

## CHAPTER XXIV

### END IMPERIALISM

The alternative to imperialism is freedom, freedom for the whole subject world. And freedom is the only alternative to imperialism, just as it is the only alternative to privilege in any form. Freedom is the great solvent of conflict, of suspicion, of wars. It is the solvent of imperialism as well.

Freedom to the subject world should be America's contribution to the peace conference.

Only through freedom will the world be brought together. Only when there is equal opportunity for all and special privileges for none will diplomacy no longer seek advantages that should be gained by skill, by ability, by services rendered. Then men's minds will turn from war and preparations for war as an agency of conquest to peaceful means of acquiring favor. With freedom the psychology of the world will change just as it has wherever privileges and monopolies have been abolished

and the mind of man has been permitted to operate through natural and peaceful channels.

A free world involves political autonomy and the right of self-determination to conquered nations and subject peoples. Belgium must be restored to complete independence and indemnified. Alsace-Lorraine must be freed. The people of Russia, Finland, Poland, Ukrania, Lithuania, Courland, the Baltic and Black Sea provinces should be permitted to decide their own destiny free from outside coercion. Siberia and the Russian Pacific coast should be released from any penetration or coercion by the Allies. The Balkan states should no longer be the pawns of diplomacy. They should be granted autonomy, and safeguarded against one another and the outside world by an international tribunal, supported by a sufficient armed force, to free the world from this powder magazine which has embroiled Europe for the greater part of a century. Turkey should be neutral territory, and Constantinople and the Dardanelles should be converted into international territory so far as is necessary to insure the freedom of the Black Sea and the Straits to the Mediterranean. Constantinople should

be made a great free port under an international commission as is the mouth of the Danube. The whole of western Asia including Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Persia should be internationalized and these states be organized as independent commonwealths, and their political and economic autonomy be insured by a Mediterranean tribunal as proposed in a previous chapter.

All of South and Central Africa should be federated into international territory under an administrative council representative of the Powers and pledged to the protection of the native races from exploitation and slavery. The widest possible autonomy should be granted the Filipinos, Porto Ricans, and other peoples under the imperialistic control of the United States. Ireland should be granted the fullest possible autonomy to develop. Her grant of political power should be so generous and so unequivocal that the Irish question would be forever ended. It should include control of education, religion, local government, taxation, and all other activities that are involved in the self-development of the Irish people. The Indian and Egyptian question should be

settled by legislation which frees the nationalistic aspirations of these peoples and, what is quite as important, ends the economic and financial burdens and obligations under which they labor.

The world will never be at peace so long as it is governed on the assumption that only the white man is fit for self-government; it will never be at peace so long as the small states are viewed as pawns and buffers for the greater Powers. The slave-owner was in bondage no less than the slave. And the greater Powers are in slavery so long as they hold others in subjection. There can be no freedom to the greater Powers, so long as they hold other nations, races, and peoples in bondage. This is an inevitable curse of empire as it is of chattel slavery. It destroys master as well as slave.

The conquered world must be freed if only to free civilization from the bondage of fear, of armaments, of war. For these are the inevitable costs of empire.

Economic freedom should likewise be assured to all peoples. There should be an end to the idea that the world belongs only to the

strong, and that weak and undeveloped peoples may be exploited by forced labor, by taxation, or by any other means. Freedom would end the "closed door," "exclusive concessions," "spheres of influence." What possible right has any nation to dictate the economic life of China, India, Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Morocco, or even of the Philippines, or Porto Rico? The closed door is one of the causes of war. Moreover, it means that the development of subject peoples shall be sacrificed to the greed and private profit of economic groups and classes within the stronger Powers.

There should be no exclusive markets, no rivers or harbors controlled by a single Power or group of Powers. Trade with subject peoples should be opened to the world on equal terms. There should be equality of opportunity in the development of the trade and resources of the backward countries. There should be no exclusive grants or privileges of lending money to the monopolists of England, France, Germany, or the United States, for such exclusive grants lead not only to the destruction of the weaker peoples: they lead to conflicts between the greater Powers as well.

Moreover, the last fifty years has seen a succession of conflicts over these aggressions on the part of the greater Powers. Europe has been in a state of nervous apprehension. Public opinion has been fanned into flame over the message of the Kaiser to the Boers, over Morocco, Koweit, and Venezuela. Wars have sprung from these conflicts. China has been made subject to the greater Powers. Financial imperialism is a continuing mine ready to explode at any moment through the threat of one nation to the imperialistic interests of another.

Peace should end the activities of high finance. It should seal the doom of dollar diplomacy and financial imperialism. The doctrine that the "flag follows the investor," no matter how usurious his contracts or how fraudulent his concessions may be, should be superseded by the doctrine that the investor assumes his own risk; he takes his chances, and he shall not be permitted to call upon his country from which he has expatriated his wealth to insure his profits or to send its youth with machine-guns to collect his debts.

The idea that the flag should follow the

investor is not recognized as between the greater Powers. English investments in America, American investments in England or France have no other guarantee than the good faith and the laws of these countries. Force is only applied between the greater Powers and the weaker states. And as a result of the assumed right of the greater nation to protect its subjects' possessions there has arisen the correlative obligation to protect them against any other Power. Thus the exploiting activities of the privileged classes have imperilled the safety and security of the world.<sup>1</sup>

A democratic peace must protect the weak as well as the strong, if only for the purpose of securing a permanent peace. Exclusive possessions and privileges should be ended, and

<sup>1</sup>Mr. H. L. Brailsford, the brilliant British student of imperialism, writing in 1914 on the increase in armaments said:

"If we were to take the sum by which British and German armaments have increased in the present century, it would be possible to allocate the increase, roughly, somewhat as follows: 50 per cent. or less for the settlement of the question, "Who shall exploit Morocco?"; 25 per cent. or more for the privilege of building a railway to Bagdad and beyond it; 25 per cent. or more for the future eventualities which remain unsettled—the fate of the Portuguese colonies in Africa and the destinies of China."—*The War of Steel and Gold.*

the world should be united into a league for the purpose of internationalizing all backward countries, and for guaranteeing and protecting the liberties of subject peoples.

The United States should be the first to lay its possessions on the table of renunciation. We should admit that the Philippine Islands and Porto Rico are the spoils of war. Our only rightful claim to these islands is the fear that some other Power may seize them and use them as a basis of operations against us. This is the only possible justification of the insistence made by some that America should place the whole of the West Indian archipelago and of Central America under our power. But the United States has no rights in these territories, no matter how they may have been obtained. And, however beneficent our rule may be, or however much the life of these subject peoples may have been advanced, these gains can be as readily assured by international guarantees, while our own hands can be cleansed of imperialistic aggressions by their release. And however much we may have done for the Porto Ricans, the Filipinos, and the Hawaiians along educational lines, however we may have im-



proved the health, the morals, and the security of these islands, the question still remains as to whether we have not, under cover of such protection, robbed them of their lands, their resources, their opportunities for economic freedom. And economic freedom is the essence of liberty. A people can never be free if their lands are owned by alien capitalists, and the people reduced to agricultural laborers but little better than serfs, as they are in Hawaii, as they were in Mexico, as they have been by imperialistic interests in every other part of the globe.

The weak and subject peoples should be lifted from the servitude to which the world has reduced them. They have a right to their own lands, to their own cattle, to their own labor. Mexico has a right to work its own mines, to levy its own taxes, to control its own internal affairs. Persia should be re-established and assistance rather than intrigue should be tendered to its aspiring ambitions. China should be freed from the penetration and menace of the greater Powers. South Africa should be joined into a federation of states whose political integrity should be guaranteed by all the Powers. Then it will be possible

for the advances of civilization, the contributions of steam, electricity, and surplus wealth to flow to these states and promote their development without sacrifice of the native peoples. Then our boasted claims of civilizing the natives will have some basis of justification, then rum and machine-guns will not be the advance agents of Christian nations. Rather they will be abolished and our emissaries will be representative of peaceful international justice.

How can this be achieved? Only by a new kind of internationalism. The greatest war of the world should be ended by the greatest peace of the world. The most unholy assault upon weak and dependent peoples should be followed by the most righteous protection of weak peoples. Just as the old régime in France, with its unconcern for the peasants, was followed by the day of renunciation, when the grand seigneurs joined in a voluntary relinquishment of one after another of their feudal privileges, when in a frenzy of liberalism they gave up their means of oppression, so this war should be followed by a day of renunciation, when the imperialists of the

world and the congress of peace unite in declaring for a peace with freedom, liberty, and equality to all the world. A peace conference animated by such motives would find ready means of internationalization. It would create an international administrative commission or tribunal to which would be intrusted the control of the lands, rights, and privileges relinquished by the individual Powers. It would become a guardian of the black, brown, and yellow peoples, of strategic harbors, of raw materials; of the markets which have been appropriated by one Power or another. It would be authorized to co-operate with these states in arranging their customs tariffs, the terms of concessions and development of harbors and waterways. It would receive all their applications for loans. It would examine the terms of loans and open up their underwriting to all nations on equal terms, or would distribute them to the financiers of the several countries on some pro rata basis. It would be the intermediary of all concessions for railroads, mines, and the development of raw materials, which concessions would be offered to the investors of other countries on terms

which would insure the investment and protect the subject states. In case of trouble it would itself investigate conditions. The world would not have to rely upon the statements of irresponsible journalists. If rights were violated, if continued revolutions jeopardized the internationalism of the world, such tribunal would have power to intervene. And in a great majority of cases where individual states have intervened it has been found that the disturbances have either been fomented by privileged interests, or the dependent state has been refused an opportunity even to utilize the loans it has made for the development work for which they were contracted.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This idea has been discussed with approval in England where it has been suggested that some sort of international control should be provided for western Asia and for Africa as well. Mr. H. G. Wells discusses the international state in *What is Coming*, while the *New Statesman* (issue of September 23, 1916) outlines a plan for the international control of Africa as follows:

"The ideal solution of the whole problem, we suggest, would be the deliberate abolition of all international fences in the tropics. All central Africa, from the boundaries of Morocco and Egypt on the north, to those of Rhodesia on the south, should be neutralized and administered by an International Commission for the benefit primarily of the races which alone can live there, and secondarily of the traders of all countries on equal terms. But ideal solutions are not always practicable, and it must be admitted that the revolution here suggested could not be brought

The British Labor party has definitely declared for such an international control of tropical Africa in its statement on December 28, 1917. It declares with regard to the colonies of the several belligerents in tropical Africa:

“In view of the fact that it is impractical here to leave the various peoples concerned

about by a mere stroke of a pen. For the creation of an international government on such a scale there are no precedents worth mentioning, and to determine its composition, its powers, and its position in relation to national governments would be a very difficult matter. Nevertheless, we believe that if the ideal were consciously accepted by the chief parties concerned its realization would only be a matter of time; and there would be an opportunity in the immediate future for the application of the fundamental principle involved. If the Allies determine at the end of the war to retain control of the German Colonies, they might and ought to give a solemn undertaking to hold those territories in trust for civilization, to treat the interests of the natives therein as paramount, and to preserve in perpetuity the principle of the Open Door in the fullest sense of the term. If at the same time France and Great Britain consented to make their own tropical dependencies in Africa subject to the same trust, the moral effect of the undertaking as a demonstration of our good faith would obviously be enormously enhanced. The sacrifice, if any, would be small, whilst the principle thus established of giving all countries an equal place in the sun (as far as this great area is concerned) would be of inestimable value as a step toward the permanent solution of the African problem. The further step to international control would be merely one of machinery. As an alternative to the not very enticing prospect of the re-establishment of the *status quo ante* in Africa, we do think this proposal is Utopian.”

to settle their own destinies, it is suggested that the interests of humanity would be best served by the full and frank abandonment of all the belligerents of any dreams of an African empire; the transfer of the present colonies of the European Powers in tropical Africa, however the limits of this area may be defined, to the proposed supernational authority or League of Nations herein suggested, and their administration under the legislative council of that authority as a single independent African state, with its own trained staff, on the principles of (1) taking account in each locality of the wishes of the people when these can be ascertained; (2) protection of the natives against exploitation and oppression, and the preservation of their tribal interests; (3) all revenues raised to be expended for the welfare and development of the African state itself; and (4) the permanent neutralization of this African state and its abstention from participation in international rivalries or any future wars."

Such a tribunal would be to the present imperialistic world what a court of justice is to the duel. It would substitute juridical proceedings preceded by investigations for the battleships which settled the fate of Egypt, Morocco, and China; it would end such acts as the sending of the *Panther* to Agadir, the intrigues in Persia, and the conflicts between

Russia and Japan over Manchuria, of the Powers over the Mediterranean, of the United States in Mexico, and of all the Powers in China.

The peace that follows will be an empty peace if it is an imperialistic peace. It will be a barren compensation to a war-weary world which has been kept in a state of nervous apprehension for fifty years over the intrigues and diplomacy, the bluster and the campaigns for armament which have been carried on now in one Power, now in another, as a result of reliance on force as a means of promoting and protecting the economic interests of the ruling classes of the greater Powers.