THE RISKS OF PEACE

PEACE is not a pause between two wars, like a rather long truce, nor is it a gift passively received and tranquilly kept. Peace must be won, be maintained and strengthened by effort, be defended against those who would disturb it. Peace is a continuous creation in which all share, each through the part he plays in social life.

Mr. Wickham Steed, in his recent book *Vital Peace, a Study of Risks,* has shown how peace has its risks as war has. There can be no life without risk.

The problem of the risks of life can be considered from three standpoints: the psychological, for each one of us; the national, for each State; the "communitary," for a united group of States or for the international community in general. In life these various planes are interwoven.

The average upper-class young Englishman at Eton or Harrow cannot envisage a quiet life, made up of study and domestic cares, without the adventure of travel, work in the colonies, the army or politics. Sport is enticing to many, but sport for sport's sake is worse than art for art's sake; training in endurance for the sake of bodily agility without a sense of adventure would become a matter of professional exercise, to be despized. All do not feel this urge to adventure. The young working-man, brought up in a Labour environment, becomes a *petit bourgeois;* the young Communist is or wishes to be a fighter, and does not exclude, at least in theory, civil war. The upper- or middle-class boy tends to adopt a nationalist and conservative ideal.

The allusion to civil war is not provoked by present events in Spain. I remember that in 1930, at a pacifist congress held in London, several Labour speakers opted for civil war as a means of ending international war. In civil war they saw a means for the advent of the proletariat, while war between nations always ended in maintaining the predominance of militarist capitalism and the spread of nationalist and totalitarian dictatorships.

Steed sees a permanent cause of modern wars in the

totalitarian and Hegelian conception of the State as absorbing the whole life of its citizens, the goal of all human activity, the divine expression of the collectivity. The risks of such a conception are immense; the Germany of Bismarck and William II, Bernhardi and Treitschke proved it to her cost in November 1918 when she lost the war she herself had provoked.

To-day Germany is on the way to renew the trial; the errors of the victors gave the motive for Hitlerian mysticism, which, combined with Germanic militarism and State totalitarianism, incites a people of over 60 millions to titanic efforts towards a new hegemonic war.

The totalitarian State, Fascist, Nazi or Bolshevist, while it meets with ready response among the young, seeks at the same time to mould them to a type still more suited to its aims. The feeling for adventure and risk, inherent in human nature, has become collective; instead of the knight errant, the discoverer of new lands, the explorer of unknown territories, it is the group, moved by need for a leader, by a spirit of blind surrender, by the fascination of risk and of the abyss, which is either not seen or felt as a collective destiny.

The speed of cars, the increasing speed of ships, the swift flight of aeroplanes, are the symbols of a life lived dangerously, for its own sake, whatever its object, whatever its end. Will war be a phase of the accelerated rhythm and continual risks of such a life? If it were not so, one of the strongest, perhaps the strongest, of motives for the collective mysticisms of Bolshevism, Fascism and Nazism would be lacking. War is their central motive, their spiritual integration, their nemesis.

Under the dictatorial regimes civil war is simplified and hidden, but it remains endemic. Bolshevism was born with civil war, and we may say that as yet it has not passed beyond it. If to-day millions of Russian refugees are living, more or less wretchedly, in other countries, they are victims of civil war, even if they took no part in it save by their flight. Those on the other side, who from time to time kill their adversaries or are murdered or tried and executed, like the Trotskyists—and there is no counting the religious, poli-

tical and economic adversaries, ex-friends or old enemies, who have been eliminated by immoral means, unworthy to be called human—give plain evidence of hidden and endemic civil war.

Other typical examples of civil war fought only by the stronger side are the nights from June 30 to July 1, 1934, in Germany, the persecution of Jews, Christians and Communists, the concentration camps; the political assassinations in Italy, like that of the Turin workers, of Matteotti in Rome, of the Freemasons in Florence, the Croats in Istria, and the many others both before and after the March on Rome. In Italy the glorification of civil war has its permanent exhibition, its sanctuaries, its public rites of commemoration.

Civil war, waged by triumphant dictatorships as a police system and a means of eliminating the vanquished, leads to international war, for dictatorships can maintain themselves only by organization of force. An armed party holds in subjection the unarmed citizens, a formidable army imposes respect on opponents and prepares for conquest or *revanche*.

To-day Russia plays the pacifist (though armed to the teeth), for she is afraid of Japan on the East and Germany on the West. But Russia has subdued by arms all the outlying populations, who wished to flee from the yoke of Moscow. The fallacious autonomy of the Soviet Republics does not save them from oppression. Russia seeks to propagate her regime beyond her frontiers, to secure herself against a return to bourgeois systems, through an instinct of self-preservation; this implies war preparation, not only materially, but in the mind.

Hitler's Germany plays her cards openly—repudiation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles; feverish, colossal rearmament; remilitarization of the Rhine frontier. Hitler wishes to be ready when the moment comes; when he judges his adversaries to be in a position of inferiority, he will launch the most tragic war that humanity has ever known or dreamed of.

Mussolini has made his war, he has acquired the Abyssinian Empire. Will he stop there? Is he in agreement with Hitler? Will he be against Hitler? No one can tell. In the

meantime he asserts that he can mobilize eight million men. A warning to Paris and Berlin, London and Moscow. And if he offers the olive branch, he offers it "on the points of eight million bayonets." A charming gift!

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Peace has its risks on the same plane as the risks of war, not because it is a necessary alternative, but inasmuch as it is peace.

It is a great mistake to think of peace as merely the alternative of war, or rather, as a periodical transition between two wars. Peace must be desired for its own sake, as Spinoza defined it: *Pax non est privatio belli, sed virtus quae de fortitudine animi oritur.*

The ending of hostilities is not a peace but an armistice.

Armed peace is not peace, but preparation for war.

Peace imposed, whether at home or abroad, is not peace, for mutual consent is absent; it creates instead a spirit of revolt and a spirit of revenge.

Peace is justice, order, honour, freedom; it is based on respect of human personality. It seeks to create an order within which the life of separate States and their minorities and the life of the international community can develop together.

Justice and order are not permanent and stable forces. Their terms change with the succession of events. A minor is subject to his guardian, but with his majority he becomes his own master. A colony is in the position of a minor; the British Dominion has reached its majority, demanding other relations, another order of justice. Thus peace is not static, but dynamic; through peace principles of justice, systems of order, must be constantly adapted to new conditions of fact, so as to eliminate disputes and cement co-operation between the States.

The Peace of Versailles established an order; ill-conceived, ill-executed as it was, it was still order. But an order imposed and not accepted was not peace; an order containing so many injustices was not a peace. It could have become a peace, if there had been, on the one hand, less distrust and

greater understanding of the German democracy, on the other a firmer will to make of the League of Nations a bulwark of peace. In short, to run the risks of peace. Little by little the defences that had been conceived crumbled away, the system was dismantled, positions reversed. France and England watched the *débacle* with the helplessness of those who have let slip all favourable opportunities through lack of faith in themselves or others, or in what they themselves had built.

Sir Norman Angell has often declared that if defence of the principles of the League could arouse the same state of mind that exists in every State where the defence of its own territory or colonies is concerned, we should have seen neither the Corfu incident, nor the Gran Chaco war, nor the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, nor Italy's annexation of Abyssinia, nor the repudiation of the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles and the remilitarization of the Rhineland. And this without need for war, just as there is no need for war because England holds Malta or Cyprus or Gibraltar, and France has Corsica, Nice and Savoy.

The significance of this is plain; since States are ready to defend their own territories, they hold them in peace. Whereas the same States are not ready, or not wholly ready, to defend the international order. This is not to say that this order is perfect, but that it should be modified only by agreement and pacific means.

If there had been no League of Nations, and England had thought fit to act in the name of her own interests to protect Abyssinia, Italy would never have made war, and England would not have needed to send the Home Fleet to the Mediterranean. Contrariwise, when England acted in the name of the League, binding herself beforehand to refrain from military intervention, she eliminated the risks of peace without eliminating, but indeed aggravating, the risks of war.

That is why Wickham Steed in his book returns to the *leitmotiv* of many of his earlier writings, the question of neutrality. Till the principle of neutrality is abolished in the organization of an international order, it will be impossible to build up an effective peace system. It is impossible to

build up a peace system, based on right, which does not carry with it the obligation of defending it. The neutral evades this obligation.

A peace that is considered not worth defending is worth nothing. If by chance, a chance of one in a hundred, the defence of peace leads to war, ninety-nine times it averts war through the very fact of readiness for defence. On the contrary, if each State that does not feel itself individually concerned can proclaim neutrality, ninety-nine times out of a hundred war breaks out because peace has not been defended nor is worthy of defence.

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The events of 1936 are all there to diminish faith in the collective system and to prove that the moral and juridical ideals on which the League is founded are frail if not fallacious schemata. The mortal blow against the League system was struck by the governments of France and Great Britain. It may seem strange that the governments of the two democratic countries, based on the principle of the State founded on law, and professing natural morality *tout court* (and not national, racial or class morality), should have been those that, to their own detriment, undermined the legal and moral foundation of the international system.

But that is what happened. The abandonment of Abyssinia to her fate, the effort to exclude her from the League, the anxiety to come to terms with Italy even at the price of recognition of her African Empire, do not chime with a system of law and morality. If at the first occasion, Corfu or Vilna, the governments of France and Great Britain had preferred to observe international law rather than to win the good graces of Italy and Poland, the League would not have had the moral setbacks that followed. If at the first secret rearmament of Germany these governments had asserted the treaties in due form, the League would not have had to register the failure of the disarmament conference. If at Mussolini's first word against the League and its Covenant the League had protested, as the smallest State will protest at an insult to its flag or to its consul, Mussolini would not

have reached the pitch of the proud challenge that he would solve the Abyssinian question "with Geneva, without Geneva, against Geneva," and have ended by solving it against Geneva.

Principis obsta!

And now, is it too late?

Belgium (in King Leopold's speech of October 14) returns to neutrality, though without repudiating her obligations to the League and treaties in force. The more the collective system is whittled away, the more the smaller and weaker States will seek refuge in neutrality.

If Geneva implied a system so ruined that it injured peace by its discussions, dissensions and procedure, it would have to be suppressed. But in spite of all, it is impossible to seek an international equilibrium in a return to the pre-war system of alliances and counter-alliances, neutralities and ententes, not only because the war made this system out of date but because it was in function of the political structure of the States of the time, and of the character of the three Empires, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, which gave Europe a sense of stability to-day wholly lacking. If the League falls, it will not be possible to form a system of alliances such as to give a balance of power, even temporary, for to-day the countries are divided by both principles and interests, there are no solid ties that could unite them in stable groups, and the small States are exposed to the intrigues and domination of strong States that have repudiated international morality.

For this reason Mr. Eden, at the Assembly of the League on September 25 of this year, called for toleration between States as a means of avoiding clashes of principle between democratic countries and dictatorships, Communists and Fascists. This refuge in the principle of toleration recalls that proposed three hundred years ago to put an end to the wars of religion. But toleration, in a world in which men have to live together, presupposes certain principles equally respected and on which all parties are agreed.

Any international collaboration demands, at the very least, common assent to three principles: (1) that treaties must be

kept (*pacta sunt servanda*); (2) that each State must be respected in the rights it possesses; (3) that present positions shall be capable of modification only by agreement, within the League system, when this is required by violation of a right, or becomes necessary through causes that may arise.

Will Germany and Italy agree to this minimum? Mr. Eden in the same speech emphasized two points, never admitted in the past, and very difficult to achieve: the separation of the Covenant of the League from the Peace Treaties of 1919, and greater facilities for the revision of treaties. He thus gave a satisfaction to Germany and Italy, hoping for their return to Geneva.

Unhappily this return will be problematical so long as Geneva appears a weak and incoherent construction, so long as England and France do not stand together in firm international solidarity. Mr. Eden hopes to reach it by regional pacts (binding Great Britain to a pact in the West), and by rearmament, pending an agreement on the limitation of armaments. But peace is indivisible. Regional pacts will be useful if framed in a general pact of effective defence against an aggressor, whether member of the League or no. But up till now, not even the second Locarno has been possible, nor will it be easy after Belgium's move and if Germany and Italy have agreed on a policy in Europe outside the League.

A recent discussion in *The Times* between Mr. Wickham Steed, Sir Norman Angell, Professor Coulton and Dr. Pollock on the one side, with Lord Ponsonby, Aldous Huxley and Rose Macaulay on the other, set face to face two classes of thinkers, those who wish the League and the States composing it to be strong in defence of justice and right, and those who repose all their hopes on disarmament, even unilateral, as able to create a new state of mind in the international field.

Professor Coulton quoted Pascal's famous sentence, "the just must be strong and the strong must be just," as the ideal of peace in a collective system. Wickham Steed reiterated his motto *Peace with Freedom,* maintaining that only such a peace deserves to be defended with might and main, for there is no true peace where there is no freedom. Norman

Angell noted that every nation in rearming claims to do so in self-defence, but that there are two methods of defence, the *nationalist,* for the defence of particular national interests, the *societary,* for collective defence. He asks, which of the two is the least perilous? Indisputably the second. The most rigorous pacifist does not repudiate his ideals in maintaining collective defence. Finally, Dr. Frederick Pollock showed how the unilateral disarmament of England would mean the dissolution of the British Commonwealth, and anarchy in India and elsewhere. He could well have said in Europe and in the world.

Responsible Englishmen, conscious of the dangers of the present hour, wish the League to be strengthened, the collective system to be made effective, and international confidence restored. This Edward VIII has proclaimed in his Speech to Parliament. Wickham Steed holds that, to correct the present situation, what is needed is to build up a psychology prepared to fight for peace. Against the false idea of creative war—for war destroys but creates nothing, neither to the advantage of the victors nor to the detriment of the vanquished—must be set the idea of *creative peace.*

This will be possible when the League of Nations is given an unshakable moral basis, an unassailable spiritual value, a respected and effectual authority.

A confession of error, of weakness, of failure in duty, is the first step. Mr. Eden had the courage to make it in his speech of September 25. Others have followed him. Now for deeds. "All with Geneva, nothing without Geneva, nothing against Geneva" should be the motto opposed to those who would pull down the international structure, and imposed on those who wish to use it only when it can profit them. Not that Geneva is perfect, or fully represents our ideal of peace, but because up till now it has been based on right and international justice, on public morality, on the traditional values of Christianity. Mgr. Besson, Bishop of Geneva, Lausanne and Fribourg, in a message to the Catholics who on September 20 had assembled in Notre Dame in Geneva for a Pontifical Mass of the Holy Ghost, on the eve of the Assembly of the League, wrote that "from 14th

November, 1920, we have had confidence in the League of Nations and clearly asserted our firm wish to collaborate in the great work of peace." He added: "This two-fold feeling we have never retracted. We persist in believing that the League of Nations, though it may need serious reform, still preserves its reason of existence, and we shall never refuse our co-operation." (*Osservatore Romano,* 28th September.)

Let us call for moral disarmament before material, for a union of upright minds before a union of interests. Let us ask for peace for men of good will, and it will become such as to be accepted even by men of evil will.

We must all co-operate, with the conviction that the risks of peace are far inferior to those of war; at the least, they can bring no remorse of conscience for violation of others' rights, for having trampled upon the innocent, for having failed to keep signed pacts and pledged words, for having unloosed on the world another war of extermination.

LUIGI STURZO.

MR. NICHOLSON ABDICATES

MR. NICHOLSON continues to show, towards the general reading public, that instructive patience which the permanent civil servant must show to his transitory chief. He carries on, in his biography of Dwight Morrow,[1] that implicit instruction in the control of world affairs which he began in the trilogy on Lord Carnock, the Peace Conference, and Lord Curzon.[2]

But his subject here is very different and very unexpected. There is no adumbration, in the story of Lord Carnock, the perfect English civil servant and statesman; in the story of that magnificent aristocrat and administrator, Curzon; no adumbration of the story of the American school-master's son, who became partner in J. P. Morgan's, Ambassador to Mexico, was close to being Secretary of State to Mr. Hoover, whose prestige, at the time of his premature death, aged 58,

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1 *Dwight Morrow,* by Harold Nicholson (Constable; 18/-).

2 See BLACKFRIARS, November, 1934, *Carnock, Conference and Curzon.*