

INTERNATIONAL REALITIES

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International realities by Philip Marshall Brown

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BY

PHILIP MARSHALL BROWN

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Salus populi suprema lex esto
—Twelve Tables

Imperii virtus securitas
—Spinoza

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TO
GEORGE GRAFTON WILSON, Ph.D., LL.D.
STIMULATING TEACHER, COUNSELLOR
AND FRIEND



PREFACE

Realpolitik has been badly discredited because of its Prussian associations. It has naturally become identified with the Bismarckian policy of "Blood and Iron"—the policy which sought German unity at the expense of other nations. In its essence, however, *Realpolitik* simply means that national policies should be based, not on theories and abstractions, but on solid realities. The chief concern of statesmen should be the protection of the legitimate interests of the State. The supreme law of the State which they are bound to respect is "the security of the State." It does not follow that a policy of enlightened self-interest means the elimination of ethical standards and ideals from international relations. It may often mean, rather, their realization and safeguard. Ideals and generous instincts are to be reckoned among the great international realities, as well as unworthy motives of antagonism and aggression. Enlightened self-interest, interpreted as the application of the Golden Rule to the affairs of nations, will ignore none of these realities.

Understood in this sense, *Realpolitik* stands in favorable contrast with policy dominated by sentiment and emotion. An example of this sentimental brand of policy is to be found in the repeal of the Panama Tolls Act in 1914. This was a question which was at least open to discussion. It was peculiarly suited for Arbitration. A wave of emotion, however, swept over the country. The American people, in a spirit of almost morbid self-abasement, voluntarily surrendered a valuable privilege which, in the opinion of many high-minded men, was entirely within our rights.

A schoolmaster may find it good policy to appeal to the manhood and sense of honor of a boy by reposing absolute confidence in him. A nation cannot afford to act on any such principle. If it knows that another nation is intent on a policy of aggrandizement and aggression, it must immediately adopt precautionary measures of defense. There are not lacking men of prominence and influence, however, who would strip the country of its defenses in order to prove the purity of its own motives! This amazing attitude reminds one of the fate of the Delaware Indians, who were evilly inspired by their worst enemies, the Iroquois, to disarm

and become the mediator in the quarrels and wars of the Indian Nations. The result, as should clearly have been foreseen, was the utter ruin of the Delaware Nation.

It would seem as if no argument were needed to demonstrate that national policies must be devised and executed in full recognition of international realities. International Law as a genuine system of law cannot be based merely on philosophical abstractions. It has lately been subjected to "ordeal by battle," and has been badly discredited. It has been found to contain much that is spurious. It has failed to apply itself strictly to its true task of "regulating the *peaceful* relations of States." It has preached and moralized, when it should have been concerned with the definition and protection of national interests.

This is the explanation and the excuse for the present volume. Since the Great War began I have been conscious, with many others, of the urgent necessity of a thorough reconstruction of the law of nations in accordance with the big facts of international life. I have set myself the task of endeavoring to ascertain the fundamental values in international relations.

The method followed has been to select cer-