Fundamentals of

WORLD ORGANIZATION

by Werner Levi



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Preface

The fundamentals of world organization cover the whole range of social life. To analyze them adequately would require an omniscient man. I nevertheless have undertaken the task, convinced it needed to be done. Almost all existing studies of international organization are either historical or descriptive. My aim has been to supplement these by adding another to the very few analytical ones.

In sympathy though I am with plans for an improved world order and formulations of the ideal, I have become impatient with the failure to grapple with pragmatic realities on the part of those who would build the new world. About the general direction in which developments should move to bring that world about there is now sufficiently wide agreement. What is insufficient is knowledge of what delays or prevents these developments from taking place. Debate over the details of a future world organization on the level of structure and machinery can by itself not lead very far. A critical investigation is needed first of the human foundations on which all social organization rests,

and when these are better understood, organizational complexities may resolve themselves.

In this book I have tried to emphasize the human problems that will largely determine the fate of any world organization for peace. Where aspects of existing or past international organizations have been described, it has been with a view to seeing how well they answer to the realities of human life and finding a clue in that to their success or failure. This purpose has made it unnecessary to cover all facets of world organization; administration and private organization, for example, have been left out entirely. From the analysis I hoped certain major principles underlying any international organization would emerge, valid irrespective of any particular form organization has taken in the past and unaffected by either its continued life or disappearance. If, as from the face of things would appear, the peoples of the world are really not yet ready for a world organization for peace, such an analysis may disclose some of the reasons why. It may then be easier to determine what must be done to make them ready.

That others should agree with my analysis is of less importance to me than that they should be stimulated by it to analytical researches of their own. The book is intended as a stimulant, not as the last word upon any subject. If eventually the study of international organization should become as rich on the analytical side as it already is on the historical and descriptive, a more constructive effort than has hitherto been possible could be made toward the creation of a functioning world organization.

The book has many citations of relevant literature, but no bibliography. The reason is that I have drawn from works in all of the social sciences whenever their matter could be brought to bear upon international organization, if only in one or two ideas. Many of them make no direct reference to this major subject, and to have cited them in a bibliography would, I thought, have been misleading. Anyone looking for additional readings in any of the fields concerned may find the notes to individual chapters useful in providing suggestions.

PREFACE

- For permission to quote passages from the books and articles named below, I am indebted to the following:
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Fundamentals of WORLD ORGANIZATION



The Anatomy of Organization

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International organization refers to nations united for the achievement of a purpose, and to the institutions and methods they have created to assure the necessary collaboration. Sometimes such organization grows haphazardly, by trial and error. At other times it is consciously created, as with the League of Nations and the United Nations. When the blessings it confers are counted, there should be no doubt that the rational planning of organization is a most desirable enterprise. For through organization, the common life becomes possible.

An organization provides a framework for social action. It integrates the unit into the whole and orders the functions of human interrelations. It provides consistent and dependable methods of interaction and a scheme of routine. It assigns to each unit its place and thereby creates an atmosphere of stability. It does more than this. It permits specialization and cooperation. Through organized effort, the end product of united action grows quantitatively and qualitatively far beyond the sum total of independ-

ent, individual action by each unit, quite apart from the fact that some problems could not be solved except by organized endeavor.¹

While certain principles with general validity for all organizations can be established, organization as such, in the abstract, cannot exist. Organization as an institution and as a method is determined in its concrete form by its specific purpose and subject matter. Since international organization deals with all aspects of international affairs, such a close relationship with international relations arises that a border line between the two cannot be drawn. This is obviously true in the sense that the nature of international relations determines to a very considerable degree the character of international organization. It is also true in the sense that international organization can be an object of international relations or that a matter of the one may be simultaneously a matter of the other. For example, the use of the veto is not only a matter of foreign policy but also an organizational device by which one nation prevents others from certain actions.

Considered in its institutional aspects especially, such as the League or the United Nations, organization appears as a framework within which an international process can occur and as an instrument to integrate and even influence international relations.² These two characteristics suggest two tasks for the organization, one passive, one active. Though permitting only those relations conducive to its purpose, it can leave the initiative in establishing relations to the states. Or, going further, it can itself initiate such relations. An international organization can therefore coordinate as well as stimulate action in the direction of its aims. Organization becomes a means to a means to an end.³

The nature of the end is not predetermined. It may be peaceful, warlike, or indifferent. Nations have a wide choice in the types of contact they wish to establish. The institutions and machinery of the organization can be adapted to any end. In the past they have served a number of independent purposes, and such aspects of international relations as commerce, communications, and security were separately organized. In recent times nations have become more ambitious and have chosen to coordinate all international organization under one predominating

purpose – the preservation of peace – a purpose necessitating the organization of almost every aspect of international relations.

The fact that international organization has a purpose that nations must bind themselves to fulfill means, of course, that they must accept limitations upon their freedom to act on the international scene. Herein lies the cause of most difficulties confronting international organization. The more comprehensive and complex the end, the greater the difficulties. And an end more complicated than the preservation of peace could not have been chosen. For the means to preserve peace, which must be considered in the structure of the organization, are controversial, they are numberless, and they involve every phase of international relations. The extent of these complications is well illustrated by a competition held in the United States in 1924 to suggest a world organization for the preservation of peace. About twenty-four thousand answers were received, no two of which were identical.

If such differences of opinion can exist within one country, how much more disagreement must be expected among nations with the most diverse ambitions and potentialities! And how difficult will it be to persuade them to bind themselves to a world organization! The tendency will be for them to fulfill readily those aspects of organization dealing with the routine and technicalities of international relations and to escape from those aspects aiming at influencing their substance. Nations are able to act in this way in spite of the fact that organization is an integrated whole because some major functions of international organization can be distinguished not only for purposes of analysis but in practice.⁴

One of these functions of organization is to provide the technical facilities for nations to unite and reach the chosen goal. The establishment of institutions, procedures, and methods to enable international intercourse to take place unhampered by technicalities would belong here—for instance, such simple things as setting a meeting place for a conference or arranging for the translation of speeches or such complex ones as budgeting for the United Nations. Generally speaking, this function refers to the creation of the innumerable formalized channels through which nations communicate with one another.

How useful this part of international organization can be is

well illustrated by the development of international conferences. The convocation and completion of the conference to end the Thirty Years War took many years. More and more people got killed while the participants were busy disagreeing on the technicalities and formalities of the conference. The titles of individuals, the geographic situation of the meeting place, the sequence of naming nations in documents, the seating arrangements at the conference tables — all were important matters of national prestige and susceptibility. Such matters, which should be irrelevant, especially when human welfare is at stake, still carry weight today even in democracies. By and large, however, they have become routine and need not delay international action.

Another function is to further the aim of the organization by the promotion of action. This involves the convening of conferences, the rendering of service—information, research, training, technical assistance—and international administration. This function, like the first, is relatively neutral as far as the contents of international relations go. Its contribution to the success of the organization, at least when peace is the aim, is founded upon the expectation that by bringing nations together, a "meeting of minds" may take place and promote conditions favoring peace.

A third function, by which the organization hopes to affect the nature of international relations directly, is the prescription of essential responsibilities and obligations to which nations must commit themselves in furtherance of the organization's goal. They are expressed in the rules and regulations established regarding the behavior of nations. At this point, where the organization contributes most to its own success, its quality may best be judged. For the success depends on the kind of influence upon the members' behavior the organization is aiming at and the effectiveness with which this influence can be exercised. Any judgment, however, must carefully distinguish between the character of the organization and the behavior of the member nations. There is a great temptation to rationalize bad national behavior by making the structure of the organization a scapegoat. The most perfect organization is useless if nations misuse or ignore it. For while it is true that established organizational methods and institutions can influence the behavior of nations, fundamentally

the behavior of nations determines the success of the organization.

On this interplay rests the organization's opportunity to improve national behavior. To make the fullest use of its opportunity, an organization must be sufficiently progressive to induce change in national behavior and yet not too far ahead to become unrealistic. The secret of the best possible organization is the right compromise between the ideal and the feasible. The neglect of this elementary rule condemned plans for world organization for thousands of years to remain on bamboo, parchment, and paper. They took no account of the fact that the conditions of existence for such an organization were absent, and they overestimated the organization's power to create these for itself. An organization can lead on, it can reinforce, stimulate, and further existing forces already driving international relations toward the envisaged goal. And, quite obviously, if it aims at preserving peace, it must change the nature of international relations since under present conditions war is a possibility. But it must also remain in contact with the ideas, mentalities, and cultures as well as the basic behavior patterns of the nations destined for membership. In changes involving national traditions it must not expect a too rapid advance. If it does, it will lose the cooperation of the members, which means it will die of atrophy.

If a world organization is to have a normative effect upon the behavior of nations, therefore, it must recognize in its construction the need in response to which it is being created and consider carefully the moral and value judgments that will loom large when nations discuss the desirability of membership. The choice of the goal is, of course, a foremost problem. Since peace, however, is universally thought desirable, its establishment as a goal is less difficult than the choice of the means to maintain it. Another problem is the degree of detail with which the organization should be concerned. In part this question is answered by the models provided by organizations of the past. Beyond that, there will be pressure to include many details in order to make the new organization as comprehensive as possible, while from the necessity of embracing as many members with diverse views as possible will develop counterpressure to limit detail for the

sake of more widespread agreement. A third problem is building the structure of the organization. Nationalistic sensitivities are least pronounced here, and difficulties can be solved on the merits of the case and in conformity with the best principles of public administration.

The two basic, interrelated prerequisites of successful world organization which emerge from these considerations of its nature are, on the objective side, a sufficient intensity and permanence of contact between nations and, on the subjective, a cooperative attitude among the potential members.⁵ The first prerequisite is sufficiently fulfilled today. Indeed, the objective situation alone of the world, that is, its interdependence, is a most powerful incentive toward the growth of international organization. So strong is it that on occasion it has forced nations to organize independently of and sometimes even contrary to their preferences.

Historically the extent of international organization coincides with the density of international contacts. As long as international relations were sporadic and on a small scale, through wars, adventurous merchants, or an aristocratic and intellectual élite, the isolation of national groups remained undisturbed and no urge toward organization arose. When during certain periods of Greek history, the Roman Empire, and the Middle Ages international relations developed on a mass basis and with some permanence, organization naturally developed with them. The same phenomenon can be observed in modern times. A reason, however, why existing international organization inadequately reflects the oneness of the world appears to lie in the failure of too many men to adjust their attitudes to the prevailing interdependence of nations.

The second prerequisite of successful world organization, a subjective readiness for it, is far from being fulfilled. Mass acquiescence in world organization, which is a matter of attitude, is as yet non-existent, at least to the necessary degree. The gap thus formed between the advanced stage of interdependence and the lag in willingness to create adequate organization cannot be closed merely by making the peoples of the world aware of their interdependence. For such awareness does not guarantee that they will realize or choose the necessary and desirable conse-

quences of it for world organization. World organization commensurate with modern international intercourse must be preceded by psychological preparedness, by the conviction of need and the expectation of reward, among a sufficiently large number of the peoples of the earth.

Human beings do not undertake lightly the creation of new institutions or changes in behavior. They are creatures of habit. They are attached to the familiar advantages and disadvantages of the status quo. They fear the uncertainties of innovations. They will engage in the effort of change only after the inadequacy of existing institutions and habitual behavior becomes patent; otherwise change is a gradual, almost imperceptible process. The intellectual conviction among many leaders in many countries in the past that a more catholic world order was necessary was of little avail. Their ideas found no response. Indeed, there was little in the experience of their peoples to evoke any response. International organization, like its subject matter, international relations, developed slowly along a tortuous path and usually after it was overdue. Schemes for global and comprehensive organization served at best as beacons along this path; at worst they were discarded as the brainchildren of dreamy idealists. Against this background, the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations must be considered a step forward, for both represent widespread agreement upon definite goals, a move away from traditionalism, and a drift toward the conscious, rational direction and control of international events.6

In spite of this advance, even a cursory look at the international scene today must convince the observer that existing organization, judged by its goal, is in many respects greatly defective. The explanation can be found in the prevailing mentality that permits the discrepancy between the unity of the world on the technical and material level and its division on the political. The majority of men are still attempting to understand and behave in the twentieth-century world with the concepts, convictions, and institutions of the nineteenth and earlier centuries. Their mental and emotional attitudes make the anachronistic political structure of the world possible.

Without a change in the mind and behavior of men an inter-

national organization that will satisfy modern requirements and, most important, make peace permanent, cannot be constructed. Without popular acquiescence it cannot exist. If foisted upon the world, it will fail to be a motivating and normative power or be sympathetically received by the masses of mankind for whose benefit it was established. For ultimately the reason why social arrangements work is that those affected submit to them. Voluntary obedience, or at least non-resistance, makes them effective. Even force, which frequently backs social arrangements, is not recognized as a final social power but is itself justified on grounds implying higher sanction, such as God, natural law, popular will, or the social contract. This ultimate legitimation originates in the concepts, beliefs, and values generally current or merely and mostly in the unquestioningly accepted traditions of the group in which it functions.7 Only with such legitimation can a world organization be established effectually.

The hope that an imposed world constitution upheld in the main by some kind of international police will be able to maintain an adequate world organization rests upon a misconception of the essence of law and force in particular and of social organization in general. Without denying that the existence of an organization may beget its own conditions of survival, it remains true that there is no short cut to a world organization guaranteeing permanent peace. It cannot arise till it is sanctioned by a sufficiently large section of mankind. It will not be sanctioned till it appears as an attractive alternative to the status quo. And as long as the status quo, that is a nation-state system based upon national sovereignty, continues and is popularly accepted, the establishment of an international organization able to preserve peace is very greatly handicapped.

From the standpoint of world organization for peace the evil of this sovereign nation-state system is that the accumulation of power has become the primary, though by no means the exclusive, end of foreign policy, to which every other consideration in the realm of international relations is subordinated. The objection might be raised that the quest for power is not an end of foreign policy but merely a means for the nation to provide for its people's welfare. This claim may be valid for the relation between

the citizen and his own country's foreign policy. But since the welfare of other peoples is not the objective of foreign policy, to the citizen of foreign nations power appears as the only end.

Sovereign nations indulge in international cooperation, let alone altruism, only if such luxury does not weaken them. This situation is due to the absence of any supranational agency capable of guaranteeing the life of nations and of social controls normally assuring the life of members in a community. As long as the citizen regards the preservation of his own nation in absolute freedom from restraint by a higher authority as paramount, even at the sacrifice of other nations, this state of affairs will continue. Under such conditions the "national interest," which is in the final analysis the citizens' interest that their state as such, not they as human beings, should survive absolutely free and unbound, permeates every national act and dominates foreign policy.

This interest appears to nations to be served better the stronger and the more powerful they are. An unending rivalry for power necessarily follows. In Nicholas Spykman's words, "Direct action from state to state has remained the normal and most prevalent form of approach [in international relations]. It represents the most characteristic expression of foreign policy. Absence of international government is responsible not only for the significance of direct action but for the fact that there is no community restraint on the methods used. In international society all forms of coercion are permissible, including wars of destruction. This means that the struggle for power is identical with the struggle for survival, and the improvement of the relative power position becomes the primary objective of the internal and the external policy of states. All else is secondary, because in the last instance only power can achieve the objectives of foreign policy. Power means survival, the ability to impose one's will on others, the capacity to dictate to those who are without power, and the possibility of forcing concessions from those with less power. Where the ultimate form of conflict is war, the struggle for power becomes a struggle for war power, a preparation for war." 8

Freedom of maneuver being obviously a desirable element in the struggle for power, submission to the obligations connected with membership in an organization is obnoxious to states. Fur-