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# EXTRAMURAL LECTURES

Report No. 1

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INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION  
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## FOREWORD

THE reasons for publishing this Report are well set forth in Mr. Murrow's Introduction. This Foreword is written to emphasize certain aspects of Dr. Polanyi's exposition.

His trenchant analysis of the mentality of the students in the southern institutions which he visited resulting from their environmental influences prepares us for the conclusions he draws. Nothing could be more interesting than the existence he points out of their idealistic, almost naive belief in the effectiveness of good will as an almost certain means of preventing war and at the same time an equally cynical belief in the capacity of trade interests to force wars. His emphasis upon the need of a pragmatic approach to the solution of our own international problems is of great value. Few foreigners who have lectured for the Institute have shown to the same extent the great importance of constant reference to our own history in studying a current international problem. This is primarily due to the fact that few such lecturers were as familiar with American history as they were with the background of European problems.

The illuminating discussion of the problem of our neutrality in another war is of great value. His emphasis upon the Executive's need of the support of an enlightened public opinion, and of the justification of looking to the colleges for that by providing their students with accurate and up-to-date information concerning factors of the international situation, will meet with general approval. Equally important is his insistence that the press is still the only vehicle for the formation of public opinion in the case of the majority of our people—a very incomplete vehicle. "History happens in our times in the newspapers."

The inadequacy of the knowledge of the background of European problems upon the part of these students—and it is equally true of Americans generally—is well illustrated in Dr. Polanyi's discussion of the misconception about racial minorities. How often one hears the question asked: "Why cannot Poles, Magyars, Germans, Rumanians and the others get along peacefully in the Central European states when they manage so perfectly here in America?" His answer to this question is typical of his enlightening and objective attitude upon others.

Dr. Polanyi in this pamphlet presents his own views of America's place in the international picture. He received no suggestions from anyone associated with the Institute nor has anyone modified his statement. However appreciative of the objective and realistic nature of his exposi-

tion, an American would probably differ upon a few of his conclusions. An American would not accept as accurate his reference to the United States as a country "which can hardly be said to have reached, at this time, the stage of having a traditional foreign policy." The United States has three principles of foreign policy which are emphatically traditional: the principle of no entanglement in the political affairs of Europe which dates from the administration of George Washington; the converse principle that European states shall not interfere in the affairs of the western hemisphere, i.e., the Monroe Doctrine, which was enunciated as far back as 1823; the principle of the Open Door in China which dates from the last year of the Nineteenth Century. All of these are older than some of the principles that now guide the foreign policies of some of the European countries.

The Institute is convinced that Dr. Polanyi contributes in this booklet many accurate reflections both upon foreign affairs and upon the attitude of American students towards foreign affairs. It rejoices in the good results of his visits to the colleges and wishes now to share with as many as possible the knowledge of the effects of this interesting experiment.

STEPHEN DUGGAN.

## INTRODUCTION

Since the organization of this Institute in 1919, many distinguished foreign scholars and statesmen have been brought to this country for the purpose of delivering extramural lectures in our colleges and universities. During the past sixteen years, four thousand and thirteen lectures have been delivered through arrangements made by this Institute. In all cases the college or university has provided the honorarium for the lecturer.

It has been amply demonstrated during the past three years that the impact of the economic depression has resulted in the curtailment and, in many cases, in the complete elimination of budgetary appropriations for extramural lectures. One of the first items to be eliminated from the college budget has been the appropriation for the bringing of distinguished foreign scholars to the campus for one or more lectures. It has also become increasingly apparent that many institutions prefer the presence of a foreign lecturer for a period of two or three days in order that he may not only deliver one formal platform lecture, but may also engage in informal discussions with faculty members and student groups. A study of the institutions in which our lecturers have appeared during the past several years indicates that, mainly for financial reasons, only the larger universities with special lecture foundations and other budgetary provisions for extramural lectures, have been able to avail themselves of the services of our lecturers.

It became apparent that the small and geographically remote institutions were being deprived of the privilege of coming into contact with distinguished foreign lecturers visiting this country. During the fall of 1934, a survey of fifty such colleges revealed that in thirty of them no foreign lecturer had appeared during the past two years; ten had been visited by only one foreign scholar and the remaining ten had had the opportunity of hearing only two or three. This survey clearly indicated the desire of such institutions to offer hospitality to foreign scholars, particularly those lecturing in the general field of international relations. Financial reasons, together with transportation difficulties, had militated against the development of any comprehensive program of extramural lectures by foreign scholars in these institutions.

A sum of money awarded by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation to the Institute of International Education "because of its record of achievement during the past fifteen years" made it possible for us to initiate an experiment. Dr. Karl Polanyi of Vienna, political scientist, author, lecturer, and Foreign Editor of *Der Osterreichische Volkswirt*, visited

twenty-four institutions in the southern states including Missouri, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia and North and South Carolina. Dr. Polanyi spent two or three days in each institution and in the course of thirty-seven days, delivered forty-four lectures before audiences totaling 14,110 persons. In addition, he engaged in twenty-four group discussions with 887 members of student clubs and faculty committees. That the experiment was a complete success is indicated by the enthusiastic and appreciative letters received from the administrative officers of the institutions visited by Dr. Polanyi. These institutions provided for Dr. Polanyi's maintenance during his visit, and the Institute of International Education defrayed traveling expenses and provided a modest honorarium. The entire expenditure involved in the carrying out of this experiment was less than the sums paid by lecture agencies to certain foreign lecturers for one formal platform appearance.

The time is definitely past when American colleges and universities, particularly those with small enrollment, are either able or willing to pay large sums for foreign lecturers. The emphasis upon a longer period of residence in the institution permitting informal and personal discussion with the lecturer is increasing.

This informal and frank report written by Dr. Polanyi upon the conclusion of his visit, is published in the belief that Americans concerned with the study and teaching of international relations will be interested in the comments of a foreign scholar thoroughly familiar with the educational systems of Continental Europe.

The value of this type of extramural activity has been clearly demonstrated. The interest and enthusiasm of the American institutions visited are evident. The continuation and expansion of such a program depend upon the interest and generosity of those desirous of developing an intelligent opinion concerning foreign affairs on the part of that larger body of American students studying in our smaller colleges.

EDWARD R. MURROW.

## REFLECTIONS ON A VISIT TO SOUTHERN COLLEGES

I was duly forewarned by many American friends that at the smaller colleges of the South which I was to visit as a lecturer on international affairs, I would meet students remarkably likeable and intelligent but sadly lacking in any interest whatever in my subject. This latter prediction was destined to prove strikingly false. After concluding my two months' trip, in the course of which I had the highly appreciated opportunity of visiting twenty-four colleges as an extramural lecturer, I can assert with some measure of confidence that in this region of the United States there are obvious signs of a genuine and growing interest in foreign affairs.

However, keen interest is one thing; right concepts, right methods, and right ideas, another. In order to present a full picture of the mental attitude of the average southern college student in this field, I intend to deal both with the formal characteristics of this interest and with the peculiar concepts, ideals and valuations apparent in it.

However, inevitably the writer will be drawn on towards a wider task. Although sent to teach, I could not help but learn. He would be a poor soul indeed who discovered nothing new in America. I learned to comprehend the generous message of a continent that is free from fear because it need not suspect foreign submarines in its home waters, nor enemy bombers in its home clouds; the spirit of a nation that feels itself at one with humanity because it holds but few foreign possessions and seems to have the moral force necessary for relinquishing them; the educational achievement of a college system that is raising the average level of attainment in this country beyond anything known before; the social importance of a type of higher education that almost invariably combines both the physical and mental training of the average student. Thus, like two opposing streams, the currents of teaching and learning interpenetrated curiously in the mind of the writer. Trying to make myself comprehended, I had first to understand. But that which I learned made me often the keener to teach. More and more I became aware of the peculiar responsibility that goes with any interchange of opinions and methods between the old world and the new, especially as between scholar and student under present world conditions.

### TYPES OF COLLEGES

True, the range of my experiences was geographically restricted. It did not reach beyond the south central and southeastern states. On the other hand, I had the advantage of being able to draw a comparison between this area and the life and atmosphere of the Middle West which

I had experienced during a six weeks' stay in one of its typical centers. The colleges visited were fairly well distributed over the region in question. Also, they included almost every type of college: denominational and non-denominational, public and private, negro and white, coeducational and girls' colleges, in the mountain regions and down on the plains.

#### *Girls' Colleges*

There was the girls' college with a distinctly religious atmosphere, a plain life, much housework, the students natural and cheerful, with varied interest and yet sufficiently tutored in the social graces to remind you that you were in the South; the girls' college of the finishing type with its protected atmosphere and its ideal of the perfect lady, but with scant interest in the material aspects of modern existence and none in foreign policy—apart from the romantic vicissitudes of young Otto von Hapsburg's claims to the throne of his fathers; the girls' college of an intermediate type at which a less formal behavior of the students was well harmonized with the need of society accomplishments, and the interest of the students in foreign politics had passed clearly beyond the strict bounds of romance.

#### *State Teachers Colleges*

I found a more purposeful type of student at these colleges. Unfortunately, their time was split up into divisions and sub-divisions and they were very often heavily burdened with housework. They have little superfluous energy left over for recreation periods, and lack that comprehensive unity of outlook which college life usually tends to achieve.

#### *Denominational Colleges*

These colleges make "family" work obligatory for boys and girls alike and succeed in achieving a harmonious balance between intellectual and physical, religious and secular, motives and activities, even if the religious interest seems to be today more with the staff than with the average student. The semi-denominational college has, but for a nominal influence of the trustees, lost touch with organized religion, as, for example, the Quaker college upon whose campus not a ripple on the surface betrayed that it was Anti-War Day, or another college in this category which almost deliberately strove to create a non-religious atmosphere within its walls.



### *Negro Colleges*

The negro colleges of various types and grades develop very different schools of thought. The minds of the students, however, mirror broadly the methods and approaches of the white colleges, except for a distinctive awareness of the happenings on the Ethiopian scene.

### *Mountain Colleges*

There was also the group of mountain colleges with their pronounced and positive ethnical characteristics, almost a world in themselves, curiously conscious of their kinship in spite of widely different cultural aspirations, such as: the famous mountain college of the classic type in Kentucky, where the students pay their way by manual work under a staff fully aware of its social mission; the similar college down on the plain, its atmosphere, however, lacking the perfection of the former, and where the "mountain white" boys and girls do not work so much in order to pay their way as to learn the job which they are expected to pursue in their home communities; the old-world college where, in primitive surroundings, a humanistic and athletic training is being passed on by a small group of old-time Southerners to a straight and sturdy generation of mountain gentlemen; the college, farther to the south, where the same breed is being moulded to the fashion of Southern gentlemen, the boys and girls often losing their natural charm of true-born mountain folk without acquiring that state of gentility which appeared to be the objective of their training.

## STUDENT INTEREST IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### *Instinctive Interest*

The interest in foreign affairs which frankly, to my great surprise, I found so widespread, was not so much of a deliberate character as of a spontaneous, unconscious and instinctive quality. Even with highly intelligent adult persons its motivation was purely volitional. "My chief concern is whether or not my son will have to go to war." This statement was made to me twice within a week, once by the wife of a college president, another time by the wife of the dean of a university.

An informal meeting with the International Relations Club at a girls' college revealed a singular lack of interest in the subjects which had been actually discussed by the Club, such as World Court, League of Nations, Disarmament, etc. I ventured to comment on this fact and did not meet with a very vigorous opposition in the group of some eighteen when I summed up by saying that these matters seemed to have appeared to them

rather remote. But when I eventually proceeded to mention the possibility of a war and the problem of neutrality, the effect was instantaneous: except for two or three, every girl had some remark or other to offer, and was keen to do so. Here in a student group was manifested the same kind of interest that made the two mothers speak as they did.

#### *Academic Knowledge*

But there is more to the above episode. The students apparently did not themselves realize that they were interested in foreign policy. In other words, the factual knowledge acquired by the students in lecture courses was unrelated in their minds to present realities. International Law, Post-War History, Disarmament Conferences, Adherence to the World Court, all belonged to one category of things; whether or not their brothers and friends would have to face the horrors of war, belonged to another. Indeed the majority seemed most unwilling if not incapable of relating the one to the other. History was past; the problems of today were in the present. There was no connection between them. The League was in Geneva; the World Court at The Hague; both in Europe; the United States was in America. Neither history nor international law carried any direct reference to the present situation in the States. Their knowledge of international law and world affairs was entirely academic. It was not so much that it was very deficient in amount, but that it was of the wrong kind.

### OBSTACLES TO UNDERSTANDING

#### *Illusionism and Cynicism*

Let us turn to the ideas, concepts and valuations themselves which seemed to dominate the minds of these students. On the whole it was a most curious mixture of an unrealistic idealism and a super-realistic cynicism. Take the all-important question of the causes of war. The effectiveness of good will and understanding as a certain means of avoiding wars was uncritically overrated by them. But so also was the capacity of selfish sectional trade interests to force wars upon otherwise peaceful communities. Both the forces of good and of evil were in fact credited with almost miraculous powers. The mere wish to abolish wars in the future should be potent enough to destroy and overcome all the combined forces making for war within a system almost bursting with the energies of national, social and racial competition. On the other hand, all of these deep-seated and manifold factors tended to be forgotten when the munition maker appeared on the scene. Suddenly he and he alone was the cause of wars, his pocketbook had the power to sway the destinies of

nations—as if in the daily life of the nations there existed no causes whatever, working for international strife and war! ("If I personally take my stand definitely for the prohibition of the private manufacture of arms, I do this, not in the erroneous expectation of thus putting an end to war, but for the most stringent considerations of public morality on the one hand and the necessity of an effective neutrality policy on the other.") Paradoxically enough in the minds of the students, the two extremes of idealistic illusionism and credulous cynicism seemed to make one consistent whole. They seemed to feel that the only reason for war was that some people *wished* to go to war for atavistic, romantic, or sentimental motives, at the back of which there were the love of conquest and domination, old quarrels, combative instincts, unwillingness to understand the other fellow; or that people were being *maneuvered into war* by sectional profit interests for selfish ends. In other words obviously war happened because some people were either fools or criminals or both. The fools imagined reasons for war which actually did not exist, or they were even so foolish as to wish to go to war for its own sake; the criminals were merely cynical but sufficiently clever to make the fools go to war whether for reasons imagined or for none at all. It was thus only consistent that war would disappear by itself once people were cured of their folly or were debarred from fooling their fellows. In neither case was there any deeper appreciation whatever of the objective causes of the tendency towards war.

Such a mental attitude towards the causes of war is pregnant with all the dangers of illusionism. I endeavored to point out that if it were true that nations go to war because they *wish* to do so, there would be no likelihood of a war breaking out in the future in which a nation would be engaged whose sincere wish not to go to war was obvious. Yet such an expectation would imply a fearful misconception of the dangers of the present world situation for the peaceful countries. Still more disastrous for peace would be the consequences of the erroneous belief that if only one's own nation did not wish war, it would be immune from the danger of war. This latter illusion would, in fact, leave the country open to the working of all the forces which, if allowed to continue, would make war inevitable and thus cause the nation to suffer precisely the fate which it wished most passionately to avoid.

#### *National Minorities in Europe and the United States*

An inadequate vision of the history of Europe and an almost as inadequate one of that of America, seemed responsible for some rather serious misconceptions. Take the preponderant cause of unrest in Central Europe today—national rivalries within the borders of the state,

better known as the question of racial minorities. There was a striking lack of understanding of the nature of this problem. It was quite usual to find that the students were identifying the American problem arising out of the varied racial origins of the people of the United States with the difficulties obtaining within nationally mixed countries in Europe. "Why cannot the Poles, Magyars, Germans, Rumanians and the others," they asked, "get along peacefully in those Central European states when they manage so perfectly here in America?" This is like not seeing the forest for the trees. In spite of the extremely mixed racial origin the dominance of the English language in the United States is undisputed. In Central Europe nine-tenths of the dissensions between different races within specific countries arise out of the question whether there should be one dominant language in the country concerned and if so, whose language it should be.

Moreover, in Europe, the so-called national minorities are often the original inhabitants of the country. They may have lived there in numbers equal and even surpassing those of the "state nation," i.e., the nation which eventually came into possession of the government. Incidentally, today's "state nation" might have been but yesterday in the reverse position of being ruled by that nation which is actually subject to it at present. The "national minority" thus might or might not be less numerous than the "state nation"; it might or might not have been for a shorter period in possession of the soil; it might or might not be of lower cultural level than the present ruling nation. In fact, if one wished to draw an analogy between racial problems in Europe and in America, one would have first to suppose that Rumanians, Magyars and the Poles were the original inhabitants of this country, equal or superior in numbers to the Anglo-Saxon immigrants; further, that they, and half a dozen other peoples, had later lived in mixed communities with the Anglo-Saxons. Who would deny that these peoples, as well as the Anglo-Saxon immigrants themselves would have soon been faced with a problem most conducive to conflict between the different groups which contended that their language should have priority in the legislature, higher administration, judiciary and in education? It would be rash to assert that the American people—the term itself is a subtle prejudgment of the issue—would have invariably found a peaceful solution to these intricate and yet so basic problems of nation-building. The Swiss example which is so readily cited as a solution of the allegedly insoluble, by the simple method of reason and tolerance, might be more indebted for its success to clear-cut divisions between the different national settlements in Switzerland and the lack of topographical unity in a small, strategically well placed and strongly armed country, than is usually assumed.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. The writer of this report is himself a convinced supporter of the method of reason and tolerance. Indeed, he believes that but for the shortsightedness of the Austro-Hungarian dynasty and, even more, of the ruling groups in Hungary and in Austria, the Danubian Empire could have survived. A timely change to a federal form of government with full cultural autonomy for the minorities could well have rescued it from destruction. But he does not allow himself to be deluded into the facile assumption that such a transformation could have been achieved without serious political convulsions involving radical change in many spheres of social and state life,—a long and painful process at the best, in which all parties concerned would have had to share. The spirit of reasonableness and tolerance is but the precondition without which the objectively possible is usually unattainable. But the knowledge of that which is reasonably possible and that which is not, belongs to the science of politics. A misconception of the nature of the national problem, in mixed areas, seems to me one of the greatest obstacles which prevents the American student from penetrating into the complexities of actual causes of war, and in consequence, of its prevention.

#### *Lincoln and the Hapsburgs*

It is only another aspect of the same fallacy when the *wish* for, or the *want* to have a thing is made to appear as the general motive for actions, including war. The simple truth that nations, like individuals, might be constrained to do what they neither wished nor wanted to, is ignored. There can be of course war-like nations actually wishing war for its own sake, or governments wanting it for reasons of state. That such cases are exceptional can be readily seen by the fact that once a country has declared war on its neighbors, these at least have to undertake a defensive war whether they wish to or not.

But not even governments which deliberately decide upon war, follow this course as a rule simply because they wish to. They might have been forced to do so in order to save the unity of the commonwealth or other objective realities, the value of which finds its justification in deeper strata of human existence than in individual or group interests. Action on such ground appeals for its justification to the well known "reasons of state." This again is not restricted to Europe. I rarely failed to impress my southern audiences when I summoned my courage and said: "It is common knowledge that the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy was the very opposite of a free federation such as the United States of America. Who of you, however, but would agree that the Danubian monarchy offered a kind of home for numerous peoples and that its dissolution resulted in

serious danger of new wars? The preservation of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy might thus have seemed—even if falsely—to its rulers as an objective value of a higher order than the questions involved in the squabbles of the small nations within its borders. Let us suppose for the sake of argument, that this consideration was in the minds of the Hapsburgs when they decided to launch a war against Serbia with a view to preventing the south Slav population of the monarchy from seceding. In all sincerity, would then the reasons of the Hapsburgs in declaring war on Serbia have been so very unlike the considerations which forced the hand of Lincoln when the secession of the South threatened the Union? Morally, the case of the North may have been the better one; constitutionally, that of the South seems to have been certainly the stronger. But Lincoln looked for justification of his action neither to the one nor to the other. As he himself stated, it was the Union and the Union alone which he felt it his duty to safeguard by all means, not excluding those of a most bloody and fratricidal war. Indeed, in spite of the vital question of moral unity involved in the slavery issue, the necessity for the war was in the last resort geographical and topographical. Yet who would question today the ultimate rightness of his action to which the people of America owe their greatness and wealth, indeed, their very existence as a nation?" Much to the credit of the intelligence and to the lack of prejudice of my audiences, they seemed to appreciate this somewhat unusual comparison which, however, reserved to them their freedom of judgment on the moral and constitutional aspects of an event most painful in memory to the South, the historic justification of which, they all have to acknowledge today.

#### *Sanctity of Treaties*

There are other points of no less importance where the absence of the pragmatic method in the analysis of American history, as it is usually taught, is a handicap to the American student in his study of international affairs. There is nothing more dangerous for peace than the divergence between nations in the appreciation of treaties. The American student, correctly, considers that there is some measure of discrepancy on this point today between American public opinion and European public opinion. He instinctively senses what is certainly true, that the European countries doubt the effectiveness of everlasting political treaties where vital interests of states and nations are concerned. He tends to interpret this doubt simply as the expression of a lower morality which is unable to comprehend the sanctity of treaties as the American nation conceives it. Only reluctantly does he accept the practical distinction between treaties of limited

scope concerning specific subjects, like trade interests, and political treaties binding the whole of a nation for life and death. It is, however, this inclusive character of political treaties which makes them rely for their effectiveness more on the harmony of the interests underlying them than on the binding power of the treaties themselves. This traditional qualification of the binding force of political treaties is proving today a serious obstacle to the establishment of an international system of collective security, indeed, even of an effective reduction of armaments by international agreement. But when the American student, and most rightly, urges that his country should take the lead in setting up higher standards of the sanctity of political treaties than are prevailing among the other nations today, he ought not to lose sight entirely of the realities of yesterday. Probably a majority of the territorial treaties concluded by American governments in the past were perpetual treaties of amity with the Indians. Yet when Manifest Destiny urged the squatter onward on the Long Trail of history, this trail was found to be littered with the scraps of these treaties. Why not make use of American history in the light of pragmatic science, to teach the American students a deeper comprehension of the slow and difficult progress of history by which the sanctity of treaties advances from the stage of a principle to that of a reality of international law?

#### *Sound and Fury*

In their over-realistic mood, my audiences were inclined to see in current history and in international life no more than a meaningless pattern of diplomatic maneuvers, personal ambitions, politicians' intrigues, sectional interests, pressure groups, and yellow press stunts. That these were only part of the picture, that they depended for their effectiveness upon the underlying reality of a more coherent and intelligible character, seemed to escape them. Indeed, there was some difficulty in convincing them that there existed such a reality at all. They were unwilling to accept the fact that personal or sectional aims had but little chance of success in history but for the working of objective tendencies under the surface. They failed to appreciate the fact that even the most startling political careers are invariably due to the application of the method of the successful "hitch-hiker" who hikes only if and for so long as he cannot hitch. The distinction between these two forms of locomotion in history is indeed a vital one. That combination of super-idealism and super-realism, however, which I have attempted to describe above, made these students un-receptive to this distinction. They failed to relate the individual to his background, to rationalize the event. This tended to distort the pragmatic pattern of history into a mere chaos of "sound and fury."

### *The United States and Switzerland*

This failure became only too apparent in the attitude of the students towards the most important topic in the field of foreign policy—the problem of neutrality. An almost passionate wave of neutrality was sweeping the country. Yet the notions of the students as to the nature of neutrality and its rôle in the foreign policy of the United States were disturbingly vague and inadequate. Again, it was the lack of a pragmatic view of American history which was the stumbling block. They were frankly puzzled by the fact that the United States seemed to have a knack of getting into wars with no sufficient reason; that it was heads or tails with them on which side they came in; and that if they went to war they usually did it in defense of their neutrality. That these alleged absurdities were not really absurdities, but found their simple explanation in the fact that America had for geographical reasons voluntarily taken upon itself, as it were, the rôle of a permanent neutral and therefore found itself in the position typical of such a country, seemed to them a novel suggestion. And yet clearly there was an important analogy between the international situation of a neutralized country like Switzerland and of a country that had assumed voluntarily the position of a permanent neutral like the United States. It is the fate of neutralized countries that they cannot choose their opponents in war. They must fight the belligerent country which did not respect their neutrality even if their sympathies are with this country as against the belligerent. Thus, the foreign policy of the mighty continent of America is governed by the same law as that which governs the small, land-bound Switzerland. My audiences found it hard sometimes to accept the inherent logic of the tragic necessities bound up with the duties of a neutral.

### *The Full Price of Neutrality*

Accordingly, there seemed to be but little understanding of the far-reaching implications of the American thesis of the freedom of the seas and of its incompatibility with the American tendency towards the voluntary assumption of the status of a permanent neutral. Nor was there any recognition of the tremendous price which might have to be paid for neutrality. An embargo on exports during war time seemed in their view to threaten only the munition makers, or at the worst, sectional trade interests. I do not recall a single instance in which the question of the exports of cotton, the staple product of the South, was as much as mentioned in this connection. "Suppose," I said, "that a neutral America would continue exporting peaceful bales of cotton to neutral England during a protracted war. Suppose, then, that one of the belligerents,



whether France or Japan or Germany, should object to these exports and threaten to sink the American transports. What could America do if she wished to remain neutral? Clearly, very much more would be involved this time in an embargo on exports than the sectional interests of some profit-makers. Would the people of the United States be prepared to shoulder collectively the burden of the economically ruined South? But unless they did so, how could the South be expected to agree to such an embargo? If, on the other hand, there were no embargo, how could America stay out of the war?" To questions such as these the answer was as a rule the confident assertion of their disbelief that such an unfair claim could ever be raised against the United States. I had to refer them to the exactly analogous objections the English had raised during the Great War against American exports of non-contraband goods, or at least goods formerly acknowledged as such, to neutral Scandinavia, to make them realize the seriousness of the proposition.

#### EDUCATING PUBLIC OPINION

My audiences were comparatively quick to see the grave political consequences involved in such an approach. It showed that only if the American people as a whole were resolved to pay the full price could neutrality be maintained under all conditions, and that such a price might have to be paid not alone in terms of the sacrifice of additional business, but normal incomes, whether wages or profits, would also have to be foregone. Would the people of the United States seriously commit themselves to such a tremendous undertaking? Did the mere actuality of this question not imply that the United States would in the future have to strain every nerve in order to avert a war between other important countries? That if it failed in this endeavor it would have to carry on its foreign policy in such a manner as to make the burden of neutrality bearable day by day to the nation as a whole? In view of the endless variety of the possible political, strategic and trade constellations with their ever changing effect on the different geographical regions of the country, as well as on the various branches and sections of the population—all this meant that foreign policy would have to become extremely supple and elastic. The Executive could never work out and maintain with sufficient steadiness such a policy unless he could rely upon the support of an enlightened, disciplined and purposeful public opinion. Indeed, without this vital instrument of a democratic foreign policy, the United States of America cannot in the future hope to stay out even of avoidable wars. But by what means could such a public opinion be developed in a country which can hardly be said to have reached, at this time, the stage of having a traditional foreign policy?

I found the students not entirely unresponsive to this challenge. They did not fail to comprehend the situation resulting from the lack of a foreign policy as a continuous function of the state in an isolated continent, as well as from the lack of an organized public opinion conscious of the need of such a policy. They were also quite ready to see that an important factor in the development of such a public opinion might well lie with the college people themselves. A keen, systematic and methodic study of international affairs by a much wider circle of students than has turned to them in the past could supply one of the essential pre-conditions: namely, a widespread, exact and up-to-date knowledge of facts and factors of the international situation. The importance of getting one's information by a careful reading of the daily press cannot be exaggerated. Unless intelligent public opinion is so live, keen and quick that it is able to react instantaneously and thereby control the editorial comment of the newspapers themselves, the press remains almost the only and in that case, certainly a very incomplete vehicle for the formation of public opinion. This is even more true of the weeklies and other periodicals which can be brought up to the required standards of factual knowledge and critical comment only by a public that has made sure of its facts from the daily press. It is not the quality of the news or its presentation with which we are concerned here, but with the simple fact that, apart from the radio, history happens in our times in the newspapers. Foreign offices, influential bankers, armament firms, and outstanding politicians may have their private sources of information, but these are after all only a day or two, and usually only a few hours in advance of published events. As for the rest, some important facts become known only when published a hundred or two hundred years later, like secret treaties, and so on. Thus, after all is said, history happens in the newspapers. Even for the small group of the privileged newsgatherers it is by far the most important source of information. A systematic study of current history with the help of the daily press could be an extremely useful aid in educating the college graduates to become an important factor in moulding public opinion.

The European scholar only slowly comprehends the many complex reasons which have made the American students' rôle in the political life of his country so vastly different from that of his European colleague. The pros and cons of this development would require a separate study. But as to the field of foreign policy, there should be no doubt about this. Without the intelligent collaboration of the college and university people, it is not possible to develop that enlightened and critical public opinion towards which the Executive will have to look for support in the field of foreign policy in the none too distant future. There seems to lie some

hope in the fact that the machinery of state and local party politics have not taken hold of foreign policy as it has of almost every other function of national life in the United States. Here there is a gap in the armor of the party politician which may yet turn out to be a most fortunate circumstance for the country.

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