

# International Planning<sup>1</sup>

## A Scotch Educator's View

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SOMEbody has said that the job I have taken on, that of teaching Scotchmen to be economical, must indeed be a difficult one! One of the great advantages of coming from another civilization to yours is that much that seems ordinary and of no account to you takes on an aspect of minor excitement for us. Since I sat down here at dinner, the only man in business garb, there have been a series of minor excitements, beginning when my neighbor asked me if I was "Full Up and Fed Up." It struck me that this inquiry was a little intimate until I learned that the gentleman was referring to a book which he had written on English labor conditions. When I turned around I found that the waiter had removed the dinner ticket on which I had carefully written my speech! Then I was persuaded to part with a dollar for a photograph and while I was so engaged I missed the chance of a cigar. With all these minor tragedies behind me you will see how difficult it is for me to say anything significant on the important subject of international planning.

I feel I am relieved of that obligation, however, because we have with us Major Urwick, a man who has for many years been engaged in the task of international planning and whose name resounds throughout Europe in this connection. I have been associated with him in Britain, in a minor way of course, in connection with the Management Research Groups and have been a member of his Institute for many years.

It seems to me that the difficulties in the way of international planning are immense because the psychology of the people in business matters is not yet prepared for it. So few of us have developed the student interest in business. We do not look upon our business problems as those of a

large organization deserving careful scientific investigation and research. I think we can all at this time pay tribute to the name of Frederick W. Taylor as the first man to apply the student mind to the problems of internal organization. The average business man has not applied that same mind to the problems of the larger organization. Take this problem of unemployment. We are all aware of it as a problem. We are, at the second stage of suggesting solutions. The third stage of evaluating the solution has not been reached. We have attempted it but have found ourselves faced with the facts of the situation. We have reached the stage of halting between opinions. We cannot proclaim any agreed solution, much less decide and take action on the basis of our decision.

If we are to plan internationally the first essential is that we be conscious of our problems and of the necessity for solutions. That to my mind will inevitably lead to a consciousness that many of these problems are international in scope. We have not developed the student mind. I speak, of course, of the country I know best, and I think the charge that we are insular is well founded. It is said that there once appeared in an English newspaper the headline, "Fog in English Channel. Continent Isolated." This perhaps illustrates an attitude of mind not entirely confined to our islands. Most of us have not nearly reached this first stage of recognizing our problems and seeing their demands in international action.

The second stage is one of interchange between countries. There ought, to my mind, to be far more coming and going between the peoples of the earth, far more interchange of ideas, so that we could get some conception of the mentality of the different peoples. I often think that travel is about as good an education as we can get. I vision

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universities on ocean liners cruising around the world with the usual studies being conducted at sea and the study of peoples in the countries visited. I know that some attempts have been made in this direction, but further exchange of ideas is essential if we are to begin to understand the uniformity that is behind the superficial differences of nationality.

Once we have exchanged peoples and ideas we must begin to co-operate. We do so today in a very timid way—like mice looking out of our holes and disappearing at the slightest noise. I sometimes think we establish international organizations and expect great things of them—and Major Urwick will forgive me if I do any organization an injustice—without understanding that the roots of these organizations lie in the various countries that establish them. A mere organization established at Geneva can do very little; it must be fed. It reminds me of the Scotchman who had a cow. Due to dry weather the pasture was poor and his friends advised him to shift the cow. They were astonished when the next day they saw the cow fettered at the top of a hill. The Scotchman pointed out to them that even though the pasture was sparser there than down below the cow at least had a grand view! We must not establish organizations at Geneva with something like that idea. The organizations must be supported continuously by their members in the various countries. The work must be consolidated and unified by conferences, but it is the day-to-day support from the constituents that really means an organization possessing strength.

Thus we have recognition of the problem as international, interchange of ideas on the problem, co-operation, probably only with the view of gathering some sort of comparable statistics, and finally planning. Planning cannot exist unless we have the prerequisites.

Planning then has the added difficulty of interfering with the sovereignty of nations. It interferes with the idea of nationalism which has become unfortunately rampant since the war to end war. We seem to be a long way from that agreement which prepares us to make the sacrifices essential

to any sort of uniform action. As Professor Ebersole said, we have to pay the price of planning, of co-operation. It means some limiting of the sovereignty of independent states. We still talk about independence in a dependent world. Though we deny, or attempt to deny, the fact in much of our political thought, the world is nevertheless dependent.

Various problems are of course in various stages. Some are already recognized as international. On some there has been an interchange of ideas and even a measure of co-operation. It seems quite obvious that there is recognition of the international scope of the interchange of goods and commodities. We have a degree of co-operation in regard to post-office facilities. We have some degree of planning, but on problems such as unemployment and depressions we are far from even recognizing explicitly that their solution demands international action. Until we progress that far we are not apt to support, in a way essential to its success, any attempt at international organization.

For some years I went to Geneva to attend the meetings of an international peace society. It struck me that one of the great steps we could take toward making international planning possible was the working out of some sort of international language. Most of us here would agree that English should be the chosen language, but we may have to make other arrangements. I do not propose, nor do I consider myself competent, to discuss this subject, but no one can be in Geneva for any length of time without feeling the necessity for a common language. If you sit in assemblies you soon realize the severe strain on the patience of negotiators.

That is all I have to say on the subject. We should get the public to realize the international implications of our ordinary economic difficulties, require an exchange of ideas and co-operation, and then we may be in a position to plan ahead. Major Urwick has actively been engaged in this difficult task and is going to speak to you now out of the wide experience he can bring to bear on this subject.

<sup>1</sup>Papers presented before a meeting of the Taylor Society, Philadelphia, Pa., May 1, 1931.