

## WAR OF THE WORLD

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OUNT MOLTKE, war-lord of the past century, once remarked: "Perpetual peace is a dream, and it is not even a beautiful dream. War is an element in the order of the world ordained by God. . . . Without war the world would stagnate and lose itself in materialism." However much pacific minds might shrink from this bellicose philosophy, which seems utterly at variance with the old German proverb, "A great war leaves the country with three armies—an army of cripples, an army of mourners, and an army of thieves," the modern resurgence of militarism might cause one to wonder if the war-leader was not right. Certainly, the facts of history seem very much in his favor.

History, it has been said, is philosophy teaching by example. It has been quite generally conceded that the recent World War is an historical and classic instance of imperialistic philosophy teaching by example, and there is an ever-growing conviction that it was by very bad example. But bad example or no, the World War does offer an interesting object lesson in the philosophy behind modern warfare, an understanding of which is not without value in view of current events in the European scene.

Philosophy in this modern era, has suffered much the same fate as the automobile. Its ponderous conclusions have been reduced to a streamlined phraseology in the form of slogans, which have all the color, speed, and perhaps the recklessness, of the modern motor car. Born no doubt before their time, the slogans of the World War—"This is the war to end war." "Make the world safe for democracy"—are very good illustrations. Through them it is possible to glimpse the philosophy motivating the last war, and, since the latter slogan is being noised about again, especially by nations whose pretensions to democracy are rather slight, to recognize the philosophy of a war to come. Slogans, however ill-applied they may be, have this to recommend them. They may contain a very vital truth, even though, through misunderstanding, it has degenerated into the falsehood of a half-truth.

So it is with the slogans of the World War. Most people are still agreed that nothing is more desirable than "a war to end war." Similarly, however much the advent of dictatorships may give rise to the conjecture that the World War was more to make the world safe *from* democracy, yet the desirability of making this universe safe *for* democracy is not to be denied. One may be still optimistic enough to hold that another war, waged on a higher plane, can really end war and make the world safe for democracy. At least, that is the contention of this essay.

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St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that "all wars are waged that men may find a more perfect peace than that which they had heretofore." Two decades ago, the Treaty of Versailles bequeathed to the world an artificial peace, a peace based on arbitrary national boundaries and disproportionate reparations and indemnities. The fundamentals of peace, such as security for virtuous living and autonomy for racial groups, were largely overlooked. Today these conditions cry for a remedy. Despite the heroic diplomacy of Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Europe is not at all sure that the treaty signed at Versailles will not prove another "scrap of paper" returning with a declaration of war written on the back. A rearrangement of the international checkerboard is on the way, and people are beginning to recognize it as inevitable. Another war, so it is thought, will erase the smoldering discontent and pave the way for a more enduring peace.

But if Western civilization wages a war to end all war, it must be one that will remove the causes of war. However effective materially the massive national armies and more massive national armaments may appear, they can little eradicate the underlying causes of conflict, any more than a blow on the head can cure a headache. The discontent today is not primarily a question of politics but rather a conflict of principles of life; not so much a question of Capitalism and Communism as one of Christianity and Atheism, not so much a contest of human bodies for supremacy and wealth as the quest of human souls for happiness. A war such as that envisioned by contemporary militarists will not solve the problem; it aims at a material conquest by material means for a material security. That is not enough; men from time immemorial have fought such wars, each thinking that theirs would be the last. But no. Caesar, about to

unfurl the Roman banner over new lands, boasted: "This victory will establish peace for us. The whole world will be disarmed after this contest." And Caesar, history attests, was wrong.

War, to be really successful, should remove the causes of war. These are primarily ideological; they are inextricably bound up with the inner consciousness of nations and men, their hopes and their grievances, their loves and their hates, their virtues and their vices. These intangible, spiritual realities lurk behind every clash between states, despite the fact that on the surface the quarrel seems concerned only with bread-and-butter issues. It is these fundamental aspirations of nations and men that must be orientated if peace is to prevail. The only war that can conquer the disorders of society is one which can conquer the disorders of individuals in society, one that is essentially spiritual, a conflict that will kill the cause of war and not kill men. In contrast to the World War, this new war might be termed the War of the World. Although it be universal, enlisting all mankind, it will, by a most delightful paradox, be less worldly, for it will be the spiritual war of "the world" against itself. To those who think only in terms of space and time, this sounds nihilistic. They conceive war only as a matter of muscles and munitions, forgetful that there is another strength, fully realized by the Commander of the Allied Forces in the late war, Marshal Foch. "In the civilized world, power founded solely upon force, however impregnated with genius it may be, must inevitably bow before spiritual strength."

Not only should the War of the World end all war by removing its causes; it should also make the world safe for democracy. The disillusionment that followed upon the World War has led some to query: Is democracy worth fighting for? Is it not more likely that the democracy for which men laid down their lives twenty years ago had lost much of its spirit, that it was but the pseudonym of a hidden and predominantly undemocratic imperialism? In his volume *Towards the Great Peace*, Ralph Adams Cram has this to say: "When therefore, modernism achieved its grand climacteric in July, 1914, we had on the one hand an imperialism of force, in industry, commerce and finance, expressing itself through highly developed specialists, and dictating the policies and practices of government, society and education; on the other hand, a Democracy of Form which denied, combatted, and destroyed distinction in personality and authority, in thought, and discouraged constructive leadership

in the intellectual, spiritual and artistic spheres of activity. The opposition was absolute; the results catastrophic."

True democracy has not failed. Men have failed to be true democrats. Democracy denotes an equality among men: not an equality of wealth, for there will always be rich and poor; not an equality of genius, for some are made to govern and others to be governed; but an equality through love, which is the greatest common denominator of human existence. Love in its perfect sense is the constitution of what might be called the Divine democracy, in which all men are equal; for in this democracy the secret of a great life is not great wealth or genius or fame, but simply great love. This is the democracy for which the world should be made safe, a democracy in which the brotherhood of man is based upon the Fatherhood of God.

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The War of the World, then, is one to end war by rooting up the causes of war, to make the world safe for democracy by defending the brotherhood of man. Contemporary prophets have envisioned the time when these things will come true. Stalin says it will occur through world revolution; Mr. Wells holds hope for a world evolution. Both are at one in admitting that Christianity cannot bring about the new social order, for it has involved itself in a strange paradox. After all, is it not incongruous that in one place the Gospel announces, "Peace on earth to men of good will," and in another place the text records these words of Jesus: "I came not to bring peace, but the sword"? "Christianity," cry her foes, "reconcile thyself!"

In his commentary on these passages, Origen explains: "The diligent reader inquires how the Saviour says 'I came not to bring peace upon the earth,' and now Angels sing at His Nativity, 'On earth peace to men.' But the fact that peace is said to be 'to men of *good will*,' solves the question; for the peace which the Lord does not give on earth, is not the peace of good will." Good will—in these two words lies the key to the peace of the world. Good will means to will good, which requires that one will rightly, and will good.

To will rightly is the first requisite for peace. When a man acts, the norm of his good or bad will is right reason, which, with all the imperiousness of knowledge, directs the will. If the will follows the dictates of right reason, there is order; and peace consists in tranquillity of order. If men were always

reasonable, war would not be the problem it is. Reason, however, as conceived by contemporary philosophy, has lost its dignity as diplomat in the tribunal of conscience. The evolutionists belittle it by making man's will the pawn of the lower passions; the rationalists exaggerate it by holding that human reason is superior to faith. Admittedly, there is a struggle between the passions and reason, and human reason cannot comprehend the truths of faith; yet that is no excuse for exalting the passions or belittling faith. The War of the World is a struggle to restore the order of reason, to enable men to will rightly, a war against sin. Sin is nothing else than a revolution against prudent human government, either through the anarchy of the uncontrolled passions or the tyranny of dictatorial reason. Only when men realize that the passions are not higher than reason and that human reason must bow to the wisdom of God will peace be obtained. It will be a peace won through unremitting war of virtue against the internecine usurpations of sense and pride. It requires a concerted drive towards the proper good of man, which is God.

If men would but enlist in this War of the World, which gathers all the resources of human nature in the name of peace, then the old slogans about "a war to end war" and "a war to make the world safe for democracy" would take on a new and much more truthful significance. It is very important to look at the modern scene in this light. It will prevent one from lapsing either into a sterile pacifism or a mad militarism. It will enable one to see how, in a spiritual sense, "war is an element in the order of the world ordained by God," without subscribing to the brutal philosophy of Nietzsche:

It is mere illusion and pretty sentiment to expect much (even anything at all) from mankind if it forgets how to make war. As yet no means are known which call so much into action as a great war that rough energy born of the camp, that deep impersonality born of hatred, that conscience born of murder and cold-bloodedness, that fervor born of effort in the annihilation of the enemy, that proud indifference to loss, to one's own existence, to that of one's fellows, that earthquake-like soul-shaking which a people needs when it is losing its vitality.

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President Roosevelt, in his letter to Archbishop Rummel on the occasion of the opening of the Eighth National Eucharistic Congress held recently at New Orleans, said, "I doubt if there is any problem in the world today—social, political or economic

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