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David Mitrany

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THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO WORLD ORGANIZATION

DAVID MITRANY

IT seems to be the fate of all periods of transition that reformers are more ready to fight over a theory than to pull together on a problem. At this stage I can only ask to be given credit for the claim that I do not represent a theory. I represent an anxiety. At home, when we want change or reform, we state our objectives in such terms that all may see how we may attain them. When it comes to the international world, where we are faced with old and stubborn habits of mind and feeling and political dogmas, where the change we have in mind must close one of the ponderous tomes of history and open up a new one, it seems that nothing will do but the perfect goal and winged results.

If we compare the general mood of 1919, when everybody was keen to get back to what had gone before, with the mood of 1948 one generation later, when the need for an active international society is almost universally taken for granted—we are justified in regarding the change as progress indeed; a change in outlook without which all schemes for international peace would, as in past centuries remain but noble dreams. Yet, even with that change, present schemes may likewise remain noble dreams if they are beyond the reach of the ways and means of human government. "Government is a practical thing," Burke wrote to the Sheriffs of Bristol, and we should beware of elaborating political forms "for the gratification of visionaries." It is the task of experts, whether individuals or groups, to pass now beyond fine appeals and ideal formulae. Expert vagueness will merely result in popular vacuousness. If that popular receptiveness to the idea of international organization is to ripen into an informed public opinion, it must now be fed with a diet of hard facts and practicable measures, so that it may know how to press and support Governments in the pursuit of an active international policy. How otherwise can it be explained why, with such broad goodwill and sense of urgency, so little has been fulfilled?

The general outlook, therefore, is promising. When we come to examine present trends more concretely, two stand out above all—the trend for national self-government, and the trend for radical social change. The two are at work in different strengths in different parts of the world, but they merge into each other. Even in Europe, where state-making seems near to completion, the transformation of society is taking place on a national basis; while in the Middle East, in South-East Asia and elsewhere, the new States express social revolution as much as political revolution. Speaking internationally, therefore, there is in this social nationalism or national socialism an actual danger of regression. The modern political trend has led increasingly to the splitting

up of the world into independent States; the idea of national self-government was taken as the guide of the peace settlement of 1919 and is still strongly at work in the Middle East, in South-East Asia, and is stirring in Africa too. At the same time the modern division of labour had tended to weld peoples and countries together, and it is that unity which is in danger of being loosened by the new conception of the State. It is not my part to discuss whether the trend is desirable or inevitable, but merely to establish that these are the conditions from which our international house-building must start. We are favoured by the need and habit of material co-operation, we are hampered by the general clinging to political segregation. How to reconcile these two trends, both of them natural and both of them active, is the main problem of political architecture at present.

In the light of that problem ideas and schemes for international organization can be brought, speaking broadly, under one of three categories: (i) a general and fairly loose association, like the League of Nations and the United Nations, (ii) a federal system and (iii) functional arrangements.

The League of Nations and now the United Nations, as their names imply, rest upon national separateness. They are loose associations for occasional specific joint action, in regard to each of which each member remains on the whole free to participate or not. They are clubs which make joint action easier, if wanted, and in the United Nations facilities for economic and social action are much improved; but they cannot prescribe such action, much less take it on their own authority.

Our short but tense experience since the creation of the United Nations has shown that such a loose arrangement is inadequate in scope and uncertain in working. Hence, no doubt, the widespread interest in the federal idea, in a variety of forms. Federalism is one of the great inventions of political theory and life. It came to us from the New World and has been adopted in a number of places especially in newer political groupings. It has served admirably where a number of adjacent and related provinces or countries, while retaining separate identity, wanted to join together for some general purpose. Federation has been the political equivalent of a company with limited liability. Habitually, federal experiments rest upon a number of similar elements: a degree of close kinship or relationship, a will to unity, but with it a clear intent to manage most affairs severally. How does all this apply to the international scene?

We are presented with a choice of proposals for international federation, advocating variously and vaguely European federation or Western federation or democratic federation or, more ambitiously, world federation. The fact that there are so many differing proposals show that they do not rest on any inherent element of kinship or close relationship. Any of them may be desirable, but we have no proof that any is desired. The will to unite is not self-evident. Indeed most of these ideas, like that for European federation, are pressed from outside upon countries which themselves have shown no sign of taking the initiative, as a corrective to their former individualistic ways—a novel idea of political marriage by sentence of the court. Or alternatively they

are urged to federate so as to be able to stand up to other political groupings. The advice may be sound, but it is an argument for a new nationalism not for a new internationalism. Hitherto federation has indeed merely created a new separate political unit which in the process, as in Germany, did bring peace within the group. There is no evidence that it would necessarily contribute to peace between it and other groups. The prospect of two powerful federations, for instance, facing each other in Europe is not enchanting. It would not check one of the present general trends, that of political division: it would change the dimensions of nationalism, but not its nature.

Let us take the most hopeful view as to the will of the countries to unite, and leave aside for the moment this negative view of peace. The main question is—would some kind of international federation under present conditions strengthen the trend for material integration, so as to make of it a general and positive foundation for peace? A federation comes into being for certain specific ends, and for those *only*. A federation unites, but it also restricts. It rests on a rigid division of powers and functions between territorial authorities which have equal status; and that division is usually and necessarily laid down in a written constitution provided with an armoury of safeguards against its being lightly tampered with. In the volume of essays on *Federal Planning*¹ Professor Wheare granted that federal government is by its nature conservative and legalistic. Every attempt to give the central government some new function and power has to knock at the massive and rusty gates of the constitution. The efforts of the Canadian Government to change the fiscal arrangements of the federation have been blocked so far, in spite of long discussion and patent need. In Australia repeated efforts for economic and social action have been similarly defeated; and the recent decision to nationalize the banking system has shaken the political structure and temper of the country. Even in such a dynamic country as the United States, the sin of unconstitutionality has plagued efforts at social reform—such as the prohibition of child labour in factories—and killed or maimed most of the original New Deal measures. The now universally admired and imitated T.V.A. scheme had to sustain, on grounds of unconstitutionality, fifty-one suits before the Supreme Court before it was allowed to settle down to its great work.

It is curious how those who urge the use of the federal idea internationally have neglected this central characteristic of it. Jefferson, who politically was wise beyond a man's measure, foresaw this and would have liked the constitution to include a provision for its periodical revision every ten years. It so happens that such a provision and for such a term was part of the Austro-Hungarian federal arrangement, the so-called *Anschluss*, with the result that every term became a crisis with a threat of dissolution—which led the irrepresible Vienna wits to speak of it as "Monarchie auf Kündigung." Yet such a refractory attitude is not unreasonable. New functions and new powers allowed to the supposedly co-equal central authority, however beneficent the social purpose, have a cumulative effect politically, and a sufficient number

¹P. Ransome, Ed., *Studies in Federal Planning* (London, Macmillan, 1943).

of them would before long permanently change the balance upon which the federation was established. It took almost twenty years of difficult negotiation, as Professor Brady points out,¹ to find a basis for the federation of Australia, and the reluctance to see it changed is therefore understandable. An international federation, to come into being at all, would have to start upon a very narrow basis and very rigid arrangements as to form and functions; and the reluctance to allow these to be disturbed would be correspondingly deeper.

In an international federation every adaptation, every amendment, would have to pass the gauntlet of jealous discussions between countries which have newly come together and differ in their political background. Even in agreed common matters the pace is that of the slowest member of the federation; issues which divide deeply have to be skirted. But in our time conditions and needs and problems are apt to change rapidly. The constitution would have to be continuously adapted, or the difficulty of doing this would hobble the life and government of the federation. Can such an instrument be made to fit the revolutionary mood which, whatever we may think of it, is surging in most parts of the world? Some may have been puzzled that the most revolutionary of all governments, which ideologically believes in world unity and in the proscription of the State, at the United Nations, and on every possible occasion, insists on a strict observance of national sovereignty. The explanation may be found in a recent article on sovereignty by Professor Levin,² a leading Soviet jurist, who uses this very argument—that any and every people must be free to transform its social organization with full power of its own to do so, and without external interference or complications. Professor Levin is obviously right in assuming that this would not be possible under some rigid and comprehensive form of political association. If a federal House cannot be half free and half slave, neither can it be half capitalist and half communist. Every attempt at deep change in one part would put in jeopardy the persistence of the whole; for the alternative would appear to the legalists as disruption, and to the reformers as stagnation.

A federal system has many bright virtues. But in form and working it is a combination of rigidities—rigid in its framework, whether geographical or ideological; rigid in its constitution, which has to be formal and unchallenged; rigid in its general life, because of the limits and obstacles it places to fresh common action. If under present conditions of political nationalism an international federation is difficult to achieve, under present conditions of social revolution it would be difficult to maintain. It would have little prospect, except on the lowest common denominator as regards membership—such as the Benelux or the Scandinavian groups—or lowest common denominator as regards federal activity. But if a dynamic federal grouping is not possible, a laggard federal grouping would be meaningless now.

¹Alexander Brady, "Dominion Nationalism and the Commonwealth" (*Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, February, 1944, p. 9).

²J. D. Levin, "The Problem of Sovereignty in the U.N. Statute" (*Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo*, No. 1, 1947, p. 16).

When the present federations came into being, their chief central functions were common defence and foreign policy. These are indeed the functions, with a common budget for their purpose, that Mr. Lionel Curtis considers sufficient to start the federal arrangement which he has advocated so eloquently and devotedly. But does this not again neglect the historical perspective? Not only do the number of functions which need to be carried out jointly change; their character is apt to change even more rapidly. A hundred or even fifty years ago defence and foreign policy were limited affairs in relation to the total life of the community. Now they embrace between them control of material resources and of the organization of industry, control of manpower and of training, and even control of communications as of education and opinion—with corresponding sweeping control of trade and of fiscal and financial policy.

Federation, to sum up, was invented and adopted when, in general, the functions of government were limited, and those of central government were deliberately intended to be restricted; now we live somewhat feverishly and precariously in an era of centralized planning. It was born in times of enthusiasm for constitutions; now we are in a pragmatic mood that scorns formal rules and restrictions. Federalism was meant to put into the hands of central authority the least possible functions of common life; now it could only mean leaving in the hands of the individual authority the least possible functions of local life. If federation were to do all the things for political security and for social security that present trends demand—inevitably through the instrument of central authority—it could only end in the paradox that the federal idea would be proclaimed only to be organized out of existence.

The foregoing examination of the difficulties of the federal idea is not made from any inclination to be critical. It is rather from a complete conviction that in this awkward field we cannot make progress by propounding schemes which have a pleasant symmetry without regard to the rough and shifty terrain on which they have to be grounded; and in looking at the federal idea against present conditions and needs I have really been trying to bring out the sociological framework within which any effort towards international government would have to work. That framework, shaped as it is essentially by the will for national distinctness and the need for social integration, shows that our end will be difficult to achieve simply by changing the dimensions of traditional political instruments. That being so, we are bound to look for a new political device, and the device which seems to fit that framework is the functional idea—not as a new invention, but as a new application.

It so happens that the functional approach has been used a great deal in established federations, very successfully by the New Deal, with the T.V.A. scheme as its outstanding example. It may be as well to deal here with two circumstantial points. If, it may be said, existing federations have been able to do all that, does not this break the argument that the federal idea cannot be helpful internationally? Existing federations can sometimes push aside

or get round formal federal partitions because they *are* old-established federations. Generations of common life and experience have welded them into a community, with a common outlook and common problems expressed in the programmes of national parties; and common central government has come to be taken for granted, with state or provincial governments, with perhaps the exception of Quebec—a significant exception—more on the level of local administrative bodies. In most cases the problem, therefore, was not so much to create a common policy as to consolidate a group of similar or identical policies. And yet even in such old-established federations, in times of crisis, these collective doings were expanded not by changing federal arrangements but rather by circumventing them. In no case was there any deliberate change in the formal gradation of power; the federal governments took upon themselves many new tasks with tacit national consent, and thus acquired new power by functional accretion, not by constitutional revision. In the United States the one attempt at constitutional change, to increase the membership of the Supreme Court, was also the only issue on which President Roosevelt was utterly defeated, though its effect would have been mild compared with the tremendous impact of the New Deal.

The United States took this line boldly also in starting new connections with neighbouring States—not only in the close wartime arrangements with Canada, which were a matter of expediency, but in permanent measures. The Alcan Highway has created a strip of international administration running from the United States through Canada to Alaska; the arrangement with Mexico for the development of the Rio Grande has turned a dividing river into a joint enterprise; and pan-American developments are likely to follow the same line. These experiments have a particular lesson for the wider international problem. It is not only that they can be made, but that the United States has found it easier to complete the Alcan arrangement with Canada and the Rio Grande arrangement with Mexico than to get its own T.V.A. Scheme going. The first two were made with sovereign countries which retained their sovereignty except in so far as it was pooled for a specific joint functional undertaking. The other experiment affected federal units which were reluctant to part with any of their share of power, and tried hard to maintain the balance laid down in the American constitution. In a more extreme way the point is illustrated by the insistence of the Australian Government, against American reluctance, that some form of international undertaking to work for “full employment” be included in the San Francisco Charter, with the purpose of getting in this way the right to take internal action which would otherwise be beyond its constitutional power—a striking and novel way of asking for international obligations to get over federal obstructions. The incident also illustrates how the content of “foreign policy” is changing. In the United States and in other federations, in other words, necessary joint action was possible in the face of constitutional obstacles because it could rely on an old and live sense of national unity. A new international federation would have no such unity, and the constitutional barriers

would thus obstruct all the more starkly at every corner. And even those old federations have found it at times easier to make functional arrangements with foreign States than within themselves.

The truth is that by its very nature the constitutional approach emphasizes the individual index of power; the functional approach emphasizes the common index of need. There are many such needs which cut across national boundaries, and an effective beginning could be made by providing joint government for them. On such lines, the emergence of so many new national States, which politically adds to our difficulties, might even be put into the service of international unification. If they are to achieve a promising social foundation for their political independence they need many things in the way of material and technical help and service which are beyond their means and experience; and, as in the case of the Marshall Plan, such needs should be used deliberately and insistently to set up lines for joint international action.

The universal popular claim for social security could likewise be turned into a channel for international unity. For it is important to note that the new nationalism is everywhere a peculiarly social nationalism; like the nineteenth century nationalism, each wants to have its own national house but, unlike the earlier nationalism, it is especially intent upon a new social life within that house. There may be much to be said for one solid international block of flats, but as long as people choose to live in detached national houses we could go a long way by supplying joint social and other services. Only in some such way is there any prospect, for instance, of mending the breach in the political unity of India, and of leading gradually to a unity of natural common interests; whereas any suggestion for political reunion would only serve to make even such practical proposals suspect. Again, this seems the only possible hope of mending the division between Arabs and Jews in Palestine; and, indeed, of building some true unity among the Arab countries themselves, along the path so admirably mapped out by the Middle East Supply Centre during the war. In the Danubian region, in spite of much ideological fraternizing, Mr. Dimitrov's mere reference to a federal link-up at once brought a rebuke from Moscow, and little response from his neighbours; but those same countries are apparently working on a scheme for a Danube Valley Authority. Nor is there any other way of dealing with the vital problem of the Ruhr. If the region is to remain German, if French fears for security are to be assuaged, if the claims of neighbouring allied countries for a share of its products are to be met, and at the same time, German workers are to be given the prospect of a decent life, only a Ruhr Valley Authority under non-political international functional management would have any prospect of meeting these varied and mixed claims. Two points might be made on this which will bring out the contrast between the political and the functional approach: first, that an R.V.A. could be started at any time without waiting for a Western Union, while a Western Union would still have to work through an R.V.A.; and, secondly, that Soviet Russia could at any

time be brought into the partnership of an autonomous R.V.A., but not in a Western Union. The enclosing of an R.V.A. within a full Western system would inevitably dig a moat against wider co-operation.

It would be instructive to examine the structure and working of the war-time functional arrangements, or the work of the International Labour Organization in giving a common direction to policies of social improvement without encroaching on State sovereignty. The French, Belgian and British Governments are now working out lines of co-operation for their African territories, ranging from sanitation, irrigation and soil conservation, to the common use of communications and other services, with a view to co-ordinating economic, educational and administrative policies.

It is not only to the field of government and economics that the functional approach brings relief. In the noteworthy sermon which the Archbishop of Canterbury preached before the University of Cambridge in November 1946,¹ he boldly admitted that all schemes of reunion between the English churches had failed because, as he insisted, they had tried a constitutional reunion, and he called for a different approach simply by the exchange of ministers and pulpits. "It is because I fear a stalemate," said Dr. Fisher, "that I venture to throw out this suggestion—Can we grow to full communion with each other before we write a constitution?" The evolution of the Flemish problem in Belgium is also instructive. The political separatist movement during the First World War created a bitter reaction in the country and almost led to civil strife. Since then, by gradual quiet changes, the Flemings have obtained complete autonomy in education—the University of Ghent is now completely Flemish and that of Liège completely French—and almost as wide autonomy in the administration of the Flemish area; in addition, there has been growing cultural association with Holland. The instructive point is that no constitutional provision has so far legalized this evolution, while talk of separation has died out among the Flemings.

Earlier in this paper I instanced the many varieties of the federal idea competing for public support as one proof of its weakness. There are as many, if not more schemes for functional experiment. Does that not show a similar fragility of conception? Perhaps nothing brings out more clearly how different is the core of the political from the functional approach. In the first the several schemes are mutually exclusive—a State cannot be in both a European or an Empire federation, or in both a European and a democratic federation. Functional schemes are at best complementary each helping the others, and at worst independent of each other. Any one can be started at any time whether the others are accepted or not, and any one may live and prosper even if others fail or are abandoned. In such changing times they have the invaluable virtue of autonomous existence, and likewise of autonomous development. A scheme started by a few countries for transport, or for oil, and so on, could later be broadened to include belated members, or

¹Speech by Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, November 3, 1946 before the University of Cambridge. Reported in *The Times*, November 4, 1946.

reduced to let reluctant ones drop out. Moreover they can vary in their membership, countries could take part in some schemes and perhaps not in others, whereas in any political arrangement such divided choice would obviously not be tolerable. Functional "neutrality" is possible, where political "neutrality" is not. In addition, functional arrangements have the virtue of technical self-determination, one of the main reasons which makes them more readily acceptable. The nature of each function tells of itself the scope and powers needed for its effective performance. All these elements are capable of concrete measurement, and unlike rigid political arrangements, they are therefore capable of concrete adjustment, in keeping with changes in the conditions of the function. The requirements of a federal authority for the conduct, for instance, of the common foreign policy must always be a matter of political bargaining. The requirements of a functional authority in charge of oil or aviation or of a Danube Valley Authority, at any given time for the clear-cut task entrusted to it, would be a matter of factual audit.

These characteristics of the functional approach therefore help to mitigate the obstinate problem of equal sovereignty. In this approach it is not a matter of surrendering sovereignty, but merely of pooling so much of it as may be needed for the joint performance of the particular task. In such practical arrangements Governments have not, as in political systems, to safeguard their right to equal voting, but can allow a special position to the countries which have a special responsibility in the task concerned, so long as the service is performed for the benefit of all. All this is completely in keeping with the whole trend of modern government. Twentieth century government means less a division of powers than an integration of functions; administration and administrative law are its characteristic tools, and such functional arrangements would simply mean giving international range to administrative organs and administrative jurisdiction, in accordance with the nature of each task. They would also be in harmony with the social philosophy of our time. As Sir John Boyd Orr has said of his particular responsibility; "here in this world food plan we have the means whereby the nations could begin to co-operate on something which would do none of them harm and do all of them good."¹ If Governments have the welfare of their own peoples at heart they could let such organizations get to work; and if the organizations are successful and their number grows, world government will gradually evolve through their performance. From the point of view of normal daily life, to quote the late Professor Hobhouse, "the life of a community may be regarded as the sum of the functions performed by its members." And conversely, one might add, the performance of a number of common functions is the way to create a normal community. If one were to visualize a map of the world showing economic and social activities, it would appear as an intricate web of interests and relations crossing and recrossing political divisions—not a fighting map of States and frontiers, but a map pulsating

¹Speech in the House of Commons, April 4, 1946, reported in *The Times*, April 5, 1946.

with the realities of everyday life. They are the natural basis for international organizations: and the task is to bring that map, which is a functioning reality, under joint international government, at least in its essential lines. The political lines will then in time be overlaid and blurred by this web of joint relations and administrations.

Close association of States can be either comprehensive or selective. Clearly the first is the ideal—all countries working together for their common good. But if it cannot be comprehensive, if it has to be selective, it is better that it be selective on lines of special activities rather than of sectional groups. Any one country may join a particular activity, but a set group cannot help being exclusive; and, in the words of Dr. Johnson, "such is the disposition of man that whatever makes a distinction creates rivalry." Seen in this light the functional approach implies not merely a change of political device but a change of political outlook. It should help to shift the emphasis from political issues which divide, to those social issues in which the interest of the peoples is plainly akin and collective; to shift the emphasis from power to problem and purpose.

In all societies there are both harmonies and disharmonies. It is largely within our choice which we pick out and further. Since the end of the war we have had brutal illustration of this truth at peace conferences, at meetings of the United Nations at which the new international life was supposed to be born. We must begin anew, therefore, with a clear sense that the nations can be bound together into a world community only if we link them up by what unites, not by what divides. In the second place, ways and means to that end must be fitted to that purpose. They have to be adequate, but they also must be relevant; and if they are to be relevant they must start from the conditions which are around us. They must avoid reaction, but also avoid Utopia. We can ask our fellow men to look beyond the national State; we cannot expect them to feel themselves at once members of a world State. During his first months as President, Jefferson wrote to a friend that he realized how short he would fall of achieving all that reason and experience justified, but "when we reflect how difficult it is to move or inflect the great machine of society, how impossible to advance the notions of a whole people suddenly to ideal right, we see the wisdom of Solon's remark, that no more good must be attempted than the nation can bear."

That is wise judgment. But in our case, and in our time, what the nations can bear shows a distinction. Taken by and large, they seem unable to bear much interference with their political independence, but they can bear quite a lot when it comes to economic and social action. That distinction gives a first guiding line for any international arrangement. The next question is, how such economic and social action might be organized to lead us to international community and international government. In our own countries we are getting accustomed to putting nearly all such action into the hands of central government. Are we ready to follow the same course in the international sphere? If so, a federation, with its restrictive political machinery,

is in any case hardly the proper instrument. A federation leaving those social and economic activities in the hands of its national members would in this respect be little more than a replica of the United Nations, under a different guise and name. If, on the other hand, those activities are entrusted to a centralized international authority with corresponding powers and means, it will have to be hardly less than a full-fledged international government. These tasks must of necessity be performed jointly and controlled centrally; therefore, the true choice is not between the present competitive nationalisms and a lame international federation, but between a full-fledged and comprehensive world government and equally full-fledged but specific and separate functional agencies.

Summary of Discussion

VICE-ADMIRAL C. V. OSBORNE asked whether Professor Mitrany thought that the functional approach was sufficiently drastic to deal with the present world emergency. Many people thought that, however great the difficulties of achieving a world federation might be, those difficulties must be overcome, because if world federation was not brought about there would be world communism.

PROFESSOR MITRANY said that the ultimate goal was federation but federation could not be secured in time to deal with the present emergency. At the moment there was no prospect of even a federation of Western Europe.

MRS. E. DANGERFIELD said that many people were working for federation. Would it not be possible, for instance, to start with regional federations, of which there was already the nucleus in Scandinavia? There could be regional federations within confederations. If a European confederation could be formed, that would balance with the Chinese confederation, the U.S.S.R. confederation, the North American and South American confederations, and so forth.

PROFESSOR MITRANY said that he certainly did not wish people to give up their faith in federation or cease to work for it, but he could only repeat that there was at present no prospect of achieving it. There were many things which needed to be done now and could be done without political federation. For instance, countries such as India, Burma, Malaya were interested in transport problems and communication problems, and would probably join in a specific international arrangement concerning such matters. That would provide a foundation, and gradually they would lose their hesitation about international arrangements. The procedure might be called the development of federation by instalments. He doubted whether regional federation would be possible in Western Europe and he was sure it was not possible in America or in the British Empire.

MR. C. G. HANCOCK suggested that, as nations were unwilling to give up their sovereignty to a world federation, UNO should be strengthened by getting together nations which would pledge themselves to put down aggression without any veto and to find forces for that purpose. Would not that be a first step towards federation?

A MEMBER questioned whether a federation of the world might not come through the use of power? The United States had the power now, and if

public opinion would sanction the use of that power could not a world State be formed?

PROFESSOR MITRANY considered that a possibility.

MRS. YOUNG asked Professor Mitrany what was his opinion of the International Labour Office and whether he thought there was any possibility of a functional organization developing from it or from something similar to it.

PROFESSOR MITRANY said that the International Labour Office was a typical functional organization. Some functional organizations were purely advisory, like the Weights and Measures Bureau, and some were co-ordinating, like the International Labour Office, which had no executive authority but which strove to direct national measures into some kind of identical channel. The equalization of working conditions could play a very important part in international relations, and the I.L.O. had been, on the whole, successful. It was really a Parliament on labour issues, on which Governments, employers and workers were represented, and it was creating gradually a body of International Administrative Law. When the nations had agreed on a convention for the conditions of employment of sailors, they had done something which could not be done through an international Parliament for a very long time. There was a common contract which could be observed, checked and enforced, and eventually it could be put under the jurisdiction of some kind of international administrative tribunal. A great deal could be done in that direction to build up a world community.

MR. J. R. HANCOCK said he was an Australian but he had lived for many years in New Zealand. He thought there was very little likelihood of a regional federation between Australia and New Zealand, but it was possible that both countries would enter a world federation if they were satisfied with the conditions of entry. Confucius had advocated the pursuit of the mean, and he would like to know Professor Mitrany's views on the idea of functional federalism. It seemed to him that Professor Mitrany's objection to federalism was very largely an objection to constitutions; he did not see why a federation should have a constitution. He thought that all the machinery of the federation, the various functional authorities, should have constitutions, but not the federation itself. It seemed to him that pure functionalism, as put forward by Professor Mitrany, needed protection. There had been functional developments in England, in the United States and in other countries, but they had been under the protection of the army and the navy.

He suggested that nations could collaborate functionally provided they had a political protection against war; in his view there must be a political organization as well as a functional organization.

PROFESSOR MITRANY agreed and said that the United Nations should maintain law and order and protect functional organizations. It was unfortunate that since its establishment it had been concerned with the discussion of general schemes in which political issues had been paramount and had neglected the economic and social side.

The wastage and destruction caused by the war had necessitated desperate efforts at reconstruction and the pooling of resources as soon as the war was over, yet when the Marshall Plan had been put forward it had been necessary to improvise a meeting hastily in order to collect facts as to what could be done. His point was that all the time people were pursuing attractive schemes for political arrangements and not giving their attention to practical possibilities for dealing with present needs.

MR. LIONEL CURTIS said that the important question was whether political problems could be solved by first concentrating on economic questions or whether it was necessary to concentrate upon political questions before economic problems could be solved.

He had said again and again but he thought he ought to repeat it now: "If we want to know where we are going we must know what we want," and he believed that what people wanted above everything else was certainty that there would be no Third World War.

As he understood Professor Mitrany's thesis, it was that in order to deal with political problems it was necessary first to tackle and solve functional problems. That meant that food must be put into people's stomachs, clothes on their backs and houses over their heads, that industries must be restarted and that nations must be prevented from cutting each other's throats by hostile tariffs, and then a general peace would prevail. How was that going to be done? He had never yet heard Professor Mitrany say how sixty or seventy sovereign Governments could be persuaded to do it. It was easy to appoint committees and devise systems for customs unions, but it was difficult to get politicians and professors to face the question of whether national sovereignties were going to be merged in an international sovereignty and how that could be done. That was the narrow, uphill, difficult path, and that was why the functional approach was so fashionable.

He proposed to quote three cases from the past in which countries had had to face the same problem which existed today, namely, how to prevent war.

He would take first the case of America, which formed a confederation of thirteen States, which agreed to provide the forces and money necessary to gain their independence. They won the war of Independence, not because they were faithful to the Articles of the Confederation, but through the genius of Washington and the incompetence of the British Government and generals. Within three years of the end of the war the United States were bankrupt and on the verge of civil war between one State and another. The functional approach had broken down. Then Washington came forward and persuaded them to tackle the key political problem of getting an organ of Government, and, over the heads of the politicians, who said that the States would never surrender their sovereignty, he got the congress of Philadelphia to tell the people what they must do if they wished to save themselves from another disaster; with the result that within twelve months the people, by popular vote, accepted the proposed constitution. After that the functional problems were comparatively easy to handle and there was free trade throughout the whole of the thirteen States.

The second case was that of Germany, which was rent with internal and foreign wars from the Middle Ages onwards. After the Napoleonic War Germany adopted the functional approach and formed the Zollverein, but after some years one State after another began twisting it in its own interests, and Bismarck said that unless a Government was elected by adult suffrage throughout Germany which could make one tariff for the whole of the German people, Prussia would go out. Everyone knew that that meant war, and the Government was formed.

The third case was that of South Africa, where a customs convention was signed after the South African War, but in the course of a few years difficulties arose and there was a possibility of war between the Transvaal and Natal. Then a political union was formed, and the whole customs question was settled at once.

We were now drifting steadily towards war. The great problem was how to prevent war, and how to make people feel that war would not come. During the last war all the democracies realized that not one of them was strong enough to keep out of a world war, and they pooled their resources under one command and beat Germany and Japan in three years. If they had done that ten years before, in 1935, at a fraction of the cost, there would have been no war in 1939, and if they did it now, in peace-time, there would be no Third World War.

If the democracies wished to pool their forces and form a union so strong that no aggressor would attack it, there must be a union Government, and a union Government could be formed only with the consent of the peoples. In the end there would have to be a constitution. That was a difficult task, but it could be done with leadership, and he could see the leaders appearing.

PROFESSOR MITRANY said that the three federations to which Mr. Curtis had referred—the German, the American and the South African—illustrated the point he had made in his lecture that all existing federations had been formed by a few kindred groups.

He was glad to hear that the functional approach was fashionable. If that was so, it was due to sheer necessity. A number of attempts had been made at political arrangements since the war, but without success.

Mr. Curtis was quite right in saying how much had been done by grouping during the war. There had then been a desperate need for a number of countries to act together, and they had reached the point of having a common economic policy, and so on; but, in spite of their unity of mind and willingness to work together, he knew of no case in which any suggestion of federation had been made. There had, of course, been Mr. Churchill's offer to France, but that had been made for a specific reason. Why should federation be expected to be more acceptable now than it would have been during the war? If it was difficult to get sovereign nations to accept functional arrangements between them, would it be more easy to get them to accept the complete merging of their political structures and outlook into a common federation? That might be desirable, but the time was getting short, and, if the action taken now was on the lines that he had put forward, and not on those that Mr. Curtis preferred, it was because the Governments realized that something must be done at once.

*Address at Chatham House
March 4, 1948.*