

## We Are All In It.

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WAR—EVEN WHEN its battles are fought many miles away from our American communities—inevitably results in certain significant and more or less permanent changes in community life. Whether these changes are for the good or the detriment of life in these same communities will be determined in large measure by the amount and quality of attention which is given to their analysis and conscious direction.

In American communities today, at least four specific conditions or forces are present which may have great significance to the future of American life—providing these forces are understood and utilized intelligently and altruistically. They are:

1. Growing awareness of social need.
2. Efficient organization of the community for action.
3. Effective participation of individual persons involved.
4. Respect for expert opinion.

Illustrations of how these forces op-

erate can be drawn from any of the wartime programs which involve civilian participation but they are perhaps most widely and clearly illustrated in local community programs of civilian defense.

In Boston, for example, the city Director of Civilian Defense used his training in fire-fighting methods to rescue a group of dinner guests and over a hundred other persons from the Coconut Grove fire, then mobilized members of the Defense Corps to assist in other rescue work, in the control of traffic, the constructing of a list of casualties, and the handling of requests for information from relatives and friends.

Air raid wardens and Control Center personnel relieved a housing shortage in Oklahoma City by making a complete survey of this city of over 200,000 inhabitants in one evening.

Local units fought fires, arranged food and housing for those evacuated from their homes, provided rescue and first aid service, and assisted in cleaning up wreckage and establishing electric, water, gas, and telephone service following a severe storm and resulting explosion of a barrage balloon in Vallejo, Calif., explosions in a large grocery store in Cheyenne, Wyo., and in an industrial plant in New Jersey, serious fires in Philadelphia and in Houston and Wichita Falls, Texas.

The various services in Provincetown,

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*Kenneth L. Heaton, Principal Consultant in the Protection Branch of the Office of Civilian Defense, presents here some facts which indicate that we of this country have already proved magnificently that we can "pull" together. True, the impetus for group action at this time is war, but, with proper nurture and care, the forces that unify our country today can carry us on to equally notable group achievements in peace.*

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Mass., mobilized to care for the survivors of a ship torpedoed off shore.

Throughout the flood areas of the Middle West people were evacuated from their homes and provided temporary food and housing, assistance was given to farm areas in saving families and livestock, levees were strengthened to protect important industrial and residence districts, spread of disease was prevented by the quarantine of flooded houses and distribution of limited supplies of pure water.

In Gary, Ind., nursery schools and other forms of care were arranged for the children of working mothers, even to the extent of finding foster-homes for several hundred children of parents required to work on night shifts.

#### *Awareness of Social Need*

Such stories could be multiplied indefinitely. In them is seen the neighborliness of the little village applied to the complex life of large cities. In these days when people work long hours, have more than their share of responsibilities and worries, and when they sometimes think that the God of Selfishness is sitting on the throne, there is evidence of an increased awareness of social need.

Such growing awareness of need is in itself, perhaps, a natural result of any social upheaval of the magnitude of a world war.

#### *Efficient Organization for Community Action*

A second characteristic illustrated by these stories is the new level of efficiency with which the community is organized for action. There is a plan for calling men and women into service

without delay. There is evidence that people are prepared to act and that they have drilled together as teams until they know how to work together as units. They have learned how to allay panic and to substitute constructive action for demoralizing fear. This type of community organization does not come as a natural and automatic result of the state of society, but is much more deliberate and planned. In communities—almost 14,000 communities which have organized for civilian defense—there have been painstaking efforts to develop an efficient machinery for rallying civilian participation.

Two essential elements in this planning for community action are well known: the local Defense Council and the Volunteer Office. The Defense Council is the planning body to which all new needs may be referred. It studies the community and the demands of war to find where service is needed and coordinates all governmental and non-governmental agencies in their efforts to meet needs.

The role of the Defense Council is basically one of community planning—What can be done to help win the war? How can the protection of homes and factories, or the sale of bonds and collection of salvage, be expedited? What are the hazards, the maladjustments, the weakness, the obstacles to effective living in the community? What can be done to mitigate the worries and uncertainties, the privations, the extra strain of hard work and worry, the lack of opportunity for recreation and relaxation, the problems of housing and feeding of a family, the separation of wives and children from home communities, the dismembering of families, and all

those other problems which come as a result of total war? What can individuals and communities do to render the life of every man, woman, and child most effective? This concern of every community for its own members, as well as for the welfare of the nation and of the world at large, is the strength of community life in peace or in war.

The Volunteer Office is an official employment bureau for those who wish to volunteer for unpaid civilian war work. It is a clearing house for work as well as for personnel. To the Volunteer Office is assigned responsibility for recruiting volunteers needed in every phase of the war effort; registering their experience, abilities, and preferences as to type of work; developing and keeping records of the types of work which volunteers are needed to do; referring volunteers to work for which they are suited; following them up to see how they are succeeding; and keeping records of the training they complete, the work they do, and the time they devote to it.

The Council lays plans for any needed activity in the community, the Volunteer Office finds the personnel to do the job. These are functions which will be equally important to community life in after-war years.

### *Participation of Individuals*

Awareness of need and perfection of organization are inadequate without effective participation of the individual persons involved. Margaret Mead, in her recent volume entitled *And Keep Your Powder Dry*, makes an interesting analysis of the American way of participation in activities arising out of the war:

We are fighting (the war) with 130,000,000 Americans who are a very special kind of human material, with very definite qualities. These qualities take special handling. Dies made for aluminum won't work for stainless steel. When we say we have to fight and win the war the American way, we aren't making a vague moral statement about the superiority of democracy as a way of life over totalitarianism as a way of life. . . . We are saying something more. We are saying a war fought by a democracy has a certain style, certain definite handicaps, certain definite weaknesses, as over against the deadly concentration of a totalitarian state. The only way to compensate for these weaknesses is to use the strengths you have got, and that to the full. . . . Are Americans bad at following orders literally? Then the answer is not to shout the order louder or shoot people who don't obey orders. The answer is to set up a form of organization which depends less on literal orders and more on what Americans are good at—taking responsibility, for instance.<sup>1</sup>

Capitalizing on individual initiative in thousands of communities, a great civilian army has been developed and then trained so it can perform effectively. In the protection program alone, over five million volunteers were organized and trained for effective action in case of enemy attack and with the hope that the probable outcome of direct enemy action against our country could be made to seem so unprofitable that such action would not be attempted. It has been an unprecedented achievement in adult education. Unprecedented because of the large number of people of all ages who have "gone back to school" to study. Unprecedented because most of

<sup>1</sup> Mead, Margaret: *And Keep Your Powder Dry: An Anthropologist Looks at America*, New York, William Morrow, 1942, p. 168.

the teachers, like their students, have served without pay. Unprecedented because it has been designed to train people for specific activities which are quite different from any interests or responsibilities they shared before the beginning of the war. As a training enterprise it was like an attempt to train five million men and women to drive airplanes in a country where airplanes have never been seen before.

Germany and Japan had been thinking in terms of war for at least ten or twelve years. Their anticipation of war, coupled with totalitarian efficiency, had led them to make very definite plans for civilian defense and to develop very exacting programs of training for civilian populations. America, however, accomplished the basic preparation in less than two years.

In addition to the Citizens Defense Corps there is a Citizens Service Corps. Members of this second large army of volunteers have often needed training for effective leadership. There are volunteers operating Defense Council headquarters, Volunteer Offices, war information centers, and speakers bureaus; and there are block leaders who have been prepared for effective leadership of neighborhood groups. Other volunteers are working with established community agencies which have increased war burdens and decreased personnel (child care and family security organizations, health services, recreational services, and libraries). Or, there are

volunteers for special war programs such as salvage, war savings, rationing, car sharing, war housing, victory gardens, or assistance in recruiting manpower for industry and farms.

Adult education and efficient participation of individual volunteers have proved to be inseparable requirements of community action.

### *Respect for Expert Opinion*

Recognition of the importance of the scientist and the technician in the Army and Navy; the prestige in industry of the production manager and the training officer, as well as of the technician, is matched by a new respect for the specialist who can contribute to the solving of community problems. People are no longer frightened at the term "expert." Experts are being employed to an extent never before witnessed—child-care experts, medical officers, sanitary engineers, teachers, specialists in municipal government and social-service administration, psychologists, nutritionists.

For the years ahead, then, there appear at least four important characteristics of contemporary community life which should be nurtured and guided so that they may have optimum expression: growing awareness of social need, efficient organization of the community for action, effective participation of individual persons involved, and respect for expert opinion.

### *Notes on Extended Day Care*

- ... There was the mother who wanted her child to "extend" all day.
- ... Another who asked about the "intended" child care center.
- ... And there was the little boy who said he liked school before and after but wasn't sure about the between.

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