over the exclusive right to possession of objects or to the possession of interest and affection, (2) fighting a stranger or outsider because he is an intruder, and (3) fighting or attacking a person or thing because of frustration in one's own activities — "taking it out" on somebody because one is in a bad temper. Being in a bad temper is usually because you are frustrated.

These young Britishers concluded that the primary cause of this fighting or aggression was the same in adult life as among children or apes, plus the factor that people in groups can exhibit a ruthlessness that few individuals would reach in individual contacts. In fact, aggression on a group scale becomes equally simple and direct as a child's fight over possession of a toy. But beyond that, the people of a nation or the dominant groups in it may become so frustrated, because they don't get what they want, or have been persuaded to want, with such an internal conflict, and such hatred of the scapegoat, which their leaders have developed for them at home or abroad, that war is the only outlet, civil war or foreign war.

This analysis has two apparent results. One is pessimism, because it makes it look as if peace were impossible. But that result is only apparent, for all nations, even the warlike, have devoted much more of their energy on a quantative basis to cooperation and peaceful pursuits than to war. And many nations for centuries have kept peace within their own borders. Peaceful cooperation is the normal, not fighting. How can the predominant impulses to peace be strengthened? That is our problem.

The other result of this analysis is to throw doubt on this tendency to blame capitalism or economic causes solely for war. Such a conclusion by a group of socialists is certainly news.

Their final conclusion is that the fundamental aggressiveness of humans will cause wars unless humans are changed or their aggressiveness restrained. That makes sense. It represents the way we keep the peace at home, while even abroad the great preponderance of human impulses and inclinations and practices is on the side of peaceful cooperation. It is anti-social minorities that cause war, and we are setting out now to restrain them. And this analysis gives the Church its two jobs, first trying to eliminate the causes of frustration, bad temper and repression in individual lives, especially in bringing up children, and second, supporting the moral administration of force to restrain aggression while working to eliminate the real causes of national frustration. That is what the Dumbarton Oaks Charter seeks to accomplish; it deserves the hearty support of the Churches.

A somewhat similar reaction to the international economic problems which are my business is that of a distinguished friend of mine who complained bitterly last May that this was going to be a peace of oil, of gold, of shipping, of factual situations, without moral purpose, a peace of dicker and trade, instead of a peace of words, revolutionary words like freedom and democracy.

That conclusion is equally unsound. Stanley King, president of Amherst, wrote some ten years ago that the al-

ternative to war is negotiation, the force of words against the force of arms; and that the way of adjustment, the settlement by talk, is politics, in which the negotiator is the politician. I suppose my friend was sick of politicians. He wanted an upset of the things he didn't like as they were, and quite rightly, I suppose, didn't think a negotiating politician would upset anything.

Perhaps so, but as President King also pointed out, politicians are the salvage men of government who come in after the crisis or revolution and construct. Hamilton, Adams, Madison and Jefferson were politicians, and that meant negotiators and traders, dealers in factual situations.

So this is a peace of transportation and trade and finance and ships and land and oil. We shan't have security by way of spiritual foundations without jobs, as the candidates call them, or dignity of labor, as the Church describes it. Neither shall we have the aspiration and ambition and risk-taking and progress without the framework of peaceful cooperation in these factual situations around the world.

I want to tell you a little of the scope of the economic problems we face. Every nation in the war except ourselves and Russia faces the problem of paying, with non-existent or reduced exports, for the essentials of life which they must import. To achieve anything like that they must finance themselves somehow until they reach the balance of payments. Perhaps we are not directly concerned, selfishly speaking, with some of the devastated areas, but without a restored Great Britain we cannot have a world in which we can be secure. This nation should not and will not accept the controls that go with attempted self-sufficiency. Our resources are not complete within our borders anyway, as we found in this war, and we can't live without the rest of the world.

We have to find how to live with the enemy after we defeat him. We propose to see that he doesn't make war again, but we can't keep him either in an ordinary prison, or in an insane asylum indefinitely, or kill him off. So we have to find how to live with him in the years to come, restricting him in appropriate ways until he shows he can join human society again.

We have some tough problems with distribution and surpluses of commodities — oil, metals, foods, for instance — and the effect of temporary or permanent surpluses on employment.

We have to face the problem of artificial shortages, and government or private monopolies of important commodities or services. Fortunately, the wide difference of background and opinion between England and the United States on this subject is being rapidly narrowed. We may well hope for a united front against the bad practice of cartels.

Transportation and communications is one of our most important problems, in ships, airplanes and radio systems, especially. These will emphasize the difficulties of dependent and backward areas, of colonies and self-government, brought closer and closer in touch with industrial progress and new ideas of all kinds.

The Dumbarton Oaks Charter gives a splendid start in the proposed Economic and Social Council. The Assembly of the League was a body essentially political, as it had to be, and by that very fact was often incompetent to deal with economic and social problems. What is now proposed is an overall international group elected for its qualifications in that specific field, to serve as a forum for the major questions coming up in these various categories of international economic operation.

The members of this Council, like the officers in the economic office of the State Department, will still have to

be politicians in the broad sense, that is, negotiators, adjustors, constructors of the means for political cooperation in trade and business and development.

The Council members and its U. S. representatives will be subject to all the alleged disabilities of politicians that make it so difficult for the Church to provide a spiritual foundation for international economic order. We representatives of the U. S. in foreign economic policy can't go straight at our goal usually, for we have to think of the domestic political repercussions, the repercussions in the country we are dealing with, and the effects in third countries. So we move slowly and by the discussion method, which takes endless meetings.

The Churches, in particular the Protestant evangelical churches, to one of which I belong myself, have a lot to learn about that political process. By and large the Protestant Churches are without affirmative influence in politics (although their negative influence is often considerable) because they have little advice for the responsible official, who is faced with a choice, not between black and white, evil and good, but between grays only. After I said something like this a month ago to a Church group about compromise, I received a letter from a minister in the audience which read as follows: "Please don't ask us Evangelical Churches to compromise on principle. Isn't there too much compromise in the world? . . . If you compromise — then how far? Suppose that Athanesius, Luther, Bunyan, the Pilgrim Fathers, Wesley, suppose these all had compromised?"

Let me be clear about this. There are two kinds of problems here, pretty well mixed up. Suppose I favor a particular foreign policy which I believe with all my heart is right. But to get it I have to carry it through Congress where it has the opposition of a particular group, the farm group, the manufacturing interest, or labor, for example. But by modification of that policy, which I don't like particularly, but which I hope to get rid of at some future time, I can get the necessary votes to get my policy approved. Am I to say that I must have the perfect whole at once, or do I accept the compromise, make the deal? What does my friend say? I can't even take much time to consult about it; I have to take it or leave it. A three-quarter, a half loaf or none! But the compromise may be such that it sets back the ultimate objective — or does it? Then you have to exercise real judgment. Does the Church help the responsible official who has that kind of choice?

In this case you see it is a matter of judgment as to timing. As Lord Reading once said, he never compromised with his ideals but only with the tempo of achieving them.

But sometimes you have a choice between two evils and no other choice at all. What are we to say when we are attacked at Pearl Harbor? Or rather, what is the President and what is Congress to say? The choice is between a yielding of all we hold dear, and war with its death and destruction. Some one may say the choice was made earlier and some may claim that we failed to give Japan economic and political opportunity. I don't think the argument is sound, but the earlier choices were equally difficult. For political leaders the choices are usually between grays, not between blacks and whites. Luther had such a choice between the Peasants of the Revolt, and the Princes. Politically his choice in the end was wrong.

The important element is for the responsible official to have a clear vision of his goal, a humble recognition of how far short he falls, but a determination to keep up the fight. Does my friend think he helps anyone by shuddering every time a person says, "compromise." The fact is that the genius of

Anglo-Saxon democratic ideals, which spring so much from the religion of the independent Churches like the Baptists and Quakers is in the acceptance of progress by compromise.

At the same time that I urge on the Church an understanding of politicians and of compromise as a basic element in democracy, I suggest also the deepest need of the day, which is supplied basically from religious faith, the conviction that man can help achieve the purposes of God through the years. It may take generations to teach millions of families to bring up children without repressions and frustrations that can cause group aggressions, but the nations can get from religion the conviction that these problems can be solved. When hostilities stop, there can be a terrible let-down. We cannot let it happen. We must give to our operations in preparation for the next events the sense of urgency and conviction of success that will mean indeed a world of peaceful cooperation with spiritual foundations.

## BARTHIANISM AND BAD TIMES

The theology of Karl Barth developed as a reaction to the evil days which he confronted in Central Europe. Facing the terrible tragedies of the first World War, Barth was driven to the conclusion that God could not be implicated in them to any extent. He was forced to conclude that whereas Gad may have been on earth some time in the past, he was not here now; that whereas man may have been" made in the image of God," there was none of that image in evidence today. The logic of this position is clear — and simple. If God is good, and the world is evil, then God must be outside this world. Its purpose is also obvious: God's righteousness must be saved even though His presence in space-time events and history is sacrificed.

The reasoning sketched in the preceding paragraph is subject to criticism at two points. It assumes, in the first place, that basic thinking about such a primary reality as God rests completely upon temporary social events. Good times and bad times succeed one another in human history in kaleidoscopic fashion: an era of prosperity is followed by an era of want; a time of peace by one of war, and one of war by another of peace. If one is to accept the status of a given era of human history as the determinant of belief in God, then indeed do we have a changing God. The divine in this type of thinking is a kaleidoscopic reality whose colors are reflections of the human scene.

The second criticism is directed toward the anthropocentricity implied in this attitude. It is assumed that God's purposes and standards are copies of ours; when things appear detrimental to us they must — so this argument implies — appear detrimental to God. But the shallowness of this assumption was noted as long ago as the sixth century B. C., when Xenophanes of Greece noted that "Aethiopians make their gods black and snub-nosed; Thracians give theirs blue eyes and red hair." The so-called plans and purposes of God are not of such character that they can be explained completely and exhaustively in terms of human needs and human wants. Yet when we deny God a home in this world because all things do not work together for our immediate good, we are judging the divine by human standards. This is a subtle temptation, and one which constantly besets us.