



**Essays in
Humanism**

ALBERT

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1. Why Socialism?

IS IT ADVISABLE for one who is not an expert on economic and social issues to express views on the subject of socialism? I believe for a number of reasons that it is.

Let us first consider the question from the point of view of scientific knowledge. It might appear that there are no essential methodological differences between astronomy and economics: scientists in both fields attempt to discover laws of general acceptability for a circumscribed group of phenomena in order to make the interconnection of these phenomena as clearly understandable as possible. But in reality such methodological differences do exist. The discovery of general laws in the field of economics is made difficult by the circumstance that observed economic phenomena are often affected by many factors which are very hard to evaluate separately. In addition, the experience which has accumulated since the beginning of the so-called civilized period of human history has—as is well known—been largely influenced and limited by causes which are by no means exclusively economic in nature. For example, most of the major states of history owed their existence to conquest. The conquering peoples established themselves, legally and economically, as the privileged class of the conquered country. They seized for themselves a monopoly of the land ownership and appointed a priesthood from among their own ranks. The priests, in control of education, made the class division of society into a permanent institution and created a system of values by which the people were thenceforth, to a large extent unconsciously, guided in their social behavior.

But historic tradition is, so to speak, of yesterday; nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called “the predatory phase” of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future.

Second, socialism is directed towards a social-ethical end. Science, however, cannot create ends, and, even less, instill them in human beings; science, at most, can supply the means by which to attain certain ends. But the ends themselves are conceived by personalities with lofty ethical ideals and—these ends are not stillborn, but vital and vigorous—are adopted and carried forward by those many human beings who, half unconsciously, determine the slow evolution of society.

For these reasons, we should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems; and we should not assume that experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on questions affecting the organization of society.

Innumerable voices have been asserting for some time now that human society is passing through a crisis, that its stability has been gravely shattered. It is characteristic of such a situation that individuals feel indifferent or even hostile toward the group, small or large, to which they belong. In order to illustrate my meaning, let me record here a personal experience. I recently discussed with an intelligent and well-disposed man the threat of another war, which in my opinion would seriously endanger the existence of mankind, and I remarked that only a supranational organization would offer protection from that danger. Thereupon my visitor, very calmly and coolly, said to me: “Why are you so deeply opposed to the disappearance of the human race?”

I am sure that as little as a century ago no one would have so lightly made a statement of this kind. It is the statement of a man who has striven in vain to attain an equilibrium within himself and has more or less lost hope of succeeding. It is the expression of a painful solitude and isolation from

which so many people are suffering in these days. What is the cause? Is there a way out?

~~It is easy to raise such questions, but difficult to answer them with any degree of assurance.~~ I must try, however, as best I can, although I am very conscious of the fact that our feelings and strivings are often contradictory and obscure and that they cannot be expressed in easy and simple formulas.

Man is, at one and the same time, a solitary being and a social being. As a solitary being, he attempts to protect his own existence and that of those who are closest to him, to satisfy his personal desires, and to develop his innate abilities. As a social being, he seeks to gain the recognition and affection of his fellow human beings, to share in their pleasures, to comfort them in their sorrows, and to improve their conditions of life. Only the existence of these varied, frequently conflicting, strivings accounts for the special character of a man, and their specific combination determines the extent to which an individual can achieve an inner equilibrium and can contribute to the well-being of society. It is quite possible that the relative strength of these two drives is, in the main, fixed by inheritance. But the personality that finally emerges is largely formed by the environment in which a man happens to find himself during his development, by the structure of the society in which he grows up, by the tradition of that society, and by its appraisal of particular types of behavior. The abstract concept of "society" means to the individual human being the sum total of his direct and indirect relations to his contemporaries and to all the people of earlier generations. The individual is able to think, feel, strive, and work by himself; but he depends so much upon society—in his physical, intellectual, and emotional existence—that it is impossible to think of him, or to understand him, outside the framework of society. It is "society" which provides man with food, clothing, a home, the tools of work, language, the forms of thought, and most of the content of thought; his life is made possible through the labor and the accomplishments of the many millions past and present who are all hidden behind the small word "society."

It is evident, therefore, that the dependence of the individual upon society is a fact of nature which cannot be abolished—just as in the case of ants and bees. However, while the whole life process of ants and bees is fixed down to the smallest detail by rigid, hereditary instincts, the social pattern and interrelationships of human beings are very variable and susceptible to change. Memory, the capacity to make new combinations, the gift of oral communication have made possible developments among human beings which are not dictated by biological necessities. Such developments manifest themselves in traditions, institutions, and organizations; in literature; in scientific and engineering accomplishments; in works of art. This explains how it happens that, in a certain sense, man can influence his life through his own conduct, and that in this process conscious thinking and wanting can play a part.

Man acquires at birth, through heredity, a biological constitution which we must consider fixed and unalterable, including the natural urges which are characteristic of the human species. In addition, during his lifetime, he acquires a cultural constitution which he adopts from society through communication and through many other types of influences. It is this cultural constitution which, with the passage of time, is subject to change and which determines to a very large extent the relationship between the individual and society. Modern anthropology has taught us, through comparative investigation of so-called primitive cultures, that the social behavior of human beings may differ greatly, depending upon prevailing cultural patterns and the types of organization which predominate in society. It is on this that those who are striving to improve the lot of man may ground their hope: human beings are *not* condemned, because of their biological constitution, to annihilate each other or to be at the mercy of a cruel, self-inflicted fate.

If we ask ourselves how the structure of society and the cultural attitude of man should be changed

in order to make human life as satisfying as possible, we should constantly be conscious of the fact that there are certain conditions which we are unable to modify. As mentioned before, the biological nature of man is, for all practical purposes, not subject to change. Furthermore, technological and demographic developments of the last few centuries have created conditions which are here to stay. In relatively densely settled populations with the goods which are indispensable to their continued existence, an extreme division of labor and a highly-centralized productive apparatus are absolutely necessary. The time—which, looking back, seems so idyllic—is gone forever when individuals in relatively small groups could be completely self-sufficient. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that mankind constitutes even now a planetary community of production and consumption.

I have now reached the point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not experience this dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, even to his economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from the process of deterioration. Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naive, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, so short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.

The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil. We see before us a huge community of producers the members of which are unceasingly striving to deprive each other of the fruits of their collective labor—not by force, but on the whole in faithful compliance with legally established rules. In this respect, it is important to realize that the means of production—that is to say, the entire productive capacity that is needed for producing consumer goods as well as additional capital goods—may legally be, and for the most part are, the private property of individuals.

For the sake of simplicity, in the discussion that follows I shall call “workers” all those who do not share in the ownership of the means of production—although this does not quite correspond to the customary use of the term. The owner of the means of production is in a position to purchase the labor power of the worker. By using the means of production, the worker produces new goods which become the property of the capitalist. The essential point about this process is the relation between what the worker produces and what he is paid, both measured in terms of real value. Insofar as the labor contract is “free,” what the worker receives is determined not by the real value of the goods he produces, but by his minimum needs and by the capitalists’ requirements for labor power in relation to the number of workers competing for jobs. It is important to understand that even in theory the payment of the worker is not determined by the value of his product.

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of the smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capitalists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population. Moreover, under existing conditions

private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

The situation prevailing in an economy based on the private ownership of capital is thus characterized by two main principles: first, means of production (capital) are privately owned and the owners dispose of them as they see fit; second, the labor contract is free. Of course, there is no such thing as a *pure* capitalist society in this sense. In particular, it should be noted that the workers, through long and bitter political struggles, have succeeded in securing a somewhat improved form of the “free labor contract” for certain categories of workers. But taken as a whole, the present day economy does not differ much from “pure” capitalism.

Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an “army of unemployed” almost always exists. The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a profitable market, the production of consumers’ goods is restricted, and great hardship is the consequence. Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before.

This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career.

I am convinced there is only *one* way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals. In such an economy, the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion. A planned economy, which adjusts production to the needs of the community, would distribute the work to be done among all those able to work and would guarantee a livelihood to every man, woman, and child. The education of the individual, in addition to promoting his own innate abilities, would attempt to develop in him a sense of responsibility for his fellow man in place of the glorification of power and success in our present society.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that a planned economy is not yet socialism. A planned economy as such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the individual. The achievement of socialism requires the solution of some extremely difficult socio-political problems: how is it possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all-powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the individual be protected and therewith a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured?

2. The Negro Question

I AM WRITING as one who has lived among you in America only a little more than ten years. And I am writing seriously and warningly. Many readers may ask: "What right has he to speak out about things which concern us alone, and which no newcomer should touch?"

I do not think such a standpoint is justified. One who has grown up in an environment takes much for granted. On the other hand, one who has come to this country as a mature person may have a keen eye for everything peculiar and characteristic. I believe he should speak out freely on what he sees and feels, for by so doing he may perhaps prove himself useful.

What soon makes the new arrival devoted to this country is the democratic trait among the people. I am not thinking here so much of the democratic political constitution of this country, however high it must be praised. I am thinking of the relationship between individual people and of the attitude they maintain toward one another.

In the United States everyone feels assured of his worth as an individual. No one humbles himself before another person or class. Even the great difference in wealth, the superior power of a few, cannot undermine this healthy self-confidence and natural respect for the dignity of one's fellow-man.

There is, however, a somber point in the social outlook of Americans. Their sense of equality and human dignity is mainly limited to men of white skins. Even among these there are prejudices which I as a Jew am clearly conscious; but they are unimportant in comparison with the attitude of the "Whites" toward their fellow-citizens of darker complexion, particularly toward Negroes. The more I feel an American, the more this situation pains me. I can escape the feeling of complicity in it only by speaking out.

Many a sincere person will answer me: "Our attitude towards Negroes is the result of unfavorable experiences which we have had by living side by side with Negroes in this country. They are not our equals in intelligence, sense of responsibility, reliability."

I am firmly convinced that whoever believes this suffers from a fatal misconception. Your ancestors dragged these black people from their homes by force; and in the white man's quest for wealth and an easy life they have been ruthlessly suppressed and exploited, degraded into slavery. The modern prejudice against Negroes is the result of the desire to maintain this unworthy condition.

The ancient Greeks also had slaves. They were not Negroes but white men who had been taken captive in war. There could be no talk of racial differences. And yet Aristotle, one of the great Greek philosophers, declared slaves inferior beings who were justly subdued and deprived of their liberty. It is clear that he was enmeshed in a traditional prejudice from which, despite his extraordinary intellect, he could not free himself.

A large part of our attitude toward things is conditioned by opinions and emotions which we unconsciously absorb as children from our environment. In other words, it is tradition—besides inherited aptitudes and qualities—which makes us what we are. We but rarely reflect how relatively small as compared with the powerful influence of tradition is the influence of our conscious thought upon our conduct and convictions.

It would be foolish to despise tradition. But with our growing self-consciousness and increasing intelligence we must begin to control tradition and assume a critical attitude toward it, if human relations are ever to change for the better. We must try to recognize what in our accepted tradition is damaging to our fate and dignity—and shape our lives accordingly.

I believe that whoever tries to think things through honestly will soon recognize how unworthy and

even fatal is the traditional bias against Negroes.

What, however, can the man of good will do to combat this deeply rooted prejudice? He must have the courage to set an example by word and deed, and must watch lest his children become influenced by this racial bias.

I do not believe there is a way in which this deeply entrenched evil can be quickly healed. But until this goal is reached there is no greater satisfaction for a just and well-meaning person than the knowledge that he has devoted his best energies to the service of the good cause.

3. Science and Society

THERE ARE TWO WAYS in which science affects human affairs. The first is familiar to everyone. Directly, and to an even greater extent indirectly, science produces aids that have completely transformed human existence. The second way is educational in character—it works on the mind. Although it may appear less obvious to cursory examination, it is no less incisive than the first.

The most conspicuous practical effect of science is that it makes possible the contriving of things that enrich life, though they complicate it at the same time—inventions such as the steam engine, the railway, electric power and light, the telegraph, radio, automobile, airplane, dynamite, etc. To these must be added the life-preserving achievements of biology and medicine, especially the production of pain relievers and preservative methods of storing food. The greatest practical benefit which all these inventions confer on man I see in the fact that they liberate him from the excessive muscular drudgery that was once indispensable for the preservation of bare existence. Insofar as we may at all claim that slavery has been abolished today, we owe its abolition to the practical consequences of science.

On the other hand, technology—or applied science—has confronted mankind with problems of profound gravity. The very survival of mankind depends on a satisfactory solution of these problems. It is a matter of creating the kind of social institutions and traditions without which the new tools must inevitably bring disaster of the worst kind.

Mechanical means of production in an unorganized economy have had the result that a substantial proportion of mankind is no longer needed for the production of goods and is thus excluded from the process of economic circulation. The immediate consequences are the weakening of purchasing power and the devaluation of labor because of excessive competition, and these give rise, at ever shortening intervals, to a grave paralysis in the production of goods. Ownership of the means of production, on the other hand, carries a power to which the traditional safeguards of our political institutions are unequal. Mankind is caught up in a struggle for adaptation to these new conditions—a struggle that may bring true liberation, if our generation shows itself equal to the task.

Technology has also shortened distances and created new and extraordinarily effective means of destruction which, in the hands of nations claiming unrestricted freedom of action, become threats to the security and very survival of mankind. This situation requires a single judicial and executive power for the entire planet, and the creation of such a central authority is desperately opposed by national traditions. Here too we are in the midst of a struggle whose issue will decide the fate of all of us.

Means of communication, finally—reproduction processes for the printed word, and the radio—when combined with modern weapons, have made it possible to place body and soul under bondage to a central authority—and here is a third source of danger to mankind. Modern tyrannies and their destructive effects show plainly how far we are from exploiting these achievements organizationally for the benefit of mankind. Here too circumstances require an international solution, with the psychological foundation for such a solution not yet laid.

Let us now turn to the intellectual effects that proceed from science. In prescientific times it was not possible by means of thought alone to attain results that all mankind could have accepted as certain and necessary. Still less was there a conviction that all that happens in nature is subject to inexorable laws. The fragmentary character of natural law, as seen by the primitive observer, was such as to foster a belief in ghosts and spirits. Hence even today primitive man lives in constant fear that supernatural and arbitrary forces will intervene in his destiny.

It stands to the everlasting credit of science that by acting on the human mind it has overcome man's insecurity before himself and before nature. In creating elementary mathematics the Greeks for the first time wrought a system of thought whose conclusions no one could escape. The scientists of the Renaissance then devised the combination of systematic experiment with mathematical methods. This union made possible such precision in the formulation of natural laws and such certainty in checking them by experience that as a result there was no longer room for basic differences of opinion in natural science. Since that time each generation has built up the heritage of knowledge and understanding, without the slightest danger of a crisis that might jeopardize the whole structure.

The general public may be able to follow the details of scientific research to only a modest degree but it can register at least one great and important gain: confidence that human thought is dependable and natural law universal.

4. Towards a World Government

A CONVERSATION I HAD with three students of the University of Chicago has made a strong impression on me. It showed me that a sense of responsibility and initiative is at work in the young generation of this country. These students are aware of the fact that the destiny of *the* new generation, will be decided in these few years. They are determined to influence the pace of events within the framework of their possibilities.

What is the situation? The development of technology and of the implements of war has brought about something akin to a shrinking of our planet. Economic interlinking has made the destinies of nations interdependent to a degree far greater than in previous years. The available weapons of destruction are of a kind such that no place on earth is safeguarded against sudden total destruction. The only hope for protection lies in the securing of peace in a supranational way. A world government must be created which is able to solve conflicts between nations by judicial decision. This government must be based on a clearcut constitution which is approved by the governments and the nations and which gives it the sole disposition of offensive weapons. A person or a nation can be considered peaceful only if it is ready to cede its military force to the international authorities and to renounce every attempt or even the means, of achieving its interests abroad by the use of force.

It is apparent that the development of political relations in the year which has elapsed since the conclusion of the second world war, has brought us in no way nearer to the achievement of this goal. The U. N. as it stands today has neither the military force nor the legal basis to bring about a state of international security. Nor does it take account of the actual distribution of power. Real power is still present in the hands of few. It is no exaggeration to say that the solution of the real problem is linked solely to an agreement on a grand scale between this country and Russia. For, if such an agreement would be achieved then these two powers alone would be able to cause the other nations to give up their sovereignty to the degree necessary for the establishment of military security for all.

Now many will say that fundamental agreement with Russia is impossible under the present circumstances. Such a statement would be justified if the United States had made a serious attempt in this direction during the past year. I find, however, that the opposite has happened. There was no need to accept fascist Argentina into the U. N. against Russia's opposition. There was no need to manufacture new atomic bombs without letup and to appropriate twelve billion dollars for defense in a year in which no military threat was to be expected for the nearest future. Nor was it necessary to delay the proposed measures against Franco-Spain. It is senseless to recount here the details which all show that nothing has been done in order to alleviate Russia's distrust, a distrust which can very well be understood in the light of the events of the last decades and to whose origin we have contributed not a little.

A permanent peace cannot be prepared by threats but only by the honest attempt to create mutual trust. One should think that the wish to create a decent form of life on this planet and to avert the danger of unspeakable destruction would tame the passions of responsible men. You cannot rely on that, my young friends. May you succeed in activating the young generation in this sense, so that they will strive for a policy of peace on a grand scale. Thus you can not only defend yourself successfully but you can serve your country and your descendants in a degree as was not given to any previous generation.

5. The Way Out

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE atom bomb has brought about the effect that all the people living in cities are threatened, everywhere and constantly, with sudden destruction. There is no doubt that this condition has to be abolished if man is to prove himself worthy, at least to some extent, of the self-chosen name of *homo sapiens*. However, there still exist widely divergent opinions concerning the degree to which traditional social and political forms, historically developed, will have to be sacrificed in order to achieve the desired security.

After the First World War, we were confronted with a paradoxical situation regarding the solution of international conflicts. An international court of justice had been established for a peaceful solution of these conflicts on the basis of international law. Furthermore, a political instrument for securing peace by means of international negotiation in a sort of world parliament had been created in the form of the League of Nations. The nations united in the League had further outlawed as criminal the method of solving conflicts by means of war.

Thus the nations were imbued with an illusion of security that led inevitably to bitter disappointment. For the best court of justice is meaningless unless it is backed by the authority and power to execute its decisions, and exactly the same thing is true of a world parliament. An individual state with sufficient military and economic power can easily resort to violence and voluntarily destroy the entire structure of supranational security built on nothing but words and documents. Moral authority alone is an inadequate means of securing the peace.

The United Nations Organization is now in the process of being tested. It may eventually emerge as the agency of "security without illusion" that we so badly need. But it has not as yet gone beyond the area of moral authority as, in my opinion, it must.

Our situation is rendered more acute by other circumstances, only two of which will be presented here. So long as the individual state, despite its official condemnation of war, has to consider the possibility of engaging in war, it must influence and educate its citizens—and its youth in particular—in such a way that they can easily be converted into efficient soldiers in the event of war. Therefore it is compelled not only to cultivate a technical-military training and type of thinking but also to implant a spirit of national vanity in its people in order to secure their inner readiness for the outbreak of war. Of course, this kind of education counteracts all endeavors to establish moral authority for a supranational security organization.

The danger of war in our time is further heightened by another technical factor. Modern weapons, particularly the atom bomb, have led to a considerable advantage in the means of offense or attack over those of defense. And this could well bring about the result that even responsible statesmen might find themselves compelled to wage a preventive war.

In view of these evident facts there is, in my opinion, only *one* way out.

It is necessary that conditions be established that guarantee the individual state the right to solve its conflicts with other states on a legal basis and under international jurisdiction.

It is necessary that the individual state be prevented from making war by a supranational organization supported by a military power that is exclusively under its control.

Only when these two conditions have been fully met can we have some assurance that we shall not vanish into the atmosphere, dissolved into atoms, one of these days.

From the viewpoint of the political mentality prevailing at present, it may seem illusory, even fantastic, to hope for the realization of such conditions within a period of a few years. Yet the

realization cannot wait for a gradual historical development to take its course. For, so long as we cannot achieve supranational military security, the above-mentioned factors can always and forcibly lead us into war. Even more than the will for power, the fear of sudden attack will prove to be disastrous for us if we do not openly and decisively meet the problem of depriving national spheres of power of their military strength, turning such power over to a supranational authority.

With due consideration for the difficulties involved in this task, I have no doubt about *one point: We shall be able to solve the problem when it will be clearly evident to all that there is no other, no cheaper way out of the present situation.*

Now I feel it my obligation to say something about the individual steps which might lead to the solution of the security problem.

1. Mutual inspection by the leading military powers of methods and installations used for the production of offensive weapons, combined with an interchange of pertinent technical and scientific discoveries, would diminish fear and distrust, at least for the time being. In the breathing spell thus provided we would have to prepare more thorough measures. For this preliminary step should be taken with conscious awareness that the ultimate goal is the denationalization of military power altogether.

This first step is necessary to make any successive moves possible. However, we should be wary of believing that its execution would immediately result in security. There still would remain the possibility of an armament race with regard to a possible future war, and there always exists the temptation to resort once more, by "underground" methods, to the military secret, that is, keeping secret the knowledge about methods and means of and actual preparations for warfare. Real security is tied to the denationalization of military power.

2. This denationalization can be prepared through a steadily increasing interchange of military and scientific-technical personnel among the armies of the different nations. The interchange should follow a carefully elaborated plan, aimed at converting the national armies systematically into a supranational military force. A national army, one might say, is the last place where national feeling may be expected to weaken. Even so, the nationalism can be progressively immunized at a rate proportionate at least to the building of the supranational army; and the whole process can be facilitated by integrating it with the recruiting and training of the latter. The process of interchanging personnel would further lessen the danger of surprise attacks and in itself would lay the psychological foundation for internationalization of military resources.

Simultaneously the strongest military powers could draft the working papers for a supranational security organization and for an arbitration committee, as well as the legal basis for, and the precise stipulation of, obligations, competencies, and restrictions of the latter with respect to the individual nations. They could further decide upon the terms of election for establishing and maintaining the bodies.

When an agreement on these points shall have been reached, a guarantee against wars of world-wide dimensions can be assured.

3. The above-named bodies can now begin to function. The vestiges of national armies can then be either disbanded or placed under the high command of the supranational authority.

4. After the cooperation of the nations of highest military importance has been secured, the attempt should be made to incorporate, if possible, all nations into the supranational organization, provided that it is their voluntary decision to join.

This outline may perhaps create the impression that the presently prevailing military powers are to be assigned too dominant a role. I have tried, however, to present the problem with a view to a sufficiently swift realization that will allow us to avoid difficulties greater than those already inherent

in the nature of such a task. It may be simpler, of course, to reach preliminary agreement among the strongest military powers than among *all* nations, big and small, for a body of representatives of all nations is a hopelessly clumsy instrument for the speedy achievement of even preliminary results. Even so, the task confronting us requires of all concerned the utmost sagacity and tolerance, which can be achieved only through awareness of the harsh necessity we have to face.

6. On Receiving the One World Award

I AM GREATLY TOUCHED by the signal honor which you have wished to confer upon me. In the course of my long life I have received from my fellow-men far more recognition than I deserve, and I confess that my sense of shame has always outweighed my pleasure therein. But never, on any previous occasion, has the pain so far outweighed the pleasure as now. For all of us who are concerned for peace and the triumph of reason and justice must today be keenly aware how small an influence reason and honest good will exert upon events in the political field. But however that may be, and whatever fate may have in store for us, yet we may rest assured that without the tireless efforts of those who are concerned with the welfare of humanity as a whole, the lot of mankind would be still worse than the fact it even now is.

In this time of decisions so heavy with fate what we must say to our fellow-citizens seems above all to be this: where belief in the omnipotence of physical force gets the upper hand in political life the force takes on a life of its own, and proves stronger than the men who think to use force as a tool. The proposed militarization of the nation not only immediately threatens us with war; it will also slowly but surely destroy the democratic spirit and the dignity of the individual in our land. The assertion that events abroad force us to arm is wrong, we must combat it with all our strength. Actually, our own rearmament, through the reaction of other nations to it, will bring about that very situation on which its advocates seek to base their proposals.

There is only *one* path to peace and security: the path of supra-national organization. One-sided armament on a national basis only heightens the general uncertainty and confusion without being an effective protection.

7. Science and Civilizations

IT IS IN TIMES of economic distress such as we experience everywhere today, one sees very clearly the strength of the moral forces that live in a people. Let us hope that a historian delivering judgment some future period when Europe is politically and economically united, will be able to say that in our days the liberty and honour of this Continent was saved by its Western nations, which stood fast in hard times against the temptations of hatred and oppression; and that Western Europe defended successfully the liberty of the individual which has brought us every advance of knowledge and invention—liberty without which life to a self-respecting man is not worth living.

It cannot be my task today to act as judge of *the* conduct of a nation which for many years has considered me as her own; perhaps it is an idle task to judge in times when action counts.

Today, the questions which concern us are: how can we save mankind and its spiritual acquisition of which we are the heirs? How can one save Europe from a new disaster?

It cannot be doubted that the world crisis and the suffering and privations of the people resulting from the crisis are in some measure responsible for the dangerous upheavals of which we are the witness. In such periods discontent breeds hatred, and hatred leads to acts of violence and revolution and often even to war. Thus distress and evil produce new distress and new evil. Again the leading statesmen are burdened with tremendous responsibilities just the same as twenty years ago. May they succeed through timely agreement to establish a condition of unity and clarity of international obligations in Europe, so that for every State a warlike adventure must appear as utterly hopeless. But the work of statesmen can succeed only if they are backed by the serious and determined will of the people.

We are concerned not merely with the technical problem of securing and maintaining peace, but also with the important task of education and enlightenment. If we want to resist the powers which threaten to suppress intellectual and individual freedom we must keep clearly before us what is at stake, and what we owe to that freedom which our ancestors have won for us after hard struggles.

Without such freedom there would have been no Shakespeare, no Goethe, no Newton, no Faraday, no Pasteur and no Lister. There would be no comfortable houses for the mass of the people, no railway, no wireless, no protection against epidemics, no cheap books, no culture and no enjoyment of art for all. There would be no machines to relieve the people from the arduous labor needed for the production of the essential necessities of life. Most people would lead a dull life of slavery just as under the ancient despotisms of Asia. It is only men who are free, who create the inventions and intellectual works which to us moderns make life worth while.

Without doubt the present economic difficulties will eventually bring us to the point where the balance between supply of labor and demand of labor, between production and consumption, will be enforced by law. But even this problem we shall solve as free men and we shall not allow ourselves for its sake to be driven into a slavery, which ultimately would bring with it stagnation of every healthy development.

In this connection I should like to give expression to an idea which has occurred to me recently. I lived in solitude in the country and noticed how the monotony of a quiet life stimulates the creative mind. There are certain callings in our modern organization which entail such an isolated life without making a great claim on bodily and intellectual effort. I think of such occupations as the service of lighthouses and lightships. Would it not be possible to fill such places with young people who wish to think out scientific problems, especially of a mathematical or philosophical nature? Very few of such

people have the opportunity during the most productive period of their lives to devote themselves undisturbed for any length of time to scientific problems. Even if a young person is lucky enough to obtain a scholarship for a short period he must endeavor to arrive as quickly as possible at definite conclusions. That cannot be of advantage in the pursuit of pure science. The young scientist who carries on an ordinary practical profession which maintains him is in a much better position—assuming of course that this profession leaves him with sufficient spare time and energy. In this way perhaps a greater number of creative individuals could be given an opportunity for mental development than is possible at present. In these times of economic depression and political upheaval such considerations seem to be worth attention.

Shall we worry over the fact that we are living in a time of danger and want? I think not. Man like every other animal is by nature indolent. If nothing spurs him on, then he will hardly think, and will behave from habit like an automaton. I am no longer young and can, therefore, say, that as a child and as a young man I experienced that phase—when a young man thinks only about the trivialities of personal existence, and talks like his fellows and behaves like them. Only with difficulty can one see what is really behind such a conventional mask. For owing to habit and speech his real personality is, as it were, wrapped in cotton wool.

How different it is today! In the lightning flashes of our tempestuous times one sees human beings and things in their nakedness. Every nation and every human being reveal clearly their aims, powers and weaknesses, and also their passions. Routine becomes of no avail under the swift change of condition; conventions fall away like dry husks.

Men in their distress begin to think about the failure of economic practice and about the necessity of political combinations which are supernational. Only through perils and upheavals can Nations be brought to further developments. May the present upheavals lead to a better world.

Above and beyond this valuation of our time we have this further duty, the care for what is eternal and highest amongst our possessions, that which gives to life its import and which we wish to hand on to our children purer and richer than we received it from our forbears.

8. A Message to Intellectuals¹

WE MEET TODAY, as intellectuals and scholars of many nationalities, with a deep and historic responsibility placed upon us. We have every reason to be grateful to our French and Polish colleagues whose initiative has assembled us here for a momentous objective: to use the influence of wise men promoting peace and security throughout the world. This is the age-old problem with which Plato, one of the first, struggled so hard: to apply reason and prudence to the solution of man's problem instead of yielding to atavist instincts and passions.

By painful experience we have learnt that rational thinking does not suffice to solve the problems of our social life. Penetrating research and keen scientific work have often had tragic implications for mankind, producing, on the one hand, inventions which liberated man from exhausting physical labor, making his life easier and richer; but on the other hand, introducing a grave restlessness into his life, making him a slave to his technological environment, and—most catastrophic of all—creating the means for his own mass destruction. This, indeed, is a tragedy of overwhelming poignancy!

However poignant that tragedy is, it is perhaps even more tragic that, while mankind has produced many scholars so extremely successful in the field of science and technology, we have been for a long time so inefficient in finding adequate solutions to the many political conflicts and economic tensions which beset us. No doubt, the antagonism of economic interests within and among nations is largely responsible to a great extent for the dangerous and threatening condition in the world today. Man has not succeeded in developing political and economic forms of organization which would guarantee the peaceful coexistence of the nations of the world. He has not succeeded in building the kind of system which would eliminate the possibility of war and banish forever the murderous instruments of mass destruction.

We scientists, whose tragic destination has been to help in making the methods of annihilation more gruesome and more effective, must consider it our solemn and transcendent duty to do all in our power in preventing these weapons from being used for the brutal purpose for which they were invented. What task could possibly be more important for us? What social aim could be closer to our hearts? That is why this Congress has such a vital mission. We are here to take counsel with each other. We must build spiritual and scientific bridges linking the nations of the world. We must overcome the horrible obstacles of national frontiers.

In the smaller entities of community life, man has made some progress toward breaking down artificial social sovereignties. This is true, for example, of life within cities and, to a certain degree, even of society within individual states. In such communities tradition and education have had a moderating influence and have brought about tolerable relations among the peoples living within those confines. But in relations among separate states complete anarchy still prevails. I do not believe that we have made any genuine advance in this area during the last few thousand years. All too frequently conflicts among nations are still being decided by brutal power, by war. The unlimited desire for ever greater power seeks to become active and aggressive wherever and whenever the physical possibility offers itself.

Throughout the ages, this state of anarchy in international affairs has inflicted indescribable suffering and destruction upon mankind; again and again it has depraved the development of men, their souls and their well-being. For given time it has almost annihilated whole areas.

However, the desire of nations to be constantly prepared for warfare has, however, still other repercussions upon the lives of men. The power of every state over its citizens has grown steadily

during the last few hundred years, no less in countries where the power of the state has been exercised wisely, than in those where it has been used for brutal tyranny. The function of the state to maintain peaceful and ordered relations among and between its citizens has become increasingly complicated and extensive largely because of the concentration and centralization of the modern industrial apparatus. In order to protect its citizens from attacks from without a modern state requires a formidable, expanding military establishment. In addition, the state considers it necessary to educate its citizens for the possibilities of war, an "education" not only corrupting to the soul and spirit of the young, but also adversely affecting the mentality of adults. No country can avoid this corruption. It pervades the citizenry even in countries which do not harbor outspoken aggressive tendencies. The state has thus become a modern idol whose suggestive power few men are able to escape.

Education for war, however, is a delusion. The technological developments of the last few years have created a completely new military situation. Horrible weapons have been invented, capable of destroying in a few seconds huge masses of human beings and tremendous areas of territory. Since science has not yet found protection from these weapons, the modern state is no longer in a position to prepare adequately for the safety of its citizens.

How, then, shall we be saved?

Mankind can only gain protection against the danger of unimaginable destruction and wanton annihilation if a supranational organization has alone the authority to produce or possess the weapons. It is unthinkable, however, that nations under existing conditions would hand over such authority to a supranational organization unless the organization would have the legal right and duty to solve all the conflicts which in the past have led to war. The functions of individual states would be to concentrate more or less upon internal affairs; in their relation with other states they would deal only with issues and problems which are in no way conducive to endangering international security.

Unfortunately, there are no indications that governments yet realize that the situation in which mankind finds itself makes the adoption of revolutionary measures a compelling necessity. Our situation is not comparable to anything in the past. It is impossible, therefore, to apply methods and measures which at an earlier age might have been sufficient. We must revolutionize our thinking, revolutionize our actions, and must have the courage to revolutionize relations among the nations of the world. Clichés of yesterday will no longer do today, and will, no doubt, be hopelessly out of date tomorrow. To bring this home to men all over the world is the most important and most fateful social function intellectuals have ever had to shoulder. Will they have enough courage to overcome their own national ties to the extent that is necessary to induce the peoples of the world to change their deep-rooted national traditions in a most radical fashion?

A tremendous effort is indispensable. If it fails now, the supranational organization will be built later, but then it will have to be built upon the ruins of a large part of the now existing world. Let us hope that the abolition of the existing international anarchy will not need to be bought by a self-inflicted world catastrophe the dimensions of which none of us can possibly imagine. The time is terribly short. We must act now if we are to act at all.

¹The following address was objected to by the Organizing Committee of the Intellectual Conference for Peace. The message was subsequently released to the press on August 29, 1948.

9. Open Letter to the General Assembly of the United Nations

WE ARE CAUGHT in a situation in which every citizen of every country, his children, and his life's work are threatened by the terrible insecurity which reigns in our world today. The progress of technological development has not increased the stability and the welfare of humanity. Because of our inability to solve the problem of international organization, it has actually contributed to the dangers which threaten peace and the very existence of mankind.

The delegates of fifty-five governments, meeting in the second General Assembly of the United Nations, undoubtedly will be aware of the fact that during the last two years—since the victory over the Axis powers—no appreciable progress has been made either toward the prevention of war or toward agreement in specific fields such as control of atomic energy and economic cooperation in the reconstruction of war-devastated areas.

The UN cannot be blamed for these failures. No international organization can be stronger than the constitutional powers given it, or than its component parts want it to be. As a matter of fact, the United Nations is an extremely important and useful institution *provided* the peoples and governments of the world realize that it is merely a transitional system toward the final goal, which is the establishment of a supranational authority vested with sufficient legislative and executive powers to keep the peace. The present impasse lies in the fact that there is no sufficient, reliable supranational authority. Thus the responsible leaders of all governments are obliged to act on the assumption of an eventual war. Every step motivated by that assumption contributes to the general fear and distrust and hastens the final catastrophe. However strong national armaments may be, they do not create military security for any nation nor do they guarantee the maintenance of peace.

There can never be complete agreement on international control and the administration of atomic energy or on general disarmament until there is a modification of the traditional concept of national sovereignty. For as long as atomic energy and armaments are considered a vital part of national security no nation will give more than lip service to international treaties. Security is indivisible. It can be reached only when necessary guarantees of law and enforcement obtain everywhere, so that military security is no longer the problem of any single state. There is no compromise possible between preparation for war, on the one hand, and preparation of a world society based on law and order on the other.

Every citizen must make up his mind. If he accepts the premise of war, he must reconcile himself to the maintenance of troops in strategic areas like Austria and Korea; to the sending of troops to Greece and Bulgaria; to the accumulation of stockpiles of uranium by whatever means; to universal military training, to the progressive limitation of civil liberties. Above all, he must endure the consequences of military secrecy which is one of the worst scourges of our time and one of the greatest obstacles to cultural betterment.

If on the other hand every citizen realizes that the only guarantee for security and peace in the atomic age is the constant development of a supranational government, then he will do everything in his power to strengthen the United Nations. It seems to me that every reasonable and responsible citizen in the world must know where his choice lies.

Yet the world at large finds itself in a vicious circle since the UN powers seem to be incapable of making up their minds on this score. The Eastern and Western blocs each attempt frantically to strengthen their respective power positions. Universal military training, Russian troops in Eastern Europe, United States control over the Pacific Islands, even the stiffening colonial policies of the

Netherlands, Great Britain and France, atomic and military secrecy—are all part of the old family jockeying for position.

The time has come for the UN to strengthen its moral authority by bold decisions. First, the authority of the General Assembly must be increased so that the Security Council as well as all other bodies of the UN will be subordinated to it. As long as there is a conflict of authority between the Assembly and the Security Council, the effectiveness of the whole institution will remain necessarily impaired.

Second, the method of representation at the UN should be considerably modified. The present method of selection by government appointment does not leave any real freedom to the appointees. Furthermore, selection by governments cannot give the peoples of the world the feeling of being fairly and proportionately represented. The moral authority of the UN would be considerably enhanced if the delegates were elected directly by the people. Were they responsible to an electorate, they would have much more freedom to follow their consciences. Thus we could hope for more statesmen and fewer diplomats.

Third, the General Assembly should remain in session throughout the critical period of transition. By staying constantly on the job, the Assembly could fulfill two major tasks: first, it could take the initiative toward the establishment of a supranational order; second, it could take quick and effective steps in all those danger areas (such as currently exist on the Greek border) where peace is threatened.

The Assembly, in view of these high tasks, should not delegate its powers to the Security Council, especially while that body is paralyzed by the shortcomings of the veto provisions. As the only body competent to take the initiative boldly and resolutely, the UN must act with utmost speed to create the necessary conditions for international security by laying the foundations for a real world government.

Of course there will be opposition. It is by no means certain that the U.S.S.R.—which is often represented as the main antagonist to the idea of world government—would maintain its opposition if an equitable offer providing for real security were made. Even assuming that Russia is now opposed to the idea of world government, once she becomes convinced that world government is nonetheless the making her whole attitude may change. She may then insist on only the necessary guarantees of equality before the law so as to avoid finding herself in perennial minority as in the present Security Council.

Nevertheless, we must assume that despite all efforts Russia and her allies may still find it advisable to stay out of such a world government. In that case—and only after all efforts have been made in utmost sincerity to obtain the cooperation of Russia and her allies—the other countries would have to proceed alone. It is of the utmost importance that this partial world government be very strong, comprising at least two-thirds of the major industrial and economic areas of the world. Such strength in itself would make it possible for the partial world government to abandon military secrecy and all the other practices born of insecurity.

Such a partial world government should make it clear from the beginning that its doors remain wide open to any nonmember—particularly Russia—for participation on the basis of complete equality. In my opinion, the partial world government should accept the presence of observers from nonmember governments at all its meetings and constitutional conventions.

In order to achieve *the* final aim—which is one world, and not two hostile worlds—such a partial world government must never act as an alliance against the rest of the world. The only real step toward world government is world government itself.

In a world government the ideological differences between the various component parts are of no grave consequence. I am convinced that the present difficulties between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

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