

New Nations For Old

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR Professor of Economics at the University of Michigan and elsewhere, Kenneth E. Boulding was born in England and educated at New College, Oxford, and at the University of Chicago. He was a member of Ann Arbor Meeting, Michigan.

He served with the League of Nations and the Committee for Economic Development. He was a member of the Committee on Research for Peace of the Institute for International Order, and full time Director of the Center for Research in Conflict Resolution of the University of Michigan. He has been closely associated with the Canadian Peace Research Institute.

Professor Boulding was internationally known for his innovative and sensitive work in the field of economics, and indeed was elected as president of the American Economics Association (along with the presidency of five other major scholarly societies, including the American Association for the Advancement of Science). He taught at universities on three continents, authored more than thirty books and hundreds of articles, pamphlets and papers, and was awarded numerous honors for his work not only as an economist pushing the forefront of his profession, but also as a humanist, futures thinker and major activist in the field of peace and conflict resolution.

Kenneth Boulding was a profoundly democratic man, a Quaker (the Society of Friends), a loving and diligent work partner with his wife, the eminent Norwegian-born sociologist Elise Boulding, and both a worrier (about our ability to survive the challenges of the modern world) and an optimist (he decided to dedicate his life to doing something about it anyway).

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assume, either that war could be exorcised by a mere threat which no one intended to keep, or that war could be used as a subtle, delicate weapon at the right time and place to avoid greater wars. The latter view is the more realistic, but it is doomed to failure because it rests on a false assumption about the nature of war. War is not a delicate instrument to be used deftly for the pursuit of limited ends, like a surgeon's knife. It is a coarse and blundering bludgeon, which can be used only when the people are sufficiently desperate, frightened, or angry. It strikes out wildly and clumsily, and usually fails to effect the subtle changes in political and mental states which is its apparent aim. The advocates of collective security may be right in pointing out that a little war with Japan in 1931 would have prevented this much bigger one now, though it is doubtful whether it would have done more than postpone the greater reckoning. But the inescapable fact remains that the people would not go to war in 1931, and probably never will go to war in future situations of a like nature, because they were not, and never will be, psychologically ready for war at the physically most appropriate time.

It is probable that the end of this war will see some sort of military union or alliance among the victorious powers. Such an alliance or union is almost certain to fail, either by the disruptive forces of nationalism within or through attacks from without, unless there should develop along-side of it a spiritual growth, a change in men's ways of thinking, reflected particularly in a transformation of the ideals of national policy. The lovers of peace should make this transformation their principal objective in the years that are to come, and should make their secondary objective the establishment of a "Positive League," which should be separated from any system of military power, and which may foster by its sheer usefulness and educational value the slow but necessary process of the redemption of nationalism.

world into a centralized world state. The advocates of an international police force usually think subconsciously of their own country in control of such a force and exercising it against enemy “aggressors.” It is doubtful whether they ever conceive of a situation in which the international force is used to suppress their own nation! It is clear that in such a case the use of the international force would not lead to world *unity*, but only to world *empire*, with one group dominant.

If the international authority is to be a force leading the world into a fellowship of distinct but mutually dependent nations — an ideal which is surely to be preferred to that of a centralized and uniform world state — it must renounce the tempting but self-defeating method of military power, and rely on its positive functions. It should be a center of research and information, a clearing house for statistics, a regular meeting place for administration of all practical problems which must be treated on a world scale, such as public health and nutrition, trade and transport regulations, the reconciliation of national codes of law, international, commercial and monetary relations, and so on. In part the League of Nations as constituted at Versailles was such a body, and its positive organization still holds together. The positive work of the League, however, has been frustrated because of its link with the now discredited system of collective security, a system neither collective nor secure, and based on the fallacious theory that nations could pledge themselves to go to war when ordered by a collective authority. The nations pledged themselves to collective security only so long as they thought it was a method of *avoiding* war by threats of united war against an aggressor. Sooner or later, however, the bluff was bound to be called, as it was called by Japan in Manchuria in 1931. Collective security could then only be saved by collective war, and for this the League powers were not ready.

The fundamental error of collective security was to

1. The Ripeness Of Time

It may seem like a lunatic optimism, at a time when the nations are engaged in worldwide battle, to propose seriously the abolition of war. Nevertheless it is frequently the nature of great changes to come unexpectedly, at a moment when the old order that is to pass away seems eternal and immutable. Dawn comes only at the end of a long night. A seed lies in the ground for many months, looking as lifeless as the day it was sown, and then, suddenly and mysteriously, it sprouts.

We must be sensitive to the subtle conditions that presage such a new birth. And it may be that we shall detect in the convulsive violence of our day not only death, but birth; the birth of a new order of society from which the peculiar institution of war will have passed away. This is not to say that we shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Poverty, disease, death, heartache, conflicts, hatreds, we shall have with us for many a long generation. But the particular evil of war we may root out, as a hundred years ago we rooted out the particular evil of slavery. War so completely fills our horizon today that we are tempted to identify it with evil itself, and to think that it cannot be destroyed until all men are perfect. But this is not so. War is a particular form of evil, resulting from particular conditions, and there are strong reasons for believing that today the conditions which give it life and power no longer exist. This prince of scourges may be at long last brought under control.

2. The Conditions Of Drastic Change

This conclusion is based on more than a light-hearted optimism about human nature. It rests on the observation that the evil institutions of human society are most likely to be reformed when two conditions are fulfilled. The first is

that the institution should be economically unprofitable. The second is that it should be morally intolerable. One does not have to be a cynic to realize that where the moral sense of mankind conflicts with its material advantage, the moral sense will not prevail unless it is unusually strong. Likewise, when moral sense is reinforced by material advantage, it pulls at a willing horse and is likely to be correspondingly successful. It is not so widely recognized, but is nevertheless true, that material advantage is frequently unrecognized unless illuminated by the moral sense. The assumption so often made that men know and act upon their material advantage is without foundation in experience. In countless examples of history material advantage is sacrificed for moral ends, both individually, as when a saint dies for his faith or a soldier for his country, and nationally, when a nation sacrifices peace and plenty to preserve its honor and dignity. Material advantage frequently goes unrecognized for generations because of the dead weight of custom and sentiment. Institutions linger on in society long after they have become economically unprofitable; the sharp sword of moral condemnation must be applied before the dead branches can be pruned away.

The classic example of reform is slavery. It is at least doubtful whether slave labor has ever been more profitable than free labor, and there is no doubt that in the modern era the superior efficiency of free labor has more than compensated for the additional remuneration. Nevertheless slavery persisted until it aroused the moral condemnation of sensitive spirits. Then the combination of moral and economic censure drove it almost in one generation from a world in which it had persisted from earliest times. In 1800 it must have seemed fantastic, to any but blind visionaries, that slavery, almost the oldest economic institution known to man, on which all past civilization had rested and which seemed to support so much of present society, could ever

previously there had been a chaotic mixture of peoples. The scheme has undoubtedly been successful in improving Greco-Turkish relations, but only at an appalling cost in human suffering. The suffering involved in uprooting millions of Germans, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Rumanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, and other peoples would be so great that we must seek desperately for an alternative solution.

A possible alternative would be the application, to middle and eastern Europe at least, of a "cantonal" federation. This form of political organization has worked well in Switzerland, where people of four languages and races are able to work together in reasonable harmony, largely because of the great degree of local autonomy left to the tiny cantons. It is impossible to divide Europe into homogeneous nations. It is possible to divide it into homogeneous "Cantons." It might be possible to federate these small units where it would not be possible to federate larger units, for each unit would be too small to obstruct the flow of trade or disturb the Federal order. Full expression could be given, however, to cultural differences, and full autonomy granted in all matters of local government.

11. The Place Of Military Coercion

Even if we arrive at a satisfactory form of international organization, the place of military coercion in such a system is inevitably a matter of dispute. There will be some who argue from the analogy of a police force that an international authority will be impotent unless it has coercive power. The analogy, however, is a false one. An international "Police Force" of the type usually propounded would be more like the forces of the king in the days of the powerful barons. There would be vast struggles for the control of such a force among the national groups, which would end only with the complete dominance of one group and the unification of the

Lithuanians, White Russians, and Ukrainians. Little German communities spatter themselves across Eastern Europe as far as the Volga! There are Italians and Spaniards in France, Irish in Scotland and Scots in Ireland: the list is inexhaustible.

Unfortunately every such situation is a seed of war. No “composite” state, made up of many nationalities, can be secure if across its borders some of these nationalities are organized into independent countries. As long as an independent Serbia existed outside Austria-Hungary, the millions of Serbs and kindred folk inside Austria-Hungary were perpetually inspired to revolt. Conversely, a state which has an “irredenta,” which observes millions of its people living under a foreign rule, will be constantly anxious to bring the oppressed sheep within its fold, by war if need be. If nations are to live together in peace it is important to unite all people of one kind in one political unit, and to exclude from this unit people of another kind. Families get along well when each has its own home, but woe to the families whose womenfolk have to share the same kitchen! So it is with nations: it is easier for them to be friends with their neighbors if they do not have to occupy a common ground. Moreover, it is not enough to draw clever frontiers — the nations enclosed by them must be all in one piece. Germany felt the severance of East Prussia as a personal injury, although economically it made little difference. This injury was enough to begin a world war.

The task of dividing the world politically is almost as great, then, as that of separating an omelette into white and yolk. One possible remedy is to unscramble the omelette — to try to sort people out into neat national piles by the process of sheer bodily transfer. The task is not unprecedented. The League of Nations organized a vast scheme of exchange of Greeks for Turks, which left very few Turks in Greece and very few Greeks in Turkey, where

be abolished. And yet before the children of that year had passed to the grave, the great revolution was accomplished. It may seem preposterous to hope in this year of world war that war is in like manner tottering to its destruction. But the forces that destroyed slavery are at work on war. Vast changes in its nature have taken place in the past generation. These changes have increased both its economic unprofitability and its moral foulness to the point where the whole institution, together with the political system which gives rise to it, is ripe for destruction. The child of this year of terror may yet live to see the axe laid to this ancient, mighty, but rootless and rotten tree.

3. Economic Unprofitability Of War

It needs no finely drawn balance sheet to prove that war is economically unprofitable today to victor as well as vanquished. It has not, perhaps, always been so. A short war of aggression by a powerful nation against a weak neighbor has sometimes in the past been highly advantageous to the victor. A good case in point is the War of the United States against Mexico. It was short, relatively inexpensive and bloodless, and it opened up for American development a vast and potentially rich empire which otherwise might have gone unexploited. The wars by which the overseas empires of the Great Powers have been gained cost likewise, with some exceptions, less in proportion to the benefits gained by the victors, or at least by certain classes in the victor nations. In circumstances like these the advocate of peace has an uphill task.

Now, however, the nature of war has changed. The cheap victory has gone, possibly forever. The system of empire, alliance and spheres of influence and interest is drawn so tightly over the globe that no easy prey is left for the would-be conqueror. Mussolini’s Ethiopian campaign

was perhaps the last example of a cheap victory, and even his empire was short-lived. Hitler's easy victory over Poland, instead of being a cheap investment for a profitable empire, turns out to be the opening campaign of a long and costly war from which whatever the outcome, Germany must emerge poor and disorganized. There is no conceivable economic justification for a war between equals: victor and vanquished share a common impoverishment. And so small has the world become that more and more it separates into two evenly-matched groups, which threaten to tear apart the whole world.

The division of the nations into two political factions is one reason for the unprofitability of war. There is also another reason: the change in the techniques of warfare in the direction of increasingly costly methods. There was a day when war was a luxury of princes, fought with mercenary armies and paid for out of a little taxation or currency debasement. With the growth of democracy, patriotism, and conscription, war has become an enterprise of the whole people, a "total war" into which the whole resources of the nation-state are flung. And total war results in total poverty. The reason for this is not only the increased destructiveness of war, but the increased cost of destruction — cost in terms of resources withdrawn from the occupations of peace.

In war as in other things we are impressed with the spectacular, to the exclusion of the significant. An airplane crash impresses us more with horror than the ravages of malnutrition. Similarly the bursting bomb, the ruined building, and the shattered soldier impress us with their ghastly drama, making us forget the more important toll of war that goes on behind the battlefronts. In the First World War, for instance, agricultural production in Europe fell by more than 40 per cent, and in many places famine was the result. At first sight we are inclined to attribute this decline to the spectacular destruction of the battlefields, where farms

history of the League of Nations is an excellent illustration: the League failed as an instrument of world government because its constituent nations used it where they could as an instrument of their own private purposes and where they could not use the League for their own purposes they abandoned it. Any reconstructed League will fail likewise unless there is a change in national policies. Any federation or union will split up unless its members are imbued with a sense of responsibility for all. The first task of the lovers of peace, then, is to seek this reform in national policies and in individual sentiments. But this reform may be more easily accomplished in the presence of a responsible and respected world authority. There is no real division, then, between a national and an international peace policy, for each is necessary to the other.

It is impossible at this time to lay down detailed plans for an international political organization. Nevertheless it is possible to state a few guiding facts and principles. A serious *physical* obstacle should be noticed: the impossibility of dividing the map into homogeneous countries. This difficulty is particularly great in Eastern Europe — the seed-bed of twentieth-century wars! — where a long and turbulent history has resulted in an unsortable mixture of races, nations, and tongues. Rumanians, for instance, occupy a roughly doughnut-shaped area, with several million Hungarians and Germans in the "hole." No frontier can be drawn here which does not leave millions of Hungarians in Rumania, or millions of Rumanians in Hungary, unless Hungary is to be given an enclave in the middle of Rumania — a solution even less satisfactory to all concerned than that of the celebrated "Polish Corridor." Unfortunate Poland is devoid not merely of clear natural frontiers, but even of clear racial or linguistic frontiers. Even in the so-called "Corridor" Germans and Poles are inextricably mixed, while eastward the Poles shade quite imperceptibly into

wishes to protect domestic agriculture, it has no hesitation in slamming the door of the British market in the faces of continental countries, such as Denmark and Holland, without a thought for the dislocations and confusion that its action occasions abroad. But when a matter affecting the Dominions is concerned, the government at Westminster confers and deliberates with Dominion representatives, and comes to an agreed policy, in which the welfare of the people of the Dominions is taken into account. This tradition of “decent behavior” has been eminently successful in securing unity and loyalty where it has been applied, and there is no reason why it should not be immediately applied to all countries. There is no need to wait for their consent! It is not even necessary to set up a formal organization — the informal conference method applied between Britain and the Dominions could be applied by any government to all others immediately. If a more formal organization seems advisable, it could grow out of the informal conferences. Perhaps the final recognition of dependence and responsibility would come when a government set up a “Third House” consisting of representatives of all foreign governments, to advise and even to legislate on matters affecting foreign interests. A nation which adopted such a course would rapidly become the center of a “Commonwealth,” “Moral Empire” of peoples bound by a common law and loyalty rather than by force of arms.

10. International Political Organization

The next step to a warless world is the development of a world political and economic organization. This cannot be done effectively unless there is first a reformation in national peace policies as outlined above. World organization is bound to break down unless there is a recognition on the part of national units of responsibility for the welfare of all. The

were pulverized till the very soil was churned under tons of barren earth. In fact, however, the physical devastation was confined to a narrow strip of territory, and does not account for a hundredth of the decline in European production.

In Provence and Brittany, in Pomerania and Bohemia, far from the bombs and shells, a subtle and paralyzing shrinkage went on. The man of the farm was taken by the army, perhaps never to return. Cattle and horses were likewise requisitioned by the military. The fertilizer that should have helped to grow the crops was used to make explosives, or was sunk on the high seas. The factories that should have been making agricultural machinery were making munitions of war. So all over the continent the untilled field runs down to rank herbage and is cropped by a few scrawny goats or sheep, while the women and boys struggle with a farm beyond their power, with means depleted by the calls of war. And when the peasant family, goaded by requisitionings, tired of giving up its scanty crops for nothing in return, begins to hoard its food and refuses to send it to the hungry towns, the lowly foundations of empires crack and revolution sweeps the whole great edifice away. It was the untilled field as much as the Allied blockade, that spelled defeat for the Central Powers, brought all of Europe to the verge of violent revolution, and pushed Russia over the brink.

In mine and in factory the same story is repeated. To equip the monstrous armies of today, millions of workers must be withdrawn from the employments of peace to the preparation of the implements of death. Consequently there is dearth. Food is not grown. Cloth is not spun. Houses are not built. Roads and railroads are not repaired. Nations live on their capital, until by the end of the war the physical equipment of society may be so run down that it cannot serve even the most elementary needs. The breakdown of transport in Russia was as potent a source of the revolution

as any decline in crops.

Even when the war is over, the tale is not yet told. There are great gaps in the ranks of the generations: young men and strong who will never return to take the burdens that should have been theirs. More important, though less visible to the unseeing eye, are the great regiments of unborn. In almost every great war the drop in births is so great that the numbers of children who fail to be born outnumber the men who are killed. Thus a great war has two memorials: the empty ranks of the generation who fought it, and the empty ranks of the generation which it cradled. For decades afterwards these ugly gaps persist in the age distribution, and are reflected in a lack of leadership and of manpower: not for seventy years will they disappear. The war of 1870 was plainly visible in the German population statistics even in 1920: there was a distinct gap in the ranks of those aged fifty. Today the war of 1914-18 is reflected in a lack of experienced men of middle age, and in a lack of young men and women in the twenties.

In material equipment also, war stores up trouble for the future. It takes time to restore the fertility of the neglected fields and the numbers of the depleted livestock. After the First World War according to *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1913-1928*, it took Germany ten years to recover the fertility of her fields and the numbers and productivity of her animals. The destruction of productive power was as great if not greater behind the lines as in the devastated areas. It took only about five or six years to restore to full production the battlefields of Belgium and Northern France. But an even greater evil lies deeper. Under the temporary demands of war, a huge "construction industry" — steel, other metals, engineering, shipbuilding — is built up, which is too big for times of peace. These overblown construction industries are in large part responsible for the destructive cycle of boom and depression which universally

government might find expression, both on the national and on the international plane.

The first essential is a Declaration of Dependence: a statement of principle by a national government recognizing its dependence on, and its responsibility for, people who live outside its immediate jurisdiction. The next step is *restitution*. Acts of the past leave a legacy in the conditions of the present, and some attempt at least should be made to rectify the results of past acts inconsistent with the principles of the Declaration of Dependence. A government cannot, of course, atone for every act of injustice performed by its predecessors. Abstract justice is impossible of attainment, and the quest for it leads to endless strife, recrimination, and retribution. But in situations where past injustices rankle, a striking act of restitution, even if it be primarily symbolic, would have an important effect in transforming the minds of people and governments in the desired direction. If Britain for instance, voluntarily offered Eire an indemnity for the damage caused by the "Black and Tan" soldiers in the civil war of 1922, or if the United States offered to pay Mexico for the territories seized in 1848 by sending a corps of medical and agricultural experts to assist in her development, the result might be the opening of a wholly new chapter in international affairs. In this regard each nation must judge itself, and not be the judge of others. Its action must be taken as a matter of direct national policy, and not as a matter of bargaining or comparison with other nations, for only thus will restitution be a sign of strength and not of weakness.

A third step in the direction of a responsible national policy would be the creation of means by which the representatives of other nations can advise and legislate on matters affecting "foreign" interests. Something of this sort takes place, in an informal way, within the British Commonwealth. When, for instance, the British Government

perfectly definable principle of national policy. Wars are fought to gain or to preserve an *irresponsible* national independence. An independent nation is one which refuses to recognize its responsibility for the welfare of people who are not its citizens. Its government, to a greater or less degree, recognizes a responsibility for the *welfare* of its own subjects, but does not recognize a similar responsibility for the welfare of people outside its immediate jurisdiction. In judging the acts of their government, its people consider only the effect of these acts on themselves. If on balance the acts of the government affect its subjects favorably, they are considered good, even if the adverse reaction on the welfare of foreigners is much greater than the benefit conferred upon the nationals. Even this standard of political morality is not always reached in our representative assemblies. A politician is judged not by what he can do for his country as a whole, but by what he can do for Podunk, and by how much he can rob his fellow countrymen for the benefit of his own electors. It is this irresponsibility of legislatures which destroys democracy internally, and it is this same irresponsibility of national governments which is destroying our whole system.

The national state must reform, or it will perish. In its present form it is an intolerable nuisance, a constant source of war, a hindrance to the establishment of any rational economic system, an ugly and dangerous anachronism which will destroy us or which will be destroyed by a superstate if it is not transformed. It can be transformed, if men of good will can be given a vision of how it can be transformed, for the trouble with the world has not been so much a lack of good will, as a lack of knowledge as to how to make good will effective. It is not the purpose of the present essay to give a detailed blueprint for the redemption of each national state. The following steps however are suggested as possible ways in which a new spirit of responsible

follows war. It is a tempting simplification — though by no means the whole truth — to regard the business cycle as a “peak load” phenomenon, with war as its peak! Just as an electric power plant must have a great deal of unused capacity at noon, in order to provide for the “peak load” of evening, so it seems that an economic system must carry excess capacity — in the shape of idle men and machines — in time of peace, in order to take care of the “peak load” of war.

In addition war brings in its train violent monetary disorders, with destructive cycles of inflation and deflation. By intensifying the sentiment of nationalism, it increases those artificial barriers to prosperity which governments always seem eager to impose. It produces a vast crop of import and export restrictions, quotas, tariffs, and the like, stifling international trade and impoverishing the people, as each nation in turn plays the game of “beggar my neighbor.”

4. The Moral Intolerability Of War

Enough, now, for the economic case against war! It is so obvious as to be trite. Nevertheless, war persists in spite of its proved unprofitability. The reason for this strange persistence can only lie in our moral and political nature. We all admit that war makes us poorer, even if we win it. Nevertheless the majority of mankind still think that there are things worse than war, or at least that there are no practicable alternatives. But the majority of mankind once thought that there was no practicable alternative to slavery; consequently the opinion of the majority is not necessarily a safe guide to truth. Moreover, there are striking signs of change. Opposition to war, which in the Christian Church used to be confined to a few small sects, is now found even in the most respectable and nationalistic of churches. The

theory and practice of non-violence as a political weapon, developed by Gandhi in South Africa and India, has aroused wide interest in the West, and influences increasing numbers of people.

There is sound reason for the growth of this moral condemnation of war. It is not merely a result of the slow increase in moral sensitivity of mankind. It is due also to the altered nature of war itself. The strength of the institution of war lies in its appeal to the moral and the poetic in man. The desire for glory, for excitement, for danger, for an opportunity to display courage or to bear suffering, and even the plain desire to down an enemy, are potent movers of man's being. During most of its history war has appealed fairly strongly to these impulses, as well as to the darker passions of lust and greed. The cavalry charge, the thin red line, the outpost of empire, the daring deed of individual valor — these had the stuff of poetry in them, and the deeper insight that saw the skull of reality beneath the mask of glamour was given only to few. Now, however, the nature of war has changed. The dashing campaigns of the professional soldier have given place to the drab, deadly embrace of the grey millions. The horse has given place to the tank, and chivalry has gone with it; the lance and plume have been exchanged for machine gun and oil rag. The cleanliness of personal combat has given place to the foul anonymity of the bomber, who never sees the trail of bleeding bodies and ravaged beauty that he leaves below. Increasingly war has become a vast machine, an insatiable Leviathan that turns all men to its own evil purposes.

Another source of the moral prestige of the military profession in the past has been its power to protect the civilian population at home from the worst horrors of war. There is something noble and dramatic about the spectacle of the strong defending the weak, the brave soldier interposing his person between the enemy and his loved

conclusion that the existence of the independent national state is the root of the greatest of all modern evils, and yet his heart impels him to a love of country which he recognizes as a true and honorable emotion.

There is only one way out of this predicament. It lies in the reform of the national state, and in particular in the development of a new criterion of political justice whereby the acts of government may be judged. It may yet be possible to reconcile the existence of a large number of diverse countries with the preservation of world peace, and if this can be done it is of all solutions the most desirable.

World peace of a kind could be established by a uniform, centralized world state, but there are grave dangers inherent in any such plan — dangers which should be honestly faced. If the authority for such a world state should be based on fear and on military might, tyranny might result. Indeed, the world state has been tried for the known world in the Roman Empire. It developed into world tyranny, and broke up not so much from attacks from without as by its own inner division. A world in which there are refugees is an evil world, but a world in which there are no refugees, because there is no place of refuge, might be even more horrible. Diversity in itself is a virtue, for out of diversity comes life, and interest, and progress. If we purchased world peace at the price of world uniformity our descendants might well sigh, in a monotonous and monochrome existence, for the color and rhythm of our own.

9. The Redemption Of Nationalism

It is desirable, then, if possible to preserve nations and to preserve differences. It is right that men should have a home, and it is right that they should have a homeland. Our problem is to destroy the spirit within a nation that gives rise to war. This spirit is no vague concept, it is a

by the sense of unity, of “belonging,” to something greater than our own little selves.

There is hardly a poet who has not been a nationalist. Indeed, the great poet does more than hymn his nation — he creates it and maintains it. Other nations wept by the waters of Babylon — but only the psalmists of Israel made a song of those tears and wrought them into the music in which Israel lives today. The world has many islands, but only one “precious stone set in the silver sea.” “Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more,” says Wordsworth. And even Blake, who walked the very streets of Heaven, would build his New Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land. What broody internationalist can fail to be stirred by the paean of the minstrel:

Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!

This universal chorus is no accident. There is a deep spiritual need in almost all men for a “home,” for an environment in which they can feel comfortable and at ease. In personal life we retreat from the world of “outsiders” whose ways are strange, with whom we have to be on our guard, into the domestic kingdom of our family and friends where love rules a small circle within which we can be free and natural. In national life also we return from sojourn among foreigners, where our tongue must be twisted around the accents of unfamiliar speech and our actions must be trimmed to an unfamiliar environment, to sink back into the comfortable embrace of familiar things with a warm feeling of affection for the homeland. It is no wonder that the love of home inspires men, or that the vagabond and the man without a country have been despised.

It is, therefore, a grave dilemma which faces the man of peace and goodwill. His reason impels him to the

ones at home. This too has been largely destroyed by recent changes — especially by the development of aerial warfare. It is now no longer possible, except in the case of countries protected by vast distances of ocean, to protect the civilian population by sending armies out to stave off the attacks of the enemy. A tiger may be kept out of a garden by a wall, but an eagle cannot. So Britain’s army and navy can no longer protect the “tight little island” from enemy fire, the armies of Poland, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Jugo-Slavia, Greece, are brushed away like flies, the supposedly invincible “Maginot Line” fails utterly to protect France from the invading hosts, and the Japanese swallow up a mighty empire in a few weeks.

In these circumstances the courage of the soldier is of no more significance than that of the civilian, and his value as a “protector” is more than doubtful. Whatever the outcome of the present conflict, it looks as if the Danes who made no military resistance will come out best of all the conquered peoples. From the point of view of protecting the lives and property of their people or even the independence of their countries, the armed forces of the smaller nations might just as well not have existed.

5. The Dilemma Of Nationalism

It is evident that the altered nature of war itself has raised vital questions for nations and national policy, questions that as yet have hardly been asked, much less answered. Nationalism itself, which in this century is the most powerful spiritual force operating on the minds of men, is running into a moral and economic dilemma from which there seems to be no escape. A nation cannot survive unless it commands a deep emotion of affection and unity in the minds of its citizens. A good deal of the education, ritual, and oratory in every country is directed towards the end of

inspiring this love. The success of a people in war is dependent to an enormous degree upon their “morale” — that is upon their willingness to endure hardship, danger, pain, and the chance of violent death without losing the will to fight. Morale in its turn depends directly on two factors: the intensity of love of country, and the standard of health and nutrition. To extend the celebrated proposition of Napoleon: a people, as well as an army, marches on two organs: its heart and its stomach. War attacks both, but from the point of view of the long-run survival of a nation, the heart is the more important organ. A nation can survive defeat through the stomach, as Germany has recently proved. But a nation that loses its heart is on its way to extinction. Conversely, a nation that does not lose its heart can survive anything. Four or five thousand years ago the Jews were a small, semi-nomadic Semitic “nation” living insignificantly in the midst of many similar peoples: the Moabites, Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, some of whom achieved considerable power and civilization. Today the Jews alone remain: scattered, homeless, persecuted, but persisting through dispersions and catastrophes that overwhelmed all their original contemporaries and many younger nations. The reason is clear: it is because the Jews have had a love of “country” — that is of their people and customs — based on a compelling sense of purpose and religious mission greater than that of any other people who have ever lived.

Modern war insidiously saps the heart of a nation. It forces men to do deeds in the name of their country, of which they are secretly ashamed. This virus of shame can spread, unknown and unrecognized, through the life of a nation until the love which sustains this life turns to indifference or even to positive hatred. The extraordinary apathy and weakness of the victorious Allies in the twenty years of armistice is a familiar symptom of a psychological

opinion and of political life even in these countries are more realistic. The New York Herald Tribune, for instance, on March 30th, 1939, declared editorially that “War is the supreme expression of the common interest of the national community.” It is evident to the most superficial inspection that the “mythology” and ritual of national life is centered mainly around the events and heroes of war. The national holidays of all countries celebrate military occasions, the national heroes are the leaders of war. Nelson, Wellington, Napoleon, Washington and Lincoln, may differ in personal virtue, but they have in common one thing that makes them heroes: their leadership in war. The national ritual centers around the military parade, the salute to the flag, the remembrance of war dead. Even religion, where it subordinates itself to national emotion, becomes entangled more and more in military trappings. The cross on the altar is obscured by regimental flags, the gospel of universal love is drowned in the prayer for victory, and the humble ministers of Christ go forth in gorgeous array to bless the instruments of death.

8. The Dilemma Of Men Of Goodwill

The conclusion is inevitable. It is nonetheless unpalatable. From our mother’s lips, and from the mouths of teachers and preachers and all men of substance and probity from youth up, we have heard constantly the praises of love of country. If we have any sensibility at all, we have responded to this emotion as something stirring and fine. We have watched the raising of the flag at a great national festival, or perhaps even at some little local celebration, and our hearts have been touched with a sense of community with many millions of our fellow citizens here and now; we have felt part of a great stream of national history, and have been ennobled and raised above our petty private concerns

abroad. In this complex of gain and loss it is impossible, usually, to say whether the people of the United States or of foreign countries are injured most.

Before the year 1603, England and Scotland were almost continually at war. After that year, war was unknown between them. The bloody borders were no longer disturbed by invading hordes, and after centuries of warfare the English and Scots settled down into fruitful peace. What accomplished this miracle? Was it a sudden transformation of the English and Scots into sinless angels? There is little evidence to show that men were much less wicked in the seventeenth than in the sixteenth century. Was it a sudden disappearance of conflicts? There is no reason to suppose that the real conflicts between Englishmen and Scotsmen suffered any sudden diminution in 1603. Did Englishmen and Scotsmen suddenly take a remarkable liking to each other? — if we have Dr. Johnson's word for it, such was not the case even a hundred and fifty years afterwards. No, this miracle of peace was accomplished by a simple union of crowns, preserved a century later by a union of parliaments, and kept alive by the growth of common sentiments of loyalty.

The study of history leads to this inescapable, if unwelcome conclusion: that war is an institution inevitably associated with independent countries. Countries are born in war, live constantly by war, must ultimately be defended by war, and frequently die by war. In countries which because of their relatively inferior position are more openly militaristic, such as Germany, Italy, and Japan, this fact is openly and unashamedly recognized. In the richer countries, and particularly in Great Britain and the United States, the military substructure of the political body is less obvious, except in times of crisis, and it is possible for the well meaning and ill informed to believe that their countries could continue to exist indefinitely without war. The leaders of

disease, caused by an unresolved sense of shame. In Germany, on the other hand, the sense of shame was exorcised by the harsh treatment which she received. Because her people felt their punishment was out of proportion to their crime, instead of a sense of shame they developed a sense of injury, making them strong as a household but dangerous, powerful, and destructive as neighbors.

6. The Prime Cause Of War

The case against war, both from a moral and from an economic point of view, is so strong that it would seem that little more would be necessary than to attend the joyful interment. But although the case against war as an abstract institution is unanswerable, war not only survives in the concrete, but threatens to grow until it absorbs our whole attention. Like the duck-billed Platypus it ought to be extinct, and there are excellent reasons why it should be extinct, but for some curious reason it persists in surviving into a day where it has no reasonable place. If therefore we are to assist the benevolent forces of evolution, it is necessary to enquire by what peculiar circumstance war survives. This question opens the door to an overwhelming flood of opinions and ideas on the Causes of War — with the danger of opening much fruitless speculation and misleading assertion.

We are told by some to regard war as an expression of a "fighting instinct," an innate capacity for strife, or, in more theological terms, of original sin. Again, the Marxist assert that war is a result of economic conflicts, of the struggle of capitalists for markets and profits in rival spheres of imperialistic exploitation. Some attribute war to subtle psychological diseases, to the desire for change or adventure, to the outbreak of subterranean sexual forces, or to attacks of mass hysteria, infections of fear and hatred that spread

like an epidemic through the minds of common folk. Others hold the people guiltless, and say that war is the work of small coterie of evil men, financiers seeking for private gain and politicians seeking to distract public attention from their own misdeeds by picking foreign quarrels. Some attribute wars to the growth of armaments; others point out that armaments result from the fear of war, and are a symptom of a deeper distress. So we might go on through the babel of would-be authoritative voices. They all speak some truth, yet the key to the whole problem, is a proposition so simple, but so challenging to all our established ways of thought, that it cannot fail to be perceived unless the eye of our understanding is blinded by habitual emotions.

This proposition is that war, as a specific human institution, is the result not of conflicts, nor of human wickedness, but of the political organization of the world into a number of separate, sovereign, and irresponsible countries. A great deal of the thinking on this subject is obscured by confounding war, a special, limited evil, with conflict, which is general, unlimited, and probably ineradicable, or with sin, which is even more universal and intractable. This confusion leads to pessimism regarding the abolition of war. Because war is a particularly dramatic form of conflict, and a particularly noticeable expression of evil, we half unconsciously identify it with conflict and with evil, and proceed to argue that it cannot be abolished till the world has been purified from conflict and sin. If this were true the advocate of permanent peace might well throw up his hands in despair — however big our pail we cannot hope to empty the ocean! But fortunately it is not the ocean that we have to drain, but a lake, a big lake and a foul one, but a lake nevertheless, a lake limited in volume, whose very foulness is a sign that the springs which fed it are dry.

7. Independence As A Cause Of War

We have war, not principally because people are wicked — although it is no doubt true that if people were not wicked there would be no war; not because there are conflicts, although it is again true that if there were no conflicts there would be no war. We have war because there are *independent countries*; bodies of people organized for the essential purpose of maintaining their national independence by war. It is possible to imagine a world, and it is possible to achieve a world, in which people are still wicked, in which there are still conflicts, but in which there is no war. Indeed, within any given country this condition is achieved already. There are acute conflicts between the various sections of almost any country — between the country and the city, for instance, or between various regions. There are acute economic conflicts between the north and south, and between the east and west of the United States, between the north and south of England, the north and south of France, the east and west of Germany, the north and south of Italy. Yet as long as these countries remain intact, these conflicts do not result in war.

Conflicts, and especially conflicts of economic interest, are no respecters of international boundaries. It is almost impossible for a government to do anything which will benefit all its citizens and injure only foreigners. Always the acts of government benefit some of its citizens and some foreigners, and injure others of its citizens and other foreigners. To take a simple example — the imposition of a tariff. Suppose the United States were to raise its tariff on certain manufactured goods. This would, at least for a time, benefit the producers of these goods in the United States, but it would injure their consumers. At the same time it would benefit the consumers abroad, because the goods would become cheaper abroad, and would injure the producers