

MARCH 19, 1953



LOOKING THROUGH THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

By JAMES T. SHOTWELL

President emeritus of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Dr. Shotwell here explains—in an article developed from his address to friends and admirers at a recent testimonial dinner on the occasion of his eightieth birthday—why peace can be purchased only by unceasing address to the arts of statesmanship.



—Conway Studios.

IT WILL never be possible now, after two world wars, to appreciate the impact on the mind of Western Europe and America of the First World War in the opening week of August 1914. In spite of the fact that it was preceded by a number of ominous crises, when peace seemed almost to hang by a thread, the actual outbreak struck with a tragic force unparalleled by any other event in Western history.

The prevalent political philosophy of the nineteenth century registered a serene confidence in the triumph of the moral order. Nor was this mere

theory. Steadily the horizon of life had been widening with the development of the arts and sciences and education. Then, suddenly, the fabric of peace was torn by a murder and an ultimatum. A day and a night were left for the decisions of peace and war, which meant that there was no chance for peace. The deadly timetable of the General Staffs began to tick off the hours for mobilization and a new era had begun.

To the military mind there is something inspiring in the spectacle of men marching to a rendezvous with death. But the death that was waiting

for them in 1914 and which they sought to inflict on others was not that of the high drama of war but of multiple assassination in the sordid, vermin-infested setting of trench warfare. The world was aghast at what seemed like a revival of the worst horrors of barbarism. Nor was this progressive deterioration merely physical. Both at the front and at home the fighting became steadily more callous. The impact of war reached to the innermost recesses of the mind of everyone involved in it, and this meant practically everyone in Europe.

IT WAS to study the problem that I was brought into the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Its president, Elihu Root, at the suggestion of Professor John Bates Clark, the distinguished economist of the Endowment, asked me to outline such a study, which I did in a memorandum in December 1914, which became the blueprint for the "Eco-

conomic and Social History of the [First] World War." There were no models to go by. Neither history nor economics, the two great disciplines of the social sciences, had ever dealt in any major way with war as such. It had been taken for granted as an essential element in political history, and economic strain and cost had been submerged in the political outcome. The plan, therefore, had to concentrate upon these neglected factors, leaving aside the purely military history of strategy and tactics. Its central idea was that the nature of war had changed with the Industrial Revolution from the simple strategy of manpower—the lines of soldiers on the Heights of Abraham, the grenadiers of Prussia, or the British guards at Waterloo, drilled to stand attack unshaken—to an involvement of the entire resources of the nation. Every last resource has to be tapped to meet the imperious demand. Thus victor and victim suffer common disasters. Moreover, the cost of war is carried in the ledgers of the future until it becomes confused with other causes of economic loss, as in the German inflation of 1923 (when I paid two billion marks for a postage stamp), due not to reparations, as the Germans held, but to the unpaid cost of the war, of which they had no clear idea. Our history showed that the cost of the war to the German Government was about eighty-five billion gold marks and the non-Governmental cost to the country as a whole was over twice that amount. In France about half the private fortunes of 1914 had been destroyed. But the final liquidation of the war took place in the Great De-

pression, the total losses of which have been estimated in a source quoted in the latest bulletin of the National City Bank at \$638 billion. It must be remembered, however, that part of this was due to unwise tariff laws and other blunders during the period of reconstruction.

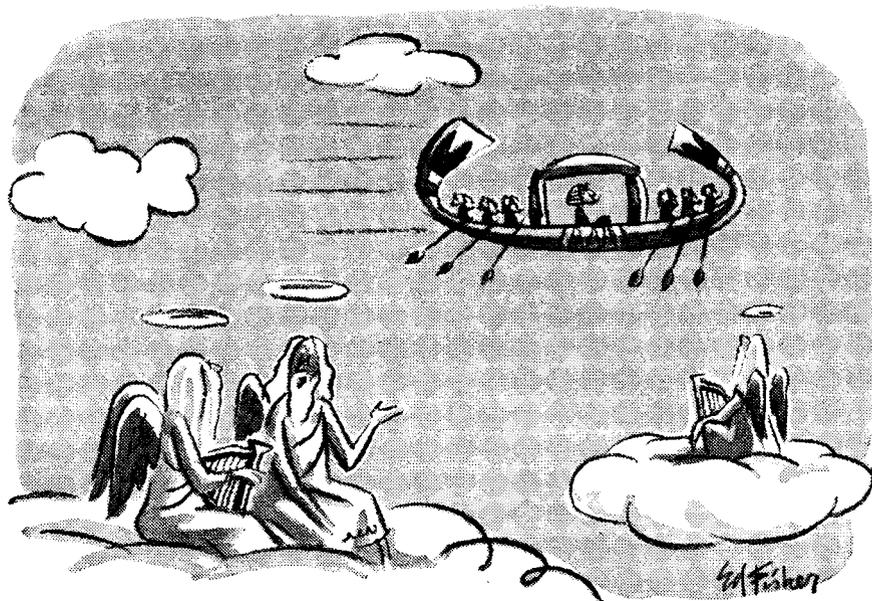
This question of war costs is so central to the peace movement that we should pause a moment to compare its effect after both world wars. The first comment to make is that it has not proved to be a deterrent to war; that nations will face bankruptcy rather than submit to attacks upon what the old diplomacy called "vital interest and national honor." The second point is that the cost must be measured against the ever-increasing productive capacity of the machine age, some of which is due to the stimulus of war. And the third point is that already referred to, that in the world of credit the balancing of the books is delayed. The liquidation of World War I was begun immediately but was not completed until in the Great Depression, ten years after the fighting stopped. In the interval, in the late Twenties, there were signs—utterly delusive but apparently convincing—of a new prosperity due to the spread of the Industrial Revolution.

Again, after World War II, we have an apparently vast increase of wealth, equally evident in victorious United States and defeated Germany. Does this mean that productive capacity, spurred on by war, effectively overcomes all the destruction of the war? Or does it mean that the cycle of the vast economic disturbance of World War II has not run its course?

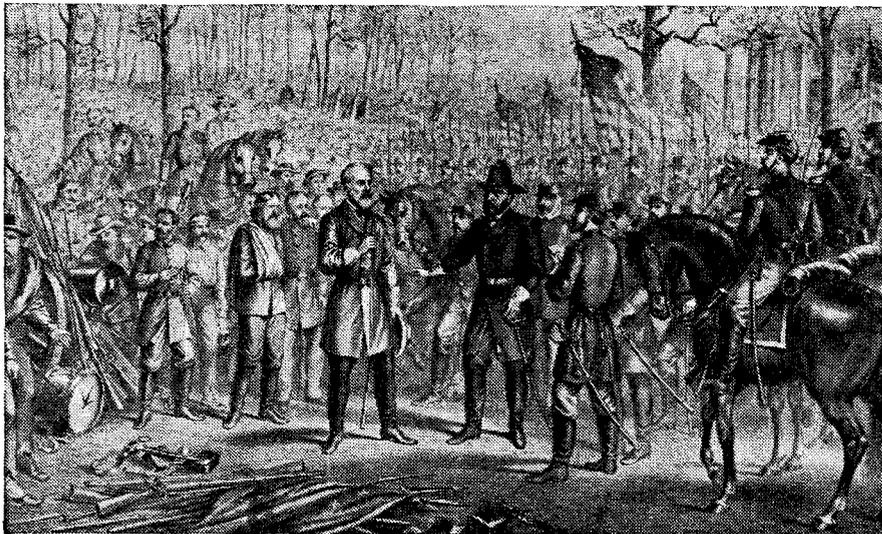
Every year that passes with increasing indications of economic health buttresses the argument that the cost of the greatest of wars can be met by the increased power of scientific production. But the history of World War I reminds us that it was the dislocation of the consumer market in the Twenties which left the wheat on the farms of the Midwest, leading to mortgage foreclosures and a breakdown of credit. The insurance against a repetition of this catastrophe is twofold today: the maintenance of price levels for farm produce by Government buying and the spread of social insurance. So far we have made these devices work. But the subsidizing of agriculture, necessary as it is today, is not a sound economy, not one to build on in the future. As the dislocations in the economies of other countries begin to be straightened out our own will have to be straightened out as well. That will be the real test of the soundness of our economy. It will also be the settlement of the last large item in the cost-accounting of World War II. But here again we are fumbling, as we did after World War I, building upon the fabulous capacity for production without parallel constructive thinking on the problems of consumption. The imbalance of trade will not be overcome by the generous spread of technical assistance, important and valid as that is. The foundation for lasting prosperity lies in adding to the capacity for production the elimination of exploitation and a freer world trade. This might even furnish the strategy for ending the Cold War.

I HAVE rambled a long way from my story of the making of the "Economic and Social History of the [First] World War." In 1927, after eight years, most of the work on the history was done. Over 200 experts, including thirty-five wartime cabinet ministers, had been engaged on its 150 volumes. Steadily my conviction had grown that its chief lesson was not that of costs, but that the war as it advanced had lost direction, becoming a conflagration or contagion out of control. By a strange coincidence, the first opportunity to draw upon its resources was my inaugural address at the Hochschule für Politik in Berlin. Only a visiting American professor would have been brash enough to speak on this theme on that occasion. For the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presided, the Chancellor and most of the Cabinet were present, as well as the Prime Minister of Prussia and his entourage. Behind them, in the second row, were the heads of the Reichswehr in dress uniforms and

(Continued on page 43)



"There goes Cheops!"



—Illustrations from Culver.

Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox—"most magnanimous terms."

APPOMATTOX: EPIC SURRENDER

By VIRGINIUS DABNEY

JUST ninety years ago, on April 9, 1865, the conflict which Winston Churchill has called "the last war fought between gentlemen" came to its close at Appomattox Courthouse.

Quiet now broods over the green woodlands and rolling tobacco fields surrounding the little Virginia village. The oaks are tasseling in the sunshine and the dogwood buds swelling, much as they did on that Palm Sunday years ago when Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant. On that day the Union general imposed some of the most magnanimous terms that history records, terms whose courage and generosity helped reunite a nation which had been split asunder by a tragic war.

Today Appomattox is becoming a place of pilgrimage to persons from all over the globe. When the original courthouse burned in 1892 a new one was built three miles away on the Norfolk and Western Railroad, and the modern town of Appomattox grew up there. Most of the hamlet that existed when Lee surrendered has been authentically restored by the National Park Service to the appear-

ance it had at the time; the restoration should be complete before the centennial is observed a decade hence.

Here is the rebuilt Wilmer McLean house, in which Grant and Lee met to draft the terms of the surrender. An old tavern, once a stopping place for stagecoaches westward bound, now serves as a museum for relics of the surrender. Nearby are the old village jail and small general store, together with a number of antebellum residences. With the reconstruction of the burned courthouse, which may not be carried through for ten years, Appomattox will be the only restored nineteenth-century village in America.

It was stolid, phlegmatic General Grant, forty-two, the tanner's son, who finally succeeded in bringing the Confederacy to its knees. After he had forced the surrender of Vicksburg and thus cut the Confederacy in two by getting control of the Mississippi River Grant was entrusted by President Lincoln with the task of smashing the Army of Northern Virginia and taking Richmond.

His opponent, General Lee, white-haired and white-bearded at fifty-seven, was the most brilliant military commander of the war, a man in all respects worthy of his great ancestral

heritage. The South idolized this deep-voiced patrician leader; the North feared and respected him.

IN MARCH 1865, outnumbered and worn down by the relentless hammering of Grant's forces, Lee was striving desperately to hold his lines in front of Petersburg. Then came the disastrous Battle of Five Forks, and both Petersburg and Richmond fell. The main surviving Southern army then began a last-ditch effort to escape toward the West. A shattering defeat at Saylor's Creek brought the Confederacy's haggard and starving veterans to the vicinity of Appomattox Courthouse. Many of these hollow-eyed, exhausted soldiers had had no rations for days except such handfuls of corn as they could embezzle from the fodder of their own famished horses and mules.

One ragged and ravenous rebel was reconnoitering a stray chicken when he was surrounded by well-fed Union troops.

"Surrender, we've got you!" they shouted.

"Yes," said the Southerner, "and a hell of a git you got!"

Torrential rains had turned the whole region into a quagmire, and Lee's army was hardly able to maneuver. The alert Federal forces, spearheaded by Sheridan's cavalry, saw their opportunity. In forced marches which called forth the utmost from soldiers and mounts they completed the encirclement of Lee's army and ended the last hope of the Confederates to make a getaway and join General Joseph E. Johnston's forces in North Carolina.

Lee saw the hopelessness of his position.

"There is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant," he said, "and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

He sent word to Grant, and asked his own military secretary, Colonel Charles Marshall, to choose a suitable place for a conference concerning terms of surrender.

While awaiting word from Grant, Lee rested under an apple tree across
(Continued on page 34)



The McLean house—"men wept openly."