

ROADS TO SOCIAL PEACE

THE WEIL LECTURES, 1924, ON
AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

My object is to promote social peace. Whatever our attitudes toward international relations, I suppose we are all social pacifists, i. e., advocates of the peaceful adjustment of all matters which may come up between sections or classes or groups within a society. The most cynical militarists, the von Moltkes and Bernhardis, agree that antagonistic social groups within the nation must never be allowed to go to breaking heads. Either these apologists for war do not really believe that war is a good thing, but oppose alternatives to war because they expect their country to profit by warfare; or else they favor social peace because they know that social strife impairs the military strength of a nation and makes it weaker before its foes.

Certainly a national organization is nothing if it is not a peace area. Politi-

cally considered the nation is a league—of communities, or population elements—to enforce peace. No self-respecting government tolerates a resort to armed conflict within its jurisdiction. Impotent indeed is a state which cannot check fighting between bodies of its citizens.

To be sure, issues of the gravest sort are bound to arise between social groups, but this need not result in infraction of the peace. If they cannot be settled by negotiation and compromise, by boards of conciliation, by voluntary arbitration, or by the pressure of public opinion, means of arriving at a just settlement are supposed to be provided in legislative acts, in the decisions of administrative officials, in the verdicts of courts of justice. The venerable legal maxim, *Nulla injuria sine remedia*, proclaims that the law stands ready to seek a remedy for every wrong.

Inter-group conflict is forestalled not only by guarantees embedded in the Constitution, against class privilege or a

majority tyranny and providing for representation on the basis of numbers, but also by general maxims which determine the attitude of the public toward conflicting groups. Such are "This is a free country," "Equality before the law," "Liberty but not license," "Religion is a private matter," "Every one is entitled to his day in court," "An indestructible union of indestructible states." It is my aim not only to set forth the unformulated principles by which Americans are even now avoiding or damping internal conflicts, but also to arrive at fresh principles from a review of American experience and from an examination of the factors which enter into conflict-breeding situations.

Profiting by the lessons of experience we Americans have attained along certain lines to no small wisdom in foreseeing and avoiding physical conflict between local communities, regions, sections, religious bodies and political parties. On the other hand, with respect to new types

of opposition, such as we see in the labor-capital disputes and the town-country feud, most of us are puzzled, confused and helpless. Longer contact with these phenomena is necessary before our leaders will be agreed as to what causes such conflicts and by what measures or policies they may be attenuated. Here is an opportunity for constructive suggestions.

Social peace means something more than refraining from the use of fists, brickbats, cudgels, revolvers or shotguns. It implies that such baleful and anti-social passions as envy, jealousy and hatred are not being engendered on a large scale. It implies, furthermore, that there is sufficient good will for members of opposing groups to coöperate freely in a social, political, or business way when opportunities for advantageous coöperation present themselves. Nevertheless, there will be tensions if the healthy processes of social adjustment are to go on. Fundamentalists and liberals, conserva-

tives and progressives, open-shoppers and closed-shoppers, protectionists and free-traders, conservationists and "developers," drys and wets, must be allowed to become conscious of their disagreements and to thresh them out in the open even if some heat and ill will be generated in the process.

Toleration is not always a social virtue. If society is to make rapid progress, we should not encourage toleration of "dark" forces, of types and elements which are anti-social and sinister. For law-abiders to become tolerant of grafters and bootleggers, for friends of child-welfare to cease to denounce the vice-caterers who prey on childhood, for physicians to become indifferent to quacks and dope-peddlers, for conservationists to feel less ire at grabbers of natural resources, for educationists to hit more mildly penny-pinching communities which starve their schools—would be a public calamity. On the other hand, when it is not a plain case of social versus anti-social—as in the dif-

ferences between color races in the same area, occupation groups, economic classes, religious sects and political parties—the tolerant spirit should be cultivated.

Then, too, if the social procession is not to be strung out all the way from the stone age to super-civilization, the stragglers should be prodded. Those of high standards should really condemn those of low standards or no standards. Does it make for social progress that the clean should hobnob with the unwashed, the sober with the sot, the chaste with the lewd, the refined with the foul-mouthed, the clad with the half-naked, those who eat from a table with those who squat on their heels about a dish on the floor, those who keep their children in school with those who could do so but prefer to exploit them, those who leave their daughters in the house with those who make them toil in the field? Surely not. Let those who wilfully linger on a lower plane be stung by the disdain of the more aspiring. If I see a man in the gutter, I do not lie

down with him in the gutter but help him up out of it and do my best to make him want to get up. This does not mean, of course, that the snobbish should look down on those of a simpler style of living.

In every society, in times of stress or alarm, there crop up men whose temperament, upbringing, or personal experience is such that they become wrought-up over this and that unlikeness and cry out that the nation or the race is headed for ruin if a certain element be tolerated. Such are the fanatics, bigots, inquisitors, firebrands, stormy petrels, alarmists, demagogues, for-God's-sake-ers, bunk-shooters, and finders of mare's nests, who spread incendiary lies about the Mormons, the Free Masons, the Catholics, the Negroes, Wall Street, organized labor, the foreign-born, the "reds," the liberal professors of economics, the social workers, the teachers of evolution. Men of breadth and balance should be at all times ready to "go to the mat" with these.

The struggles between unlike groups—racial, nationalistic, cultural, religious—may be damped not only by the inculcators of the spirit of toleration, but also by solid constitutional provisions which make each element feel secure from ever being brought under the domination of an unsympathetic element. In the opposition of interest groups—capitalists and workingmen, farmers and townsmen, businessmen and the farmer-labor people—the chief mitigating circumstance is the certainty that the interests of no group shall be at the mercy of an opposing group; but that the issues which come up between groups and can not be settled by negotiations shall be settled by a well informed public opinion, an impartial judiciary, or a disinterested legislature. For nothing is so strife-provoking as the selfish wielding of power by one class in utter disregard of the interests of other classes.

To some extent inter-group conflict varies inversely with international conflict. A nation rent by internal conflicts

and feuds shrinks from the supreme test of war; conversely, when a nation is at war the social groups are more willing to sink their differences and compromise their conflicting claims.

To some extent inter-group conflict varies inversely with inter-individual conflict, i. e., personal competition. A man sticks to his group and fights for its success when, in competing with individual members of other groups, he cannot get a decision on his merits. Feeling that the cards are stacked against him in the man-to-man contest, he enters the group-to-group contest in the hope that through the success of his group he may obtain a square deal, or even an unfair advantage. Protestants join the Ku Klux Klan if they believe that Catholics are juggling matters so as to fill the public schools with teachers graduated from church schools. Likewise, one becomes an active worker for his party, if he believes that the party now in power is reserving all the desirable posts for its members.

From the types of inter-group conflict I consider in the following pages, the reader will miss one, namely, *race conflict*, which with us means conflict between whites and negroes. This certainly has spilled more blood and roused more hellish passions than any other type of internal conflict; and the reader will wonder why I pass it by. My reason is that I do not know what is the "road to peace" for intermingled color races.

CHAPTER I

THE AVOIDANCE OF SECTIONALISM

The United States is imperial in area. If we lay a map of Europe upon a map of the United States constructed to the same scale, the western coast of Spain would coincide with the coast of southern California; Constantinople would rest near Charleston, South Carolina; Sicily near New Orleans; and the southern coast of the Baltic would fall in line with the southern coast of Lake Superior. Thus in size the United States is comparable not with a single nation of Europe, but with all of Europe, exclusive of Russia. It is also comparable with Europe in that it is made up of separate geographic provinces; each capable in size, resources and peculiarities of physical condition to be the abode of a European nation, or of several nations.

Professor Turner is right. Nature has laid a basis for sectionalism among us in the peculiarities which differentiate our huge country into the seaboard, the mineralized region, the corn belt, the wheat belt, the cotton kingdom, the timbered area, the Great Lakes country, the arid

region, the Pacific Slope. Nor is this all. Reinforcing factors have come in. The adoption of slavery throughout the South gave rise to the most intense sectionalism in our history with the resulting tragedy of the Civil War. Even now the negro is still the problem of the South and southern sectionalism will not altogether disappear. The Pacific slope is set apart not only by the barrier of mountain and desert but by the peculiar concern with Oriental trade and Oriental immigration. Its manufacturing industries and its heavy placements of capital in other parts of the country cause the East to have a mind of its own as to national defense, tariffs, federal income tax, trust regulation, immigration, money, banking and railroads.

On the other hand, the century-old friction between the older parts and the zone of advancing settlement ended with the disappearance of the frontier. There is no longer a West demanding paper money, free banking and liberal distribu-

tion of the public domain. As manufactures spread below Mason and Dixon line the South ceases to be solid against the tariff. As negroes drift North, more Northerners are able to get the Southern white man's point of view of the race question. As unifying interests multiply the East is less set against a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterway or the development of the arid region by Federal irrigation enterprises.

Such isolation as the railroads have not put an end to is being wiped out by the automobile, not to mention the aeroplane. In our time local-mindedness is a thing hard to keep alive. Aside from newspapers, no section has its own reading matter. There is no sectional literature in the sense of literature read in a section. The poems and stories most redolent of the peculiar life of the Maine woods, the Lower East Side of New York, the Pennsylvania mill towns, the cane fields of the Gulf, the high camps of Colorado, the ranches of the Southwest or the San Fran-

cisco waterfront move persons to laughter or tears in every part of the country. Sectional centers for bringing out the good stuff New York and Boston will not publish do not appear for the simple reason that the Eastern magazine editors and publishers aim to put out what will be read everywhere and recognize their need of a frequent "bath in the United States."

The national magazines tend to standardize our thinking and feeling and taste, while their advertising pages standardize our clothes, household interiors and manner of life. The national circulation of motion films causes us all to giggle or weep at the same pictures. As for radio, there is no telling what it may do in breaking down mental isolation. The World War with its tremendous accent on "we" and "our" caused sectional pride and loyalty to become thin and faint. The Liberty Loan campaigns were coercive advertising in the interest of national unity. Everything conspires to lay us open to the power of reiterated suggestion