

OUR PART IN THE PROBLEM OF WAR

"He who taketh up the sword shall perish by the sword". The Gospels

If the problems of our own country, described in the previous chapter, were never solved but allowed to run their courses, possibly we should be reduced to a Dark Age of slavery and regimentation, or to chaos. But if the same happens in regard to war, the face of the earth might again be reduced to its condition on the Sunday immediately preceding Genesis, a setback for civilization worse than The Flood and lacking its mitigating provision for a fresh start.

War is a problem we share with all other great nations.

It clarifies matters to recognize why war was natural ages ago. The life of primitive Man was narrow and precarious in the extreme, beset as he was by wild beasts, flood, frost, famine, disease, and his own ignorance. At first men consumed only what Nature provided, in whatever location, form, or degree of scarcity found -- catching fish, hunting game, picking berries, gathering roots and bark. Living as tribes for social culture and mutual advantages of production and security, they wandered about, gathering what they could, depleting an area and moving on. Perhaps they would return to favored spots each year, as did the Indians for salmon in the "pool" below the "Great Falls" on the Connecticut three centuries ago, or much as the Bushmen of South Africa do today. Nature always had to recover by herself. With growth of population tending to press upon the relatively static offerings of Nature, the more one tribe possessed the less there was for others. Conquest of the weaker by the stronger, taking territory and stores, was as natural then as today our shooting a bear and taking honey from a hollow tree. War made sense, then; intelligently pursued, it was the way to survive.

But a happier, more potentially fruitful age for humanity began about 6000 B.C., with the Dawn of Agriculture. Man then began to settle down, directing his labor to the soil in which the growth of selected plants could be stimulated, and to the breeding of animals. Thus he freed himself from the limitations of haphazard Nature unattended. In this way the supply of all necessities could be augmented in proportion to the growth of population. Of course this could succeed only to the degree in which pillage was reduced, since man will not sow without some certainty of later reaping, nor save without security. Agriculture made the abolition of war logical and, with all its derivative opportunities for cooperation, brought in for the first time the action of a natural law: that all people working in peace together can produce and enjoy infinitely more wealth, security and love than can be realized under conditions of con-

flict. Since that time war has served no net useful purpose. Deep down, most all people know this.

Nevertheless, war has continually been prepared for and revived, at various times and places and for various alleged reasons. Most people have never fully comprehended the essential harmony between the best interests of all nations. False leaders are frequently apt, with the outmoded outlook of cave men, to see their countries' nationalistic interests as separate from those of other countries. War, with its costs, cruelties and stupidity, is with us still. Evil leaders have constantly seen, in war, some opportunity for personal gain -- wealth, prestige and power -- that they never found in peaceful pursuits. For their nefarious schemes the indispensable support and subservience of underlings can usually be inspired, bought, or enforced. Fear and hate toward another nation can be stirred up, causing the people to submit to added taxes, sacrifices, regimentation, and the dictates of leaders. Often the entire project can be promoted as a great "crusade" with a righteous and inspiring or a necessary purpose, the spreading of a doctrine or the "liberation" of the alleged victims of some alleged tyranny.

Ever since the Second World War, we have suffered constant turmoil and localized fighting, called "The Cold War", always with the fear and danger of the outbreak of a real "shooting" war, which we know might end everything. Although there is of course no single cause of this, the dominant factor -- that which could make the greatest difference between war and peace in this age seems to be the self-appointed leadership of what is called world communism, most closely identified with Russia and its forces of arms, propaganda, communications, technology, and ideology. Their form of socialism they claim is necessarily and inevitably to become a world-wide social order of which they are the best and rightful interpreters, guardians, defenders, and promoters. So ardent and determined are they, that almost any means are justified, even the use of their military might -- perhaps fully the equal of ours. Their domination of the peoples and economies of many neighboring countries are claimed not to be imperialism at all, because of the unselfish justifiable nature of their alleged purposes.

The comparison between the potential well-being and satisfaction of peoples, under freedom and constitutional law, or under collectivist regimes, appears to be a considerable rebuke to the ideological leaders of the latter, whose subjects are kept in isolation, and restrained, like cattle and sheep, within walls and barbed wire, from escape and migration. Although those leaders seem always to emphasize the possessive term "Peoples" in the subtitles of their countries, yet their people are allowed no such rights as free elections or a two-party system such as we think of for implementing the true will of the people. Even

so, that will is constantly indicated by individuals who "vote with their feet", escaping to the west, which evidently appears to them preferable as a haven of refuge from those "Peoples'" regimes.

In contrast, our country has, I believe, in the main stood for human liberty and the self-determination of the peoples of other countries, in spite of some forms of domination by us of the world economy or that of separate countries which we should regret. I still think there is a significant and basic difference between collectivism as a national and a world order on the one hand, and free enterprise as we think of it, on the other, as general objectives leading to motivation in attempts to influence world affairs. By the enemies of our faith, all such attempts of ours are condemned as war mongering and a threat to world peace.

It appears that the official sophistries of those who would spread their domination at all costs remain much the same down through the ages.

Assuming that the Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer version of the attitude of degenerating Rome toward the people of the province of Judea in the time of Christ, as depicted in their story of BEN HUR, is as valid as any, it is relevant to recall the voice of domination of that day and see how its ring resembles that of this age. In the story, Judah Ben Hur, though a Judean prince, is devoted to the people of his home city of Jerusalem, is very much liked by them, is of great influence among them, and envisions their ultimate freedom from the Roman yoke. Messala, an old boyhood companion, now a proud and ruthless Roman soldier, has just been put in command of the garrison of Jerusalem to bring fresh vigor to the suppression of incipient revolt. Ben Hur calls on Messala. Their reunion is joyous at first, as they drink to old friendship and prove once again their undiminished and equal prowess at javelin throwing. But then, their conversation turns to the occasion of Messala's presence and purpose in the city; he asks Ben Hur to help him in his task, and all is at once changed. Naturally the latter is thunder-struck at first; then, gradually realizing the bleak and hideous nature of the requested cooperation -- the use of personal influence and persuasion of people to submit, and the reporting of dissenters -- says, "I could not possibly do that; I cannot believe you would ask such a thing! I am a Jew; I am devoted to my people and to that of the single loving God I see in each one of them." Then Messala, in his turn aghast with incredulity, says, "Why Judah! How can you be so stupid! You are trying to live in a world that no longer exists! Rome is the world of the future. Look Judah! Listen to me! The slightest sign of resistance in this province will be crushed. I urge you to use your great influence with your people to avoid all that through complete obedience. You have the power to do that. Can you not see that if there is violence and bloodshed, it will have

been your responsibility?" The urgency of his request and the force of his question intensify Messala's whole face and figure. Ben Hur fully comprehends it all now; he gazes a long, silent moment into the glittering eyes of the Roman; tears well up in his own; his arms collapse at his sides as he turns slowly and sadly away.

Perhaps this whole idea is more simply illustrated by the man who said, "If my wife would agree with me, we wouldn't have this constant squabbling."

Our country is the nearest thing there is to a leader of "the free world", and as such is a barrier to the spread of domination of those wishing to destroy our autonomy and way of life and to spread their own. We intend to minimize the infiltration of their influence in the affairs of other nations, especially in this hemisphere. It is our hope as a nation to help hold all forces of violence in abeyance, and to learn to practice and exemplify the truths of economics and human relations until all people in high places and in low shall see their best interests as being bound up with those of all people everywhere, and with the philosophy of "Live and let live". In the meantime, the American people as a whole see no alternative to being prepared to defend themselves against the threat of aggression by the enemies of our faith. This all poses a test of our wisdom, patience, internal economy, IDEALS, and statesmanship.

The great moral and economic problem we have is how to be prepared to engage in war without becoming corrupted (and bankrupt) in the process ourselves.

To some extent we are already corrupted. We have a lack of balance in our whole productive and constructive facilities and efforts. In spite of having vast, unsatisfied needs among half our people and in many of our public services, we have not put forth the effort to convert our economy and our attentions and habits of thought to these; but, instead, have attempted to keep all mass-production facilities humming and ever expanding.

Sitting in the lobby of a great machine company, I heard a purchasing agent say to a salesman of electric motors, "Things don't look so good, Fred; I can't promise you anything right now," adding in lower tones, "This Korean thing may blow over any time."

A friend with a tiny, one-man shop was recently in the doldrums; the last I knew, a navy contract, patronizing his remarkable skill, had put him to work.

I asked the owner of a shiny, new, modern, metropolitan sales-room and instrument repair business, how he could possibly keep busy such a large modern machine shop as he had at the rear. "Oh,

well," he said, "most people don't know it, but the largest share of our business is secret work for the government."

On our honeymoon trip in 1934, while getting the car serviced, in Bath, Maine, just for something to say I asked how everything was there. "Pretty flat," the station attendant said, "but one of our Senators is down in Washington right now, trying to get a destroyer for the Ironworks to build. If he does, everything will pick up."

If you, the reader, get around very much, if you recall past revelations of "war profiteers" and of the "internationalmindedness" of munitions makers, you must realize how these things I have personally observed are but tiny samples of the grim evidence, constantly coming to light, showing how much our wonderful full employment and high industrial production depend on wars and rumors of wars.

Is this liable to corrupt us?

The truth about this is well expressed in words from the Gospels:

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also".

The American people do not want war, of course, but they love the good wages seemingly made possible by government spending for anything remotely connected with defense or security. This is a little like my wife's attitude when I was called to Boston on a charge of speeding: She did not exactly say she was glad of it, but did enjoy the special trip we made together because of it.

Our government does not want war either. But the political interest of any central government in keeping the productive plant working full time and all workers happy is served by the requirements of an arms race perhaps better than by most anything else, since patriotism and fear prevent any effective public protest against the costs or any questioning of the necessity; furthermore, the wide, strategic dispersal of plants and bases serves the political needs of seeming fair in the distribution of the presumed benefits of this sort of industrial development to all areas.

Considering all the extraneous angles to the provisions for national defense, I would say that the appropriateness, the amounts, the costs, and the military reliability of such equipment and plans cannot be matters of much public confidence. For instance, on March 4th, 1960, a radio broadcast predicted a congressional investigation of a recent navy purchase of \$600,000,000 worth of planes of questionable reliability. Now, what loyal manufacturer would cheat his country so? Where were our inspectors, and what were they thinking of? However, if all was well, then why was someone trying to discredit someone else unjustifiably?

The possibility of war is indeed an unquestionable stimulus to business activity of a sort. Employment will be total; every factory will hum; increased taxes and costs will be offset by increased wages and long hours; money will pour into the capital where business and political leaders will feel fresh security, importance and augmented authority. There is nothing like a wartime business boom to bring economic society out of its chronic lethargy, uniting it behind leaders who then must be trusted. If anyone then to question the manner or costs of defense, or the necessity of the seeming prosperity, would be as mean and disloyal as to suggest that Grandma be buried in a reasonably-priced coffin.

To our economy, always wavering on the edge of depression, war production is a form of "dope" to which the patient has long become accustomed and complacent but from which he must sometime be weaned if he is not eventually to go to pieces. For over a generation ours has had the "habit."

The Russians have already piously pointed out this weakness of ours, considering it, of course, inherent in free enterprise. In their major premise they are undeniably right; give them credit for that. However, they have their own uses for military establishments in maintaining their influence, which are habit-forming too. Armed force is for them at least as great an instrument of national policy as it is for us, and their ideology is perhaps even greater stimulus to meddlesomeness in the affairs of other people than is ours. They would naturally claim that their type of economy would never need military construction as a "made-work" or relief, project and that their leaders would never betray their peoples' interests so. But what faith can be put in them? They have long expended their peoples' substance on arms, satellites, foreign aid, and intervention when the common people could not afford such things, needing, instead, not "guns" but "butter" and recently -- even though they are great wheat producers themselves -- wheat!

Considering the natural friendliness of the common people everywhere, in America, Russia, and all other countries, we must face it that militarism is a waste, a danger, a burden, and a corruption of all public and private affairs, and preventive of normal human association and progress, and that it would be such under any social and economic regime.

If we are to do our full share in the world's efforts toward peace, we must cure our economy of its need for the stimulus that war brings, by getting it geared to peaceful functions, thus purging our motives, strengthening our determination for peace, and making us appear to the world as being as exemplary a nation in fact as we actually are at heart.

Were we successful in finding full outlet for our products in factors in the satisfaction of humanly-needed pursuits exclusively

ly, with opportunity and justice for all, we could then be invulnerable to taunts of an incomplete sincerity in world affairs -- regardless of how hypocritical such taunts, from the enemies of our faith, have been -- and we could at the same time be better able to display to the world a more completely successful domestic way of life, more worthy of foreign emulation.

This would be a real example of world leadership.

And our moral obligation in leadership is very great. We have enjoyed considerable internal success, which, however imperfect, is real. We are the fortunate stewards of a rich heritage of basic laws and liberties; we owe it to the world and future generations to pass this on to them, preserved and, if possible, improved. We have a large share of responsibility for the magnitude of the problem of war; we have done most to advance the destructive power of modern arms; the present race was begun by the atomic bomb, an American development.

In spite of the constant turmoil in human and world affairs, it is heartening to realize that there are very real forces for peace. The common people in all lands earnestly desire it; all true human aspiration is consistent with it; the enjoyment of well-being, human association and progress, and love -- without which all else is "nothing" -- are all dependent upon it. Many individuals take a stand for it, by open espousal and personal dedication, by exemplary non-violent resistance and protest, by refusal to serve in military establishments or to pay taxes for their support, by "walks", fasting, prayer, and the picketing of warlike preparations, each in his own way. Associations and Committees work for peace and good will, "speak truth" to those of "power", and carry on programs to alleviate the lot of the sufferers of war, poverty, and injustice.

We should be glad that all such efforts for the abeyance of evil and for the sustenance of human faith and hope are being made, because none can know at present which will in the end prove to have been most helpful in giving time and opportunity for more fundamental measures to be found.

However, the refusal of some to take part in war, the many forms of protest against it, the well-worded expressions of the Brotherhood of Man, and over-seas shipments of food and clothing -- all good, and justifiable -- are no real substitute for the assertion of equal natural rights which for ages have been denied the common people, leaving them to be unwilling, unwitting tools of those who would lead them into wars of aggrandizement and mutual destruction under false banners and hollow slogans. In view of the deep-lying roots of war -- nourished by ignorance, poverty, greed, cruelty, false pride, vain ambition, dishonesty and irresponsibility -- these protests and efforts are, in essence, attacks

upon the results of evil causes, not upon the causes themselves, and, so are, if unassisted by actual reform, destined to failure, somewhat resembling King Canute were he to stand on the banks of the Connecticut at Hartford and command the flood waters to rise no further, when, as we know, true flood control could succeed only by trapping those waters at their tributary sources.*

The nature of true reform and what those more fundamental measures and natural rights are will be taken up later on.

In the next chapter, we shall see how, in the face of unemployment, industrialism, war, and other problems, people have failed to resort to characteristic strengths of a past age or to our own earlier ideals of self-reliance, and how they have gravitated into indolence and paternal welfarism to an extent amounting to a gradual change of philosophy of social and economic life entirely out of keeping with our physical resources and heritage ideals.

* In justice to the Danish King of England, be it recalled that for him to stay the rising tide by royal command was his flattering courtiers' ideas; he knew better, and proved it.