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Appendix B

MEDICAL ASSOCIATION for PREVENTION of WAR (MAPW Australia)*

THE HAGUE CONFERENCES and WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: OUR CENTURY'S RECORD (Part 1: 1890 - 1918)

The upcoming Hague Appeal for Peace Civil Society Conference to be held in The Hague this May (1999) comes just 100 years after the First Hague Conference. This essay aims to give some historical background and some thoughts on what factors led to its calling and its failure to prevent the World War that followed. It is hoped that such information may help to prevent repeating mistakes, and thus to reduce the chances of further wars. We urgently need a highly informed public opinion to support the necessary actions that can assure a peaceful 21st Century

The FIRST HAGUE CONFERENCE-1899

It seems altogether relevant to recall that although at the time, there was much *public* concern at the rising risk of war, there was also, in many 'high places' internationally, a very different attitude, one that saw war as desirable, a valid way of attaining one's nation's 'manifest destiny'. Darwinism uncritically applied to human societies, meant biological competition ordained from on high. War was not only inherent, but ennobling. The stronger and superior race survived, that advancing civilisation. This bizarre thinking 'justified' not only the subjugation of coloured and other 'inferior people,' but set the stage for wars between competing industrial powers.^{2,6,7,9,13,14}

Captain Mahan, author of "*The Moral Aspect of War*" saw 'honest collision' between nations as an 'heroic ideal', "*evidently a law of progress.*", further maintaining that: "*No greater misfortune could well happen than that civilised nations should abandon their preparations for war and take to arbitration.*"¹⁴ Many of Germany's publicists, historians, political and military scientists raised such deranged thinking to the level of national dogma. As Treitschke¹⁴ explained, war, by purifying and unifying a great people, was the source of patriotism. Peace was decadent and immoral. Similar views were held within all 'advanced' industrial nations, including Britain. The military virtues, seen as essential for preserving and extending the Empire, were part of the essence of an Imperial race. As Pearson put it, a nation had to be "*kept up to a high pitch of efficiency by contest, chiefly by war with inferior races, by the struggle for trade routes and for sources of raw material and food supply.*"⁷

Sacrifice was an important element for success, as we see in Sir Cecil Spring Rice's poem (adopted by Church of England - see Hymns Ancient and Modern) "*I vow to thee my country*", and employed to inspire British youth to sacrifice their lives without questioning the cause.⁵ And as Sir Ian Hamilton recorded after Japan's victory over

Russia in 1905: "...Providentially Japan is our ally....England has time therefore - to put her military affairs in order; time to implant and cherish the military ideal in the hearts of her children;From the nursery and its toys to the Sunday school and its cadet company, every influence of affection, loyalty, tradition and education should be brought to bear on the next generation of British boys and girls, so as deeply to impress upon their young minds a feeling of reverence and admiration for the patriotic spirit of their ancestors".⁷ It was the case with all the contending powers, God too had to be 'called up' and, as evidenced during WWI, successfully so by *both* sides.

Needless to say, the real impetus in all this was crass competition, - the obsession to become 'top' nation in all commercial, colonial and military matters - indeed in all *materialist* concerns. God was just another recruit for the game.

Space will not allow further elaboration of the above bizarre yet influential views of the time, but they are well documented in Howard's and Tuchman's works.^{7,14,15} On the side of sanity, by contrast, a public response to the looming threat of war, was the formation of numerous national organisations, many becoming internationally linked. The following is not so much an account of these but rather an outline of two *inter-governmental* conferences which, though ostensibly called to combat the threat, would likely never have occurred had not the public pressure been there. It is not a story with a happy ending, but we can take the necessary lessons for the future.

So, as events transpired, just before the turn of the century, the above-mentioned concerns about the great powers' rivalries with their demonstrated abilities to produce enormous quantities of destructive arms led ultimately, in May 1899, to the First Hague Conference. Its origins and course have been wonderfully described in "*The Proud Tower*" by Barbara Tuchman, whose access to official papers and letters, together with her extraordinary writing skills makes her account a riveting read.¹⁴ Additional valuable information can be found in Cunliffe's "*The Age of Expansion 1848-1917*"² and Howard's "*The Lessons of History*".⁷

As indicated, the Conference, purportedly to limit the level of arms and to legislate for the arbitration of international disputes, had enormous public support. But because its formal proposal had come from Czar Nicholas II, head of a nation which lagged behind many others in arms, rival governments treated it with great suspicion. 'Humanitarian but utopian', seemed to be the British view. Britain, recently almost at war with France over its challenge at Fashoda on the Nile, seemed more concerned to increase rather than decrease its armaments. And that general attitude was shared by the governments of most other powers.

However, once proposed, the strongly positive public response, internationally expressed through citizens' organisations and broadly backed by the press, ensured that the Conference (a gathering of government-nominated delegates) would go ahead. Significantly, though, among the delegates were people like Germany's Count Munster, the US's Captain Mahan, and Britain's Major-General Ardagh and Admiral Fisher, all of whom were well known for their opposition to arbitration and arms limitations of any

kind, including the development of new weapons. Entirely consistent with those of their own governments, these attitudes were to have far-reaching outcomes. As Andrew White, head of the US delegation commented, no such body had ever assembled "*in a spirit of more hopeless skepticism as to any good result*". In like mood, Germany's Professor Mommsen, predicted that the conference would be remembered only as "*a printer's error in the history of the world.*" ¹⁴

The Conference set up three Commissions, one on '*Armaments*', another on '*Laws of War*', the third on '*Arbitration*', each in turn dividing into subcommittees. Initially all sessions were totally closed to the public and press. However, W.T.Stead, influential correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, had access to many delegates, which enabled him to produce a daily chronicle much sought after by the official delegates (as well as the excluded NGOs). The outcome was that the Conference meetings were then opened to the press.

Nearly all delegates were willing to discuss at length the Laws of War, 'rules' for its 'proper conduct'. Few wanted to prevent the development of new weapons or limit the levels of existing types. And few favoured the arbitration of disputes, especially if there was any suggestion of compulsion.

Although very few were in favour of arms limitations, most delegates were reluctant to state their opposition openly. A marked exception was Germany's Colonel Gross von Schwartzkopf who, emphasising that the German people were in no way crushed by the weight of arms expenditures, went on to reject *any* moratorium on arms. That left the other delegates free to vote in favour of further consideration going to a subcommittee. Somewhat later, to avoid public censure when it had become clear to all (including attendant NGOs) that little or no progress would be made, it was considered advisable to outlaw at least *some* weapon or weapons. As the feeling against the use of dum-dum bullets was almost general, that issue was debated. Only two nations, Britain and the US stood against prohibition.

Captain Crozier of the US was opposed because his country was about to use dum-dums in the Philippines. It is worth quoting the reasoning advanced by Britain's General Ardagh on the issue. The problem was that projectiles from the currently used small-bore weapons made only smallish holes in the body which failed to stop advancing 'savages'. As the General elaborated: "*The civilised soldier when shot recognises that he is wounded.....He lies down on his stretcher and is taken off the fieldaccording to the prescribed rules of the game as laid down by the Geneva Convention*" "*Your fanatical barbarian, similarly wounded continues to rush on, spear or sword in hand; and before you have had time to represent to him that his conduct is in flagrant violation of the understanding relative to the proper course for this wounded man to follow - he may have cut off your head.*" ¹⁴ Unimpressed, the delegates voted 22 to 2, against the unremitting opposition of Britain and the US.

Next discussed was the possible prohibition of "the launching of projectiles or explosives from balloons." At first everyone seemed to agree with Colonel Jilinsky that,

as was the opinion of his Russian government, ".....*the various means of injuring the enemy now in use are sufficient.*" So for a while, it looked like a permanent prohibition would get unanimous support. But at the following meeting Captain Crozier, who had meanwhile consulted with Captain Mahan, made the point that to ban forever a weapon of which they had no experience could be a serious mistake. New developments might soon make airships motorised and truly navigable over battle areas where their presence could have a decisive effect - thus shortening the conflict and saving lives. Was it really in the humanitarian interest to prevent such a development? Crozier then proposed a 5-year trial ban which the delegates approved.

The next ban to be considered, one on 'asphyxiating gas' failed by one vote, that of Captain Mahan who stubbornly refused on the grounds that gas would be less inhuman and cruel than submarine attack which the Conference had *not* outlawed. In any case, the United States was averse to restricting "*the inventive genius of its citizens in providing weapons of war.*" Notwithstanding that, the delegates voted for a ban on 'asphyxiating gas'.

On the limitation of naval forces, Britain was nominally in favour as that would have curbed the German building program which, in time, could have threatened her clear superiority at sea. However, Admiral Fisher, whose underlying view, not shared by others, was that "*The supremacy of the British Navy is the best security for the peace of the world*", had little faith in the prospects for adequate verification. Apart from that, the German delegates would not even consider a freeze. The US's attitude was likewise uncompromising, Captain Mahan indicating that in view of the coming struggle for markets in China, there would have to be a "*very considerable*" increase in America's Pacific fleet.¹⁴

Throughout these discussions with their obviously meagre results, delegates remained concerned at the possible consequences of the public's reaction. In particular there was concern that the generally negative results would strengthen the hand of Europe's socialist parties. That encouraged all concerned to at least make some headway in the Arbitration Commission. Britain's Pauncefoot, the US's White, France's Bourgeois, Germany's Munster and Russia's De Staal, chief delegates of the major powers, all sat on this Commission. Britain, Russia and the US all favoured a permanent tribunal. No one advocated compulsion, however. And Germany was opposed to arbitration of *any* kind. To submit to arbitration a dispute which might lead to war was simply to give one's rival time to catch up on Germany's superior capacity for rapid mobilisation, a view thoroughly supported by the Kaiser.

Notwithstanding that bad start, the Commission persisted in its efforts. However, the task was extremely difficult not only because of Germany's intransigent attitude, but because *all* governments were greatly disturbed at any suggestion of compulsion. It was only the looming spectre of the international public response to failure and the likely socialist backlash that drove the delegates on, even the Kaiser giving reluctant support to an Arbitration Convention of 61 articles. Yet, lacking any trace of compulsion, it was far from effective. But even this was too much for some. When all was ready for

signature, the American delegation objected to Article 27 which would have obliged signatories to remind disputing parties of the existence of the Tribunal; and they had just seen W.T.Stead's public article making the point that had the Convention been operating in 1898, Spain and America might have been brought to arbitration and their war avoided. As Mahan saw it, such a Convention could have prevented that "honest collision".

The overall result of the Conference were 3 Conventions on: (i) Arbitration, (ii) Laws and Customs of War on Land and (iii) Extension of the Geneva Rules to Maritime Warfare. No convention emerged on arms limitation, the prime aim of the original proposal. In addition three Declarations - on (a) Projectiles from Balloons, (b) Asphyxiating Gases and (c) Expanding Bullets - plus six "wishes" for future accomplishment - and a final Resolution. This expressed the Conference's opinion that limitation of military spending and new types of weapons, being "*highly desirable for the moral and material benefit of humanity*" should be the subject of "*further study*". That led to a further 'wish' for a Second Conference 'sometime in the future'. Three months later Britain went to war in South Africa (the background to which is well described by Nutting¹³)

BETWEEN the CONFERENCES

Before the next Conference eventually met in 1907, much had intervened, including the turn of the century.^{2,14} That was marked not only by the onward march of crass top-down materialism, but the continuation of international violence in South Africa, the Philippines and in quashing the Boxer Rebellion against Western domination in China. McKinley's new Vice President, Theodore Roosevelt, was an enthusiastic advocate of the latter two campaigns. The Kaiser, while concentrating attention on the need for German troops to emulate 'Huns' in their efforts to punish the Boxers for their unwarranted interference with international commerce, was concerned also that a German gunboat had been severely damaged by Chinese Forts equipped with the latest Krupp canon. As he telegraphed Krupp: "*This is no time when I am sending my soldiers to battle against the yellow beasts to try to make money out of so serious a situation.*" ¹⁴

A Hundred years ago (1900) it was already clear to many, including liberal economist John Hobson, that there was a burgeoning *global* economy.⁶ Business and finance governed. Morgan and Rockefeller, with 100 others, bought out Carnegie to form the first billion-dollar business, US Steel. King Leopold set up his private company to exploit the Congo's resources, most scandalously, its rubber. A mere 300 men were said to dominate the economic destiny of Europe. The International Exposition in Paris displayed some of the evidence. Covering nearly 300 acres, it featured 'Palaces' of Machinery, Electricity, Mining and Metallurgy, Chemical Industry, etc., etc. The two largest single exhibits were Schneider-Creusot's long-range canon and Vickers-Maxim's collection of rapid-fire machine guns - the production license of which had long since been sold to Krupps.^{1,2,14}

Also in 1900 a new German Naval Law announced a building program aimed at

catching up with the superior British naval strength. Britain was then soon to drop its long-held prejudice against making alliances, especially with its 'traditional' adversaries and commercial rivals. Thus resulted the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty with the US (1901), a formal Alliance with Japan (1902) and the Anglo-French Entente of 1904. Fisher, appointed First Sea Lord in that same year, set about developing a new generation of 'super' battleships, (the 'Deadnoughts': 18,000 tons, 10 x 12" guns) which spurred the Germans to even greater activity. Also in 1904, Japan and Russia went to war in the 'Far East' over contested foreign territories. Japan's clear naval victory of 1905 in the Straits of Tsushima caused alarm bells in the US and Roosevelt's offer to mediate a settlement. Although Roosevelt deplored 'anti-imperialist' sentiments, he was most concerned that an emergent Japanese Imperialism might interfere with America's China trade and otherwise threaten its interests in the Pacific. As delegate Mahan had emphasised to Britain during the first Conference, the US was ever mindful of the coming struggle for markets in China.^{2,14}

The SECOND HAGUE CONFERENCE

As previously, the Czar issued the invitations to the Second Conference - set for May 1907. Again, while the nations agreed to go, they disliked the prospect. The Russian program, circulated a year earlier, proposed '*Arbitration*' and '*Laws of War*' but omitted '*Disarmament*' (or arms limitation). Its recent defeats and revolution left it desperate to build up its arms. However, the Liberals, just come to power in Britain, were led by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (known as C.-B) who pledged to put arms limitation, as well as Arbitration, on the agenda. The Kaiser's attitude was that disarmament should not even be discussed, a view shared by cousin King Edward who considered the issue sheer 'humbug'. Although Roosevelt thought likewise, his Secretary of State, Elihu Root, was sympathetic to C.-B's aims. Both wanted to see a real effort by all nations to limit the burden and awful threat of the international arms race and arrive at sensible multilateral agreements on their limitation. But most delegates were thoroughly sceptical: basically all governments wanted the freedom to arm as they pleased, as Russia's de Martens had discovered on his earlier tour of European capitals. Moreover, as Italy's king observed, disarmament negotiations would stir up an "*outburst of opposition*" from arms manufacturers and he was sure the Kaiser would never consent to "*clipping the wings of Krupp.*"

But there was still the issue of how to handle the issue in public. An intense public interest in arms limitation, which included annual peace congresses in capitals around the world, had continued. Baroness von Suttner, for many years a leading advocate, had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905, and in 1907 Jane Addams' book "*Newer Ideals of Peace*" added a much respected voice to the cause. The resulting public preoccupation with the issue led both the British and American governments to support disarmament for the agenda. Germany, Austria and Russia wanted its exclusion, as agreement might trap them into unwanted outcomes. So, after months of negotiation the Conference was finally convened on June 15, 1907, *without* disarmament an agenda item.

Although larger in size (44 nations, 256 delegates c.f. 26 and 108) and extended in time (4 c.f. 2 months) its eventual outcome was little different. Although many changes in delegates had occurred, attitudes were much the same. As Barbara Tuchman commented on two losses: "*Mahan and Fisher were absent in body if not in spirit.*" Dominating the Conference were America's Joseph Choate and Germany's Baron Marschall, the latter ominously warning against making laws for wars' conduct which might be made useless by "*the law of facts*".

Once again peace advocates representing NGOs from all quarters, including Baroness von Suttner and W.T.Stead, gathered in encouragement and to monitor progress. Again Stead published a daily chronicle, '*Courier de la Conference*'. And as before, the work was divided into Commissions: '*Arbitration*', '*Rules of War on Land*', '*Rules of War at Sea*' and '*Maritime Law*.' Following his government's intention that disarmament be discussed, Britain's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey prepared the way by explaining to delegates in advance that the issue would not be uncomfortably pursued. Then Sir Edward Fry, after a moving description of the world's appalling build-up of weaponry, tabled a resolution calling for its "*further serious study*" - the same phrase of postponement as used in 1899. Nelidov, Russia's leading delegate and Conference President, agreed that if arms limitation was not appropriate in 1899, it was not more so in 1907 and Fry's resolution was adopted without vote - the whole matter being dealt with in less than 25 minutes. So, notwithstanding the sincerity of Campbell-Bannerman's original stand, Grey's support was merely a gesture aimed at satisfying English public opinion, as Elihu Root later concluded.¹⁴

The Conference then settled to its more serious intent: to revise the 'rules' governing the conduct of war. Re-visiting the '*Launching of Projectiles or Explosives from Balloons*,' the prohibition was extended a further 5 years. Neutral territory, it was agreed, must be inviolable. Conscious of Japan's surprise attack on Russia in 1904, it was further agreed that hostilities not be opened before a formal declaration of war. Also agreed was a Convention against the forceful recovery of international debt - unless the debtor had refused arbitration. On naval warfare, Britain insisted on the right to capture ships, with no exceptions; no matter how sacred private property was in peace time, Grey knew better than to invoke its immunity in war. Germany was equally determined on the right to use submarines and mines.

The main driving force behind Arbitration was Secretary of State, Root, who wished to see a Permanent Court of International Justice, with permanent judges, set up. But the proposal ran into trouble, especially over the issue of compulsion. A compromise watered-down proposal specifying that compulsion be applied only to certain innocuous issues still failed to gain the support of 8 nations. The resulting '*Convention on the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes*' ended up with 96 Articles, not one of which required compulsion, and no Court of International Justice was established.

Those who believed in the importance of the Hague idea wished to see a permanent organisation continue. Although US's Elihu Root backed it, European governments wanted no further limitations of their sovereignty or actions. Only the American threat

to 'go public' brought agreement to meet again - in 8 years. As the American delegate concluded - he hoped for 'further progress' at the next conference in 1915 (see Footnote 1).

Thus failed the first 'official' attempt to limit the arms race, reduce tensions and avoid what turned out to be the 'Great War', the 'war to end all war', WWI. As some had realised in advance, it was to be a highly mechanised war, a war of mass killing, using what were truly 'weapons of mass destruction'

Mass Destruction in World War I

Notwithstanding the undoubted power of humankind's currently favoured weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological and, most destructively, nuclear) to kill on a massive scale, such weapons are not alone in this capacity. As this century's history has shown, it has been the (mis)use of so-called 'conventional' weapons which, to date, has caused the greatest mortality and suffering.

By the beginning of WWI, all participants were equipped with the two most deadly types of killing machines then available. Despite the confidence of politicians and commanders that the war would be short ('over by Christmas') these weapons, since they favoured the defence, meant that advances were easily thwarted, movements made only at enormous human cost. Concentrations of rifle-armed men attempting to move across open ground, were no match for protected machine-gun (600 rounds /min) fire. In addition, between and, most intensely, before battles, men in their trenches and bunkers were subject to continuous heavy mortar and H-E artillery shell bombardment. The result was continuous killing, terror, sleeplessness, exhaustion and demoralisation. And because of the 'success' of defence, the result was a largely stale-mated war of inexorable attrition of the men of both 'sides', an attrition which commanders saw simply as an opportunity to 'win' by eventually 'out-supplying' the enemy's human replacements.

Reliable military and civilian casualty figures for WWI do not exist.^{3,10} Overall estimates of 'approximately 10 million' military deaths are often quoted, but the figure is altogether uncertain. On the Western Front, half a million Frenchmen were lost in the first 4 months, 5 million by 1918. Two and three quarter million Germans were killed, missing or wounded in the first 8 months. The Allies lost 600,000 men in one battle, the Somme. On the Eastern Front, the German commander, Hindenberg, estimated Russian military casualties at 5-8 million. None of us can properly comprehend the meaning of such figures.^{3,10,14,15}

At no stage of the war did the public, whether British, French, German, Italian or Russian, know the full extent of their own casualties. The Germans began to fake their figures in 1916. As Lloyd George commented, "*If people really knew the war would be stopped tomorrow. The correspondents don't write and the censorship would not pass the truth*".¹⁰ The true figures will probably never be known, the oft-quoted figures of 10 million war dead, 20 million wounded clearly being considerable underestimates.¹⁰

In any case, to these military losses must be added the 'collateral' damage, the civilian casualties on all sides, including those resulting from the blockade. Understandably these casualties arose not so much from 'enemy fire' but from forced displacement, starvation and disease. The resulting toll was particularly heavy in Germany and Russia, both during and after the war. Phillip Knightly gives the Russian civilian casualties from WWI, their Civil War, the economic blockade, famine and disease as close to 14 million.¹⁰

But whatever the figures, such statistics take no account of the anguish of next of kin, the blighted lives of survivors, the human and material opportunity costs of such a vast disaster, the inequity and utter waste of it all.

The war left a deep impression and a great determination that it should never be repeated, a view shared by nearly everyone who had any experience of it, direct or indirect. Unfortunately, there were some influential exceptions (see Footnote 2).

At the present time, however, it seems essential to attempt to understand 'what went wrong', how could such a massively counter-productive clearly man-made event have been allowed to occur. Based on the cited historical accounts, especially that of Hobson,⁶ the following is an attempted analysis.

WWI: ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CAUSES

Compared to anything that had gone before, the scientific, technical and industrial changes which marked the progress of the 19th century were altogether remarkable. Clearly, such accomplishments had the potential to solve *all* of human-kind's material needs. However, long before the end of that century, there were ample indications that all was not well. In all major industrial societies, increasingly efficient methods of production, supported by burgeoning levels of finance, had led to unheard of levels of agricultural and industrial output. Yet for these societies to continue to expand production and prosper, there would have had to be an appropriate market mechanism to ensure the consumption of all commodities produced. There would have to have been not only the presence of human needs (of which there were plenty!) but the existence of market mechanisms to ensure that the 'needy' had the monetary means to satisfy those needs - i.e., to provide *effective* demand for all commodities produced.

Unfortunately, that 'balanced' market mechanism was never properly established. Indeed, in all industrialising countries, a very significant proportion of the population (1/3-1/2), though playing a crucial role in production and having urgent material needs (indeed, many altogether desperate¹⁴), were so poorly recompensed for their efforts that they could do little to stimulate effective demand for the goods produced.

The reason that a more equitable market system was not established is clear. As Keynes⁸ proclaimed: for modern industrial production to 'take off' and go on expanding, it was essential to have large investments of capital in productive plant. That capital had to come from 'surplus value' derived from the efforts of employees, mostly ordinary

workers. (Emphasis here is on the *human* contribution to 'surplus value', since the significant other contributions from fossil fuels and other natural resources, being 'gifts of nature,' can be rightly regarded as 'common' wealth).

Keynes believed that there *would* be enough production to satisfy literally *everyone's* needs - but only *eventually*. As he warned in 1930:⁸ "*But beware! The time for all this is not yet. For at least another hundred years we must pretend to ourselves and to everyone that fair is foul and foul is fair; for foul is useful and fair is not. Avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods For only they can lead us out of the tunnel of economic necessity into the daylight*" A more equitable distribution of the nation's wealth would come *one* day, but meanwhile capital must continue to be generated in the usual way.

However, as we know, continuation down that very path gave rise to periodic production gluts, sometimes only of particular products - but whenever a wide enough range of products was affected, to large-scale economic crises, such as the Depressions of the 1890s and 1930s. Such crises have conveniently been ascribed to '*over-production*', a less honest description than the reality of '*under-consumption*'.⁶

Certainly, as in our present era, such crises were preceded and, indeed, triggered by excesses of speculation on inflated values of land and other assets. However, it must be stressed that these excesses were not *the* fundamental problem for no simple adjustment of such overvaluations could circumvent the inadequate demand, the fact of too few 'solvent customers' for the goods produced.

Regrettably, the obvious solution to this market 'dilemma' - to share more generously the wealth derived from industrial and other production with its co-producers, converting them (and their families) into fully solvent customers, was rejected. That was most unfortunate because, in addition to crisis prevention and 'saving the system', that approach would have provided each nation, each industrial society, with enormous benefits for all citizens: - not only adequate food and material goods, proper health care and education, but also a community sense of justice, with good morale all round. As set out below, that course would also have avoided the international exploitations, tensions and wars that have made this, 'our century', the most violent to date. It could have provided nations with the very 'security' they have always craved.

Tragically, notwithstanding the ready capacity of developing industrial societies to meet the valid needs of *all* of its citizens, the more influential people of those societies (in league with their governments) favoured a number of different approaches to the so-called 'problem of over-production'. One partially successful (and still favoured) approach was through export, the international trading of 'surpluses'. Of course that made sense whenever nations possessed unique sources of raw materials and/or unique capabilities to produce commodities needed abroad. But for long-term sustainability, such export-import trade had to be truly reciprocal and in balance. And for nations that were more or less equally advanced industrially, any overall *net* gain in 'their' level of trade would be critically dependent on increasing the levels of effective demand

domestically at *both* ends of the deal. In other words, such export trade could not be the simple solution to overproduction, for always outstanding was the need for greater equity 'at home'.

This predicament of the rising industrial states was well described at the turn of the century. In his study of 19th century imperialism,⁶ J.A. Hobson, an English economist and social critic, outlined the approaches adopted by the industrial powers which, failing to solve their marketing problems 'at home' and through 'normal' international trade, resorted to various forms of aggressive off-shore behaviour which they themselves proudly described as 'Imperialism' ^{2,4,6,7,9,13}

Especially through the latter half of the 19th Century, the by then fast-growing Western industrial powers engaged in an extraordinary acceleration of forceful annexation and exploitation of the peoples and resources of vast 'new' areas of Africa and Asia. Using Britain (the predominant imperial power of the day) as example, Hobson was able to show from government sources, that the *net* overall gains from such activity were comparatively small. That is, from the *nation's* viewpoint they were quite small. It was not that significant riches were not obtained, but that under the circumstances of imposed rule, the military, policing and administrative costs were very high, leaving but small financial advantage to the nation. Needless to say, for both the occupying personnel and the newly subject peoples, there were also great *human* costs in deaths and disablements from the wars and police actions involved, as well as from tropical and other 'foreign' diseases. Why then, was the imperialist course so favoured, not just by Britain, but by all of the would-be imperialist powers?

In raising this issue, Hobson points to the fact that certain sectional interests were, through their close connections to government, able to usurp control of national resources, to have them used for their private gain. In that way, even though the 'New Imperialism' was undoubtedly bad business for the *nation*, it was 'good business' for particular businesses, for certain interests, certain classes and certain trades within the nation. As Hobson put it: "*The vast expenditure on armaments, the costly wars, the grave risks and embarrassments of foreign policy, the checks upon political and social reforms within Great Britain, though fraught with great injury to the nation, have served well the present business interests of certain industries and professions.*" ⁶

Thus, very significant support for the imperialist approach came not only from army and navy quarters, but especially from industries concerned with steel making, ship building (including warships) and armaments production generally.^{6,12} Hobson could see that although Britain was still 'top' imperial power of the day, controlling far more of the earth's land than any other power, it was surrounded by many other industrial nations playing the same dangerous game. Thus it was rivalled by many other imperialist or would-be imperialist powers - not only its 'traditional' enemies, France and Russia, but by the ever-so-fast-developing Germany. All were attempting to maximise their control over distant territories and all were in desperate competition to maximise 'their share' of what were *limited* export markets. That very competition, with its obvious threats to peace and sane order, should have been the signal for these nations to pause, to

reconsider the consequences of their chosen 'imperialist' way of life. (c.f. Hague Conference).

Unfortunately, although many people in many countries, sensing the danger, did their utmost to alter course, the more influential with governments saw only the opportunity to expand sales, including international sales of warships and other arms.^{1,11,12} The Vickers Company, at the time by far the largest arms exporter in the world, 'justified' such activities as thus keeping itself fully viable and strong to meet any 'national emergency'! Two examples: Notwithstanding that international tensions were already high and that Italy, along with Germany and Austro-Hungary, was formally a member of the Triple Alliance, Armstrongs entered into a joint enterprise with Ansaldo, forming Ansaldo-Armstrong to rebuild the Italian navy.¹² Similarly with Vickers-Terni. And both Vickers and Armstrongs were, from 1911, involved in modernising the Turkish navy, a task which continued until the very outbreak of WWI.^{1,12} As Admiral Wester Wemyss reported to the Admiralty after that war,¹⁶ a very distressing thing about British firms supplying arms to potential enemies was that the more arms they sold abroad, the more the government had to order in its attempt to restore or improve the 'balance'.

Overall, it is not hard to see how, driven by such sectional interests, the imperial powers' competitive, grasping behaviour of the time, led to the rise of international tensions, the build-up of arms to absurd levels and the very real threat of war, a danger clearly warned of by Hobson at the turn of the century.

In view of the present highly inequitable 'carve-up' of the world's wealth and resources, there are many important lessons in the above history to help guide us and our children towards a far saner and more secure future.

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Footnote 1. Although WWI prevented the convening of another Hague Conference of government delegates, it did not prevent a determined group of women meeting there and setting up WILPF, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an organisation still very much alive today.

Footnote 2 Part II (1919-1939/45) will deal with the valiant efforts made, following the carnage of WWI, to put in place treaties of mutual assistance and arms limitation, treaties designed to provide true international security - and how, again tragically, these efforts were undermined.