



The Chances for Negotiated Peace As an Industrial Mediator Sees It

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USUALLY time and stress of conflict work changes in the psychological state of combatants. After sufficient grief has been endured proposals that before were intolerable have been found to be worthy of consideration, and sometimes of acceptance. And this has not always been due to recognition of superior force on the other side, but by an actual change in mental reaction caused by the slackened tension of the mind after enduring a long strain, and by the hard thinking forced on it during the period of struggle.

This change, when it comes, is the opportunity of the mediator. He must be one who has the absolute confidence of both parties. He must be entirely free from adverse prepossessions or interests of his own in order to deserve this confidence. He must have good will toward both combatants, an intelligence keen enough to discover and understand the real causes of difference, and a genius for creating affirmative constructions in which the differences may be resolved. He will interpret the parties to each other, try to make them see each other in a more favorable light. Coming as a friend his words will not be deflected by the armor of antagonism but will penetrate unhindered to the judgment of the combatant where they will leave their just impression.

He will have an important function as a medium for the transmission of terms. It often happens that belligerents are willing to settle for less than they are publicly demanding, but dare not say so for fear their opponents will

construe it as a sign of weakness. In such a case both sides can confide their minimum terms to a trusted mediator without danger of publicity. He may find they are not so far apart but that a happy suggestion may bring them together.

These offices may be useful in repairing a transient breach,

but the work of the mediator will not be permanent unless he can find an adequate ground of common interest between the combatants, and so interpret it to them that they shall be convinced of its soundness and sufficiency. It need not be one hundred per cent perfect; it is enough that it be distinctly better than war; but it must genuinely meet the real factors in the problem and not be satisfied with a cheap reconciliation that ignores the vital causes of controversy. The synthesis when made must not only include the essential causes of difference, but must also provide for any new or unforeseen factor that may arise in the future. In addition to this the peace agreement, when made, must provide a tribunal to adjudicate differences of interpretation of terms, which shall have sufficient power to enforce its decisions.

I have sketched in a large and, I fear, rather a vague way, the lines that impress me as being somewhat parallel in the industrial and international situations. But as I write I am impressed with the magnitude of the differences between them, and I fear I have oversimplified. Even in industrial disputes, mediation and arbitration are not simple. Some cases are, confessedly, not arbitrable at all; and hardly any of them are susceptible of pacific or rational treat-

ECONOMIC cleavages are newer by many centuries than national ones. We have only begun to build up civil government in the industrial field. For this very reason the men who are contributing to the slow formulation of practice in industrial negotiation, arbitration and settlement, have broken with many of the old legal and political precedents. Men like Brandeis and Neill, Knapp and Williams, are not interested in putting out decisions like a judge. The very fact that there is no enforcing authority has lifted the process to a new level.

Industrial relations, therefore, afford an interesting analogy in considering international relations where likewise there is today no enforcing authority; and where, whether a settlement is reached by a smashing victory or by a negotiated peace in a military stalemate, its permanence depends after all on its "rightness."

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This article is based on the essential core of his experience which is that "an adequate solution cannot be obtained unless it reconciles the essential interests of the parties in dispute."—EDITOR.