

the case
against
pacifism

by JOHN LEWIS

It is surprising that there has not yet appeared a considered reply to the pacifist case as stated by Aldous Huxley, C. E. M. Joad, Bertrand Russell and the Christian pacifists. Dr. Lewis has now attempted such a task and to-day its value should be considerable.

The book is planned so that in each section the fullest statement is given of the pacifist case in the actual words of its defenders, and to this the author then replies. After discussing the fundamental argument that force, being an evil, cannot produce good results, and also the case for Christian pacifism, Dr. Lewis deals with the argument that force has achieved nothing of value in world history.

In subsequent chapters the author deals with the influence of pacifism in unwittingly encouraging aggression and thus precipitating the world war. There is a particularly interesting section on the pacifist criticism of Russian home and foreign policy.

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by

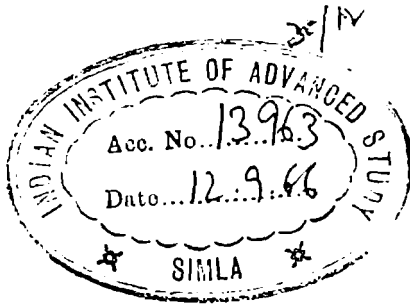
JOHN LEWIS, B.Sc., Ph.D.

“Justice without force is a myth, because there are always bad men; force without justice stands convicted of itself. We must therefore put together justice and force, and so dispose things that whatever is just is mighty, and whatever is mighty is just.”

PASCAL

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BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED
WOKING

P R E F A C E

PACIFISM IS no new creed. Long before the last War the influence of Tolstoi had disturbed the conventional morality of those who accepted without question the necessity of violence. During that War a number of new pacifist movements were launched, some mainly political and some religious. The influence of the Society of Friends increased considerably, and other branches of the Christian Church began to move in a pacifist direction. Circumstances also gave strong support to the Socialist criticism of war, which was based not only on internationalist and humanitarian grounds, but also on its fundamental economic causes.

The pacifist "forces" (if the word is allowable) were substantially united until events threw the whole problem into different perspective. The movement, which had always been progressive, and which had found its opponents among Conservatives and those who really believed in war, began to find itself opposing not the reaction, but the Left. There had been indications of this in differences of opinion over the struggle of Soviet Russia against intervention and counter-revolution. Although a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the No More War Movement, it had never been possible for me to criticize the Russians for their defensive policy. Very many pacifists shared this point of view. We were anti-imperialist pacifists at this time, and in the years immediately following the War this position was shared by all progressives, and involved no difficulties. Our aim was to oppose the unnecessary armaments of our own Government, to secure the revision of the Peace Treaties, and justice for exploited and defeated nations. This was the period of the Anti-War Movement, the growth of local Peace Councils, and the unity of pacifists, Socialists, and Communists in a vigorous attack on every form of war and war preparation. But with the growth of Fascism and Japanese im-

perialism the whole problem changed. Country after country found itself on the defensive against military aggression, and an increasing number of former pacifists could only give their unstinted support to this resistance.

With the growing menace of war, pacifism itself was reborn. Largely under the influence of Dick Sheppard and his friends, the Peace Pledge Union came forward as the uncompromising exponent of a pacifism pledged to take part in no war at all, either aggressive or defensive or civil.

Simultaneously there arose within the ranks of Conservatism a powerful "isolationist" and anti-war party whose aim was to prevent the League of Nations, and this country in particular, from interfering with Fascist aggression. Not on fundamental questions, of course, but quite definitely on questions of immediate policy, the Peace Pledge Union found itself in close alliance with Lord Beaverbrook, the National Government, and the British Union of Fascists, all of whom were strong for "Peace" at almost any price, and who accused Socialists and supporters of the League of being "war-mongers." Their motives, of course, were exactly opposite to those of the pacifists. It was war in defence of smaller nations, of democracy, of genuine self-government to which they were opposed, not war itself.

It became increasingly difficult for the old type of Anti-War Movement and all-in Peace Council to continue. The invasion of Abyssinia brought matters to a head, and pacifists found themselves divided. Many opposed sanctions, but others, who had previously taken up a purely negative attitude, now found themselves supporting them. They did not accept the position that sanctions necessarily meant war. On the contrary, they held that the only way to secure peace was through a union of partial democracies with the Soviet Union against Fascist aggression. Such a union, though founded on the threat of war, yet hoped by such action to avert it.

For a time there was considerable confusion. On the platforms of Peace Demonstrations appeared exponents of

contradictory policies. In the Corn Exchange at Cambridge in 1937 I found myself and Lady Layton speaking strongly for Collective Security, while Captain Mumford of the P.P.U. took a diametrically opposite line. Eleanor Rathbone truly says, "When advocates of policies which are completely incompatible and mutually destructive are encouraged to address audiences from the same platform under the same banner—what can one expect but that the public becomes confused and dispirited. . . . Was there ever a better illustration of the text: 'For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?'"¹

It became clearer and clearer to some of us that for a time at any rate it was possible to work for a union of Capitalist and Socialist forces desirous of resisting Fascism and preserving the *status quo* against the Axis Powers and their confederates in our midst.

More than half the original Peace movement gradually swung into line, but a powerful minority, together with a great accession of new converts, opposed sanctions, interference with Germany, the self-defence of Abyssinia, Spain, and China, and the whole idea of collective security.

Pacifism thus became an immensely significant political force. To many of us it appeared to be helping to mobilize public opinion behind a pro-Fascist Government, thus, out of very zeal for Peace, rendering invaluable support to Fascism. "If I were Hitler," says Jonathan Griffin, "I should pray for the success of the Peace Pledge movement."

If the Peace movement was split and confused by the development of events, individuals also suffered. The minds of many were divided and bewildered.

The Crisis of September 1938, the inevitable results of which were the redoubling of our armaments, the introduction of conscription, and desperate moves for a Peace Front, intensified the problem. As the possibility of averting war diminished, the need for conscription and re-armament

¹ Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., *War Can Be Averted*.

were accepted by many who, only a few months ago, were strenuously opposing them.

When the Second World War broke out there was a month or so of great confusion as the opposing forces ranged themselves and made clear their aims. At first it seemed that the struggle of the weaker nations for independence and against Fascism had entered another and a higher phase, and that democrats and Socialists could support it. Many did so and still do so.

Misgivings increased, however, under the pressure of the rapidly changing situation, and by the beginning of October non-pacifists and pacifists were to a considerable extent lining up once more in much the same position as in 1914-18.

This involves no wavering or inconsistency either in pacifists or non-pacifists. Pacifists are against all wars, whether just or unjust. Non-pacifists are with the pacifists when war is in their view imperialist, or futile, or unjust, and against the pacifists when they believe war to be in self-defence or genuinely for collective security.

There are two united fronts: the uneasy unity of democrats and capitalists against Fascist aggression, a unity which, if it is possible, is both rare and insecure, and the unity of pacifists and democrats against imperialist war. Readers must judge for themselves which front at the moment is theirs.

But the international problem is not everything.

- Spain has been through a civil war in which many former pacifists participated. Fascist aggression is as much anti-democratic and anti-Socialist as it is monopoly-imperialist or racial. The real struggle is a class struggle: the war between privilege and the common people. The final struggle will be internal, and may issue in civil war. The final question is whether we should fight to preserve democracy in our own country if we are left with no alternative.

Pacifism claims that there is an alternative, and that it can be used to defeat invasion as well as unconstitutional

reaction at home. Such a claim must be examined with scrupulous fairness, even with eagerness. If there is an alternative to war, we must find it without delay, for without some defence the overthrow of all that stands for progress and decency is inevitable.

This book endeavours to deal with the complex situation which has arisen. While the decision is definitely against pacifism, every care has been taken to state the pacifist case fully and in the words of its exponents.¹ I have also tried to follow the circuitous route of pacifist argument, which frequently assumes what has to be proved or what has been frankly denied. In many cases the same argument keeps reappearing in somewhat different forms as another aspect of the subject opens up. A certain amount of repetition is thus inevitable, but it will help to make the pacifist position itself clearer and to drive home difficulties and objections. It may be that the case as thus presented will convince some of my readers. I shall regret this, but take some comfort from the fact that it has at any rate vindicated the fairness with which I have tried to state both sides.

There was a celebrated Mayor who, during his year of office, allowed himself to incline neither to partiality on the one hand nor impartiality on the other. Impartial enquiry, however, does not mean neutrality. As in a court of law, the more impartial the hearing the more certain may be the verdict. With regard to the questions debated in this book, my own conclusion is that the more exhaustively and objectively the case for pacifism is debated, the more plain does it become that it has now become a reactionary faith. If so, we need to know it and to know why. I make no apology, therefore, for drawing definite and critical conclusions, in face of the gravity of the world situation. Where error may be fatal, there is every reason for plain speaking.

¹ The pacifist case, as set forth in the words of its exponents, is printed in *italics* at the beginning of each section.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the pacifist case I have consulted a large number of books, but I should especially like to mention Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means*, C. E. M. Joad's *Why War?* and Bertrand Russell's *Which Way to Peace?* On the other side I am indebted to Norman Angell's *Peace with the Dictators* and his invaluable "Foreign Affairs Supplement" to *Time and Tide*, to Wickham Steed's *Vital Peace*, and to the *Listener* for a number of verbatim reports of broadcast discussions on pacifism and collective security. The Christian attitude to the use of force is discussed with courage and insight by Reinhold Niebuhr in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* and *Reflections on the End of an Era*. Finally, I must mention with appreciation Kenneth Ingram's *The Defeat of War*.

I have also had the advantage of reading an unpublished essay by Dr. Aurel Kolnai, to whom my thanks are very specially due.

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CHAPTER I

THE CASE FOR PACIFISM

“WAR IS the worst of evils.”

“War settles nothing, achieves nothing, creates nothing.”

“Even if war achieved every single one of the aims which it professes to achieve, even if it conferred every one of the goods which its apologists claimed for it, if it settled disputes, cleansed the national life, left the world happier and more vigorous, restored manliness and courage, gave security and laid the foundations of a lasting peace—even if it did all these things, they would not be worth the price that must be paid for them. In fact, as we have seen, it does none of them, and the flood of human misery and boredom which the last war let loose flowed to no purpose; the men who won the war were betrayed by the peace, their ideals were derided, their hopes mocked, their sufferings wasted.

“I would go further and maintain that, even if the suffering that war involves were enormously and incredibly diminished, so that it fined itself down to the sufferings of a few, a very few people, of one family even, that still those things for the sake of which the suffering was endured would not be worth the endurance.”¹

In these words Professor Joad takes us at once to the heart of the pacifist position.

Pacifism, which was the belief of a very small minority during the Great War, is now upheld by a large and influential body of public opinion. It cannot lightly be dismissed, indeed even those who cannot accept the pacifist position must be ready to acknowledge that it bears witness to truths which to-day are too frequently and too easily forgotten, but which must at all costs be maintained if civilization is to endure.

The fact that war has a hardening and corrupting influence on all who participate in it, the fact that war

¹ Joad, *Why War?*

propaganda whips up hate, maligns the enemy, and persuades us of our own self-righteousness, the fact that wars are frequently supposed to be fought for noble motives, whereas greed and lust for power are really at the back of them—these and many other pacifist contentions cannot for a moment be denied.

And it is certainly true that no positive civilization, no just social order or stable peace, can flow from violence, war, and repression. A true social order must be based upon persuasion, conviction, and a positive will to co-operation and fellowship among men. These are the only bonds which can hold society together with any permanence and to any real advantage.

Having made this position clear, let us consider whether the immense and deep-seated evils which war implies are, in all possible circumstances, greater than the evils which would fall upon us if we refused to fight, for that is the pacifist contention; and the opposite contention is, of course, that evils may result from pacifism, in certain circumstances, which are even greater than the appalling horrors of war.

There appear to be two quite distinct pacifist positions which must be examined separately. The first is based upon the broad general principle that no end, however good, justifies the adoption of evil means, and, therefore, to resort to violence, either to preserve that which we value or to achieve it, cannot, in the long run, bring the desired result. What we seek to achieve or maintain by evil means we are bound to lose.

The second is based upon practical or utilitarian considerations. Refusing to dogmatize about the sacredness of human life or the doctrine of "means and ends," it holds that as a matter of experience wars do more harm than good and fail to achieve the objects they have in view.

The first type of pacifism I propose to call *absolutist*, because it is based upon the belief that there are certain absolute moral truths which must in no circumstances be

violated. Chief among these is the principle of the sacredness of human life. Bertrand Russell says :

“In all that lives, but especially in human beings, and most of all in children, is something sacred, indefinable, unlimited, something individual, and strangely precious, the growing principle of life, an embodied fragment of the dumb striving of the world.”¹

This fundamental principle has also been clearly put by Aldous Huxley :

“The end cannot justify the means, for the simple and obvious reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced.”²

Max Plowman puts it even more forcefully :

“War is an outrage upon the principles of social morality which every human being has an absolute duty to uphold. The Pacifist simply says he will not willingly be a party to outrage upon those principles : he will not destroy men for the sake of society. When the family brawl turns to violence he walks out of the house.”³

This being the case, the pacifist's duty in time of war is extremely simple—he refuses point blank to take any part in it. In this way he cuts through all the complexities of a difficult situation.

Max Plowman goes on to say that this position cannot very well be discussed on an intellectual or a political basis. It is essentially a religious question :

“It frames itself like this. Can we, or can we not, in the full consciousness with which we are endowed, take part in war? When it comes to the real thing, the killing business, at whose command are we to forgo the God-like endowment of consciousness? Who has the right to put

¹ Bertrand Russell, *Which Way to Peace?*

² Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*.

³ Max Plowman, *The Faith Called Pacifism*.

individual consciousness out of commission? Because in the active-consciousness which distinguishes a man from a beast, one human being cannot kill another."¹

The utilitarian position is rather different. It does not go so far as to say that violence and the taking of human life are never permissible. Thus Joad says:

"I do not believe that human life is sacred."

"I do not believe that the use of force is always and necessarily wrong."

"I propose to assess the rightness of a course of action by reference to its effects on people's happiness. If it conduces to their happiness more than any other alternative course of action which it is open to the individual or the community to take, then I should hold that the course of action is right and ought to be followed; if not, not."²

Bertrand Russell also rejects the *absolutist* form of pacifism. He points out that the absolutist does not of course find it necessary to weigh the pros and cons of each particular war to see whether the evil consequences are likely to outweigh the good. His position is perfectly clear in all circumstances: war is *always* wrong. Russell does not find himself able to reach pacifism by so short a road. "What is right and what is wrong depends, as I believe, upon the consequences of actions, in so far as they can be foreseen; I cannot say simply, 'War is wicked,' but only 'Modern war is practically certain to have worse consequences than even the most unjust peace.'"³

There are two sides to this argument. Firstly, it may not be the case that *all* wars have done more harm than good, but only that modern war is on so large a scale, and uses such deadly weapons of destruction, that it is bound to end in mutual annihilation. It is now an act of race suicide. Vera Brittain says: "I do not believe that any kind of peace

¹ Max Plowman, *The Faith Called Pacifism*.

² Joad, *Why War?*

³ Bertrand Russell, *Which Way to Peace?*

has always been better than any kind of war; it is the wholesale massacres involved in modern warfare, and its penalization of those who are most helpless and least responsible, which causes me to regard war as the greatest calamity that can afflict a nation to-day."¹ Secondly, the cruelties and horrors of war fall increasingly on innocent civilians, degrade all who participate in it, and give rise to the same kind of tyranny and injustice that war is usually seeking to overthrow. You cannot, it is argued, defend civilization with the instruments of barbarism. To fight for any worth-while or noble end is foolish, because war itself is a denial of the very thing you are after. You cannot cast out Satan by Satan! You cannot overcome force by force. That is both the conclusion of history and the teaching of morals. "War engenders an atmosphere in which hatred and bitterness flourish and ideals are forgotten. It throws into prominence and elevates to positions of power a managing and executive type of man very different from the young idealists who, in the early days, flocked so eagerly to the standards to fight for honourable ends."²

War "degrades the mind in which it begets stupidity, silliness and lies, and debauches the spirit, from which its offspring are cruelty, vulgarity, ferocity and greed."

"War is irrational and amoral . . . it puts a premium upon vice, discourages intelligence and diminishes virtue; in short, it leaves men intellectually and morally worse, thicker in the head and harder in the heart than it found them."³

Vera Brittain has put the position very clearly:

"It is chiefly because of the incalculable, insensate and indiscriminate destructiveness of the modern war machine, that I deny that the principles, codes and standards of civilized living can be inculcated or maintained by force." Moreover, "War exterminates ordinary men and women on the other side with whom we have no quarrel. To

¹ Vera Brittain, *Thrice a Stranger*.

² Joad, *Why War?*

³ *Ibid.*

fight Fascism by arms is to imitate its methods; to defend democracy is to accept regimentation and abandon every democratic principle."¹

In addition to those utilitarians whose objection to war is mainly moral, we have others who oppose "League" wars and the whole doctrine of collective security as likely to widen the area of conflict, and even provoke an outbreak of hostilities. This might be called *political pacifism*. Others again reject all *capitalist* wars, including all wars in which Socialists are asked to unite with capitalist allies, as in Spain and China, or to-day in the war against Germany. All such wars, it is argued, will either prove to be for imperialist ends, though disguised as wars for "democracy" and "liberty," or, if they start as a genuine struggle for such ideals, they will speedily degenerate, and the jingo and capitalist elements will end up in supreme control, having ousted and suppressed their progressive allies.

Pacifism has largely arisen from a very natural and very right revulsion from war and its horrors. There is a danger of getting used to horrors, of becoming as callous to suffering and death as primitive man. Civilization has increased our sensitiveness to human pain and taught us pity. War is making us unlearn this lesson. Civilization has also schooled us to restrain our more violent impulses. War, once again, throws off the painfully achieved discipline of centuries and we revert to savagery. For two hundred years we have preached the slow elimination of war from society and the coming of internationalism. Now we have war actually preached as an ennobling thing. Mussolini declares:

"I do not believe in perpetual peace. Perpetual peace negatives all the fundamental virtues of man. War is for man what motherhood is for woman. Only in bloody effort can man live in the sun."

"We wish to be a military nation and, not being fearful of words I will add, militarist."

¹ Vera Brittain, *Thrice a Stranger*.

Hitler declares:

“Peace is an interlude in war.”

“In eternal warfare man has become great. In eternal peace mankind would be ruined.”

Pacifism is the revolt of the human spirit against this whole tendency, and, as such, it is to be welcomed.

The coming of Fascism has brought a new and cynical machiavellianism into politics. Expediency takes the place of conscience. The end justifies any means. Oaths and treaties are no longer held to be sacred. Demagoguery becomes calculated and cunning to the last degree. In the face of this, pacifism preaches a return to conscience, to integrity, and to scrupulousness in the choice of means. That is not an unhealthy tendency.

There is no more relentless critic of chauvinism or more sincere champion of international justice than the pacifist. Nor can we pretend that an unworthy pride in the very worst features of British Imperialism is not as prevalent and as dangerous as ever it was. The pacifist rightly insists that more than one war fought for ostensibly noble motives was really imperialist, that behind the Great War was the clash of rival claims for economic and territorial expansion, that the real victims are in the end the exploited coolie in the conquered colony and the exploited worker in the victorious country. The pacifist suspects that “resistance to aggression” may easily be merely a refusal to consider genuine grievances. He believes that we were wrong in treating Germany as a criminal after the War, and that until her just grievances are remedied it is unfair to complain of her attempts to better her position by force.

The pacifist sees a tendency to substitute force for persuasion both in international affairs and in the struggle for and against Socialism. He repudiates the violence of Fascism, but he thinks that the Socialist is also in danger of choosing the short cut of violence to his goal.

Pacifists, ever since the Great War, with its appalling sufferings, its gross injustices, and disastrous consequences,

have been preaching their gospel with increasing effect. Political developments have recently operated in their favour. Those who were opposed to collective security and to the restraint of Fascism for non-pacifist reasons nevertheless found allies in the pacifist on certain specific issues, and this undoubtedly accounts to some extent for the present popularity of pacifism.

Although all pacifists are at one in this general attitude to war, it is important to recognize the distinction between absolute and utilitarian pacifism.

Absolute pacifism, as we have seen, is more religious than political, and has always appealed to the type of mind which finds in moral principles and abstract ideas eternal realities which entirely transcend the exigencies of practical life and the unrealities of time and space. In this it differs fundamentally not only from non-pacifism, but also from utilitarian pacifism. The absolutist does not say: "We will not fight because we know from experience that the actual results are not worth the price paid," but: "We *know* that whatever the immediate or apparent results, the ultimate and real results must be bad because good cannot come out of evil."

Some pacifists make the logical mistake of arguing in a circle. They have not really made up their minds whether they are utilitarians or absolutists. If you ask them why war is wrong, they say: "Because its consequences are always evil." If you ask them to give their reasons for asserting that the consequences are always evil, they say it is because war is wrong, and right cannot come out of wrong. This fallacy is avoided by both the consistent absolutist and the consistent utilitarian.

The absolutist judges the wrongfulness of war not by the consequences, but by eternal and absolute principles. From these he deduces that the consequences *must* in the long run be disastrous, but he is prepared to stand by his principles "in scorn of consequence." It is only *in the long run* that pacifism is certain to work, and anyhow it is followed not because it works, but because it is right.

For the utilitarian, however, the question of immediate consequences is crucial. His whole case is that war does not work. His position depends upon the failure of war to achieve its aims. If therefore it can be shown that, under certain conditions, war can succeed, that, in spite of the tragic cost, there may be in some cases net gain, that the nation which defends itself does not necessarily always become as bad as the aggressor, and so on, then utilitarian pacifism as a creed has failed to make good its claims.

That does not mean that *all* wars are necessary, or that *all* wars which are declared to be in defence of justice are right; but that it is *possible* that any particular war is just and necessary—a position previously denied. Every case must, of course, be settled on its merits.

It is important to see what such a conclusion would mean to the absolutist. Does it also overthrow his position? Not at all; the absolutist can reply: "I do not refuse to fight because war does not pay, but because, as the Quaker would say, there is a 'stop' in my mind. There are some things that I simply cannot bring myself to do, and killing a man is one of them. To do so would both violate something in myself and offend something sacred in the very nature of things. I cannot and will not do it."

This position may not prove an easy one to maintain. It may be—and the absolutist would not for a moment deny the possibility—that the first consequence, under certain conditions, of a widespread refusal to fight would be such a weakening of the defensive forces as to encourage and precipitate attack by an aggressor. If this is so, the pacifist has actually to face the possibility of the growth of pacifism increasing war *for a time*, even though, in his view, ultimately it may end it. There are some absolute pacifists who will be shaken if this is indeed the case. Even though they still know in their hearts that war is wrong, they may feel it difficult to resist it if the immediate consequence of such resistance is not peace, but the butchery of an innocent civilian population or its subjection to a cruel despotism.

But there are certainly others who would still maintain their position in spite of these "apparent" consequences.

If, on the other hand, the utilitarian is right; then the absolutist not only has the satisfaction of doing his duty, but the additional satisfaction of securing immediately desirable results. Many absolutists, but, as we shall see, not all, are convinced that this is the case—naturally their faith is greatly strengthened by the success of its working.

Our task now is to examine these two schools of pacifist thought not only as theories, but also in their practical consequences. Truth cannot be discovered by thought alone: in every case theory must be tested and corrected by practice. Pacifism is not only a faith, but a guide to action—or inaction—and, as such, it can only be judged by its effects.

CHAPTER II

THE ABSOLUTIST POSITION

THE MOST fundamental objection to war is based on the conviction that violence and the taking of human life, being themselves wrong, cannot lead to anything but evil.

This position depends on the truth of two propositions :

(1) Violence and killing are absolutely wrong, and therefore cannot be justified under any circumstances.

(2) If they are wrong, and if they are chosen as the means to a good end, then, instead of leading to that end, they necessarily defeat it.

Let us examine these contentions. It is not so simple as is often supposed to distinguish right from wrong. Conscience, or moral intuition, is sometimes correct, but that does not mean that it is infallible. Men's consciences have commanded them to do some very queer things. The conscience of one age and place is not that of another. Conscience is educable in the history of man and of the individual, and it badly needs educating. One must follow the light one has, and in that sense conscience is *authoritative*, but one must also remember that, since the light can increase, the dictates of conscience should never be regarded as final.

Intuition is not a faculty which simply knows right and wrong, but the judgment of the whole man at any one moment, the man as he is, as the creature of his social environment, heritage, education, and personal development. The feeling of absoluteness is not due to the absoluteness of a fixed standard outside the man which he sees with crystal clearness, but to the fusion of all his feelings and ideas in a judgment which is the resultant of them all and is *felt* with overwhelming force and certainty. If this were not

so, it would be almost inexplicable for two men to reach opposite moral judgments in the same situation. Yet we know how often it happens. It is explicable if the judgment depends on the man.

But how does a man reach a particular judgment? What, if anything, decides how the balance of conflicting tendencies shall come out? Now, if it is a genuine moral judgment, then, whether the conclusion is reached by a rapid summing up of the pros and cons which is practically intuitive, or by anxious thought and deliberate weighing of the factors, what is really happening is that the man is balancing up the consequences of two alternative courses of action. That course is "right" which on balance gives us the greater good.

But how do we decide what is good? Spinoza gave us the classical answer to that question: *We do not desire anything because we believe it to be good, but we deem it to be good because we desire it.* Life contains many goods and many evils, and there is a wide measure of agreement about them. The problem of life is not so much to decide what we desire to attain and what we desire to avoid, as how to order our lives so that, in seeking what is good, we do not pay too high a price. All moral judgment is a weighing of the good consequences of a line of conduct against the evil consequences. If I train for a race, I have the satisfaction of physical fitness and victory, but I pay in a strict regimen, plain food, and exhaustion. I have to decide whether it is worth it. It follows that the unpleasant or painful—what we call evil—is not always to be avoided, for it may be the means to a greater good. The "right" course is that which, in spite of incidental evils, is on the whole satisfactory in its results. The "wrong" course is that which leads to a preponderance of evil consequences over good. We must draw a sharp distinction between evil and wrong. An evil is anything which is *in itself* undesirable. A "good" course of action may involve us in certain inevitable evils, but that does not matter so long as good preponderates.

But not all moral judgment of this kind is *sound*. Judgment can err in several different ways:

- (a) It can add up the sum wrongly.
- (b) It can make a mistake as to the consequences of a particular action.
- (c) It may not even attempt to judge by the ultimate balance of good and evil.

Let us consider the last of these possibilities. An intuitive judgment may not be a moral process at all, but the result of emotional bias or simply habit. A man who simply *accepts* a moral judgment secondhand, backed up as it may be by authority and even threats, may come to react automatically and to *feel* certain things as absolutely right or wrong. This is not a genuine, autonomous moral judgment.

A man who recoils from an action because of a simple and violent emotion of distaste or rejection is not necessarily making a moral judgment at all. Such a judgment is baseless not because it is intuitive, but because it is not made in view of *all* the facts—the ultimate consequences have not been weighed. If a man spends more than he is earning and gets heavily into debt, he does so because he dislikes the immediate evil of depriving himself of what he wants, and refuses to face the ultimate consequences. Such deprivation is “in itself” an evil, but taken in connection with its consequences, *i.e.* keeping solvent, it is good.

Applying this to the moral judgment of absolute pacifism, one would agree, of course, that violence and the taking of human life are evils. That is an absolute judgment, and an immediate one. But if a man makes that immediate judgment of evil a final judgment of wrong, he is putting *moral* validity where it does not belong. What he ought to do is to ask himself whether the total evil involved in the particular series of actions under consideration is greater or less than the total good. If he does this, then, while certain evils will also be wrong, not all evils will be wrong.

Applying this to the question of violence, violence remains an evil, under all circumstances, but it is not wrong if the consequences are more good than bad.

This may seem rather abstract, but all our ordinary judgments are of this kind. We accept many evils, in spite of their being evil, because on the whole more good results than harm. We climb mountains, enduring much discomfort and fatigue. We "scorn delights and live laborious days" to pass examinations. We save our money for a rainy day. We have a tooth extracted because it is decayed. We generally recognize that to call an action "wrong" simply because it is in itself evil, and for no other reason, is a short-sighted policy, is to be swayed by immediate feeling rather than by reflective feeling. Such immediate judgments are partial, and therefore non-moral. They treat an action as if moral value were attached to the action itself apart from circumstances and consequences, whereas it is only the *immediate* good or evil that so belongs. Now to consider any action by itself and apart from its consequences is to attribute to its quality an *absolute*, instead of a *relative*, goodness or badness. It declares, for instance, that the action of striking a man is *in itself* evil, and therefore in itself wrong. Why do we call this an *absolute* judgment? Because nothing is allowed to overthrow it or qualify it, because we allow its wrongness to be completely and finally determined by its evil quality without reference to its consequences.

Now, all such absolute judgments are liable to be wrong. They exalt into a universal rule a valuation which may vary considerably according to circumstances. If, simply because I am conceited and irascible, I strike a man who laughs at my mistakes; if I strike a man out of malice or unjustified hatred, the action is wrong. If I strike his arm up just as he is going to shoot someone; if I knock him down to prevent him injuring an innocent person, the action is right. It does not cease to be evil, but it does cease to be wrong. If I consider the same action apart from the circumstances, my judgment becomes abstract and

absolute, and I therefore make a universal or absolute rule: "All violence is wrong."

Now, whether one accepts such rules because of the immediate evil employed, or because of custom or religious tradition, or for any other reason, they separate an action from its circumstances and consequences. Such rules are without foundation.

The important thing is to see that right and wrong *in every case* have to be determined by considering, not the *action* in itself and its goodness or evil, but the action in relation to all the relevant consequences. When we do so we shall hardly ever find that we are offered the choice between an action which is wholly good, the consequences of which are also good, and an action which is evil, the consequences of which are evil. If every case were like that we could work to "absolute" rules and all would be well. Actually we find that some actions which are good in themselves have consequences which undo this good, while some actions which are evil in themselves have consequences which compensate for this evil.

There is no harm in spending our evenings in some delightful hobby. It is good. But if by doing so we neglect other duties, it is nevertheless wrong.

It is most unpleasant to undergo an operation for appendicitis. It is an undoubted evil. But it may save our life.

We are now in a position to re-examine the statement that "the end justifies the means." This assumes that we can judge whether the means is good or bad by considering it in isolation. It is good or bad *in itself*. It also assumes that we can judge this goodness or badness *apart from the consequences*, that, in fact, we can predict the consequences by discovering whether the means is good or bad in itself. But there is only one way to find out whether anything is good or bad, and that is to measure its value *in terms of its consequences*. Therefore, if the means chosen has desirable consequences, that in itself settles the fact that it is good, and there is no other way of judging the goodness or the

badness of the means. From this it follows that the moral quality of an action—say striking a blow—is not a fixed thing at all, but depends always upon the end achieved by it. Therefore we do not say that “the end justifies the means,” but that the only way of telling whether a *means* is good or bad is to find out what its effects are.

This means that a value may be overridden by other values in a particular situation so that its character is altered. What was good becomes bad. The delightful hobby becomes a vice. It is not enough to say, “It is never right to do evil.” Discriminating between evil and wrong, we must say it is never right to do *wrong*, and wrong is not the same as evil. A knife tearing painfully through bone and nerve and tissue is undoubtedly an evil; if it is the knife of a surgeon it may be right in spite of being evil; if it is the knife of a murderer it is both evil and wrong.

But can it ever be right to take human life? It can never, of course, be anything but evil to take human life; but if the shooting of one gangster about to machine gun a number of innocent people is at the moment the only way to save them, it is undoubtedly right. Joad himself says:

“If I saw a man laying a mine on a railway line just before an express train was due, I should have no hesitation in shooting him, just as I should have no hesitation in shooting a mad dog.”¹

The action, however evil and regrettable in itself, becomes a right action because on the whole more good than harm results. Pacifists frequently declare that we are never placed in such a position that whatever course we take someone is bound to be injured. “One is never faced with a choice between two evils, if we did we could not be living in a moral universe.” They believe that the choice is always between “hatred and lies and a denial of brotherly love and of the right of the individual to live” and pure benevolence. Unfortunately, life is not as simple as that, and it is shutting our eyes to facts to pretend that it is.

¹ Joad, *Why War?*

The non-pacifist does not choose between hate and benevolence, he chooses between two courses, one of which in its immediate consequences is undesirable but leads to desirable consequences in the long run, and the other which is certainly less objectionable at the moment but leads to disastrous results. He will not make such a choice, of course, unless he is convinced that it is the only way to a desirable end for all concerned. The simple example is the decision to have a child operated upon. A more complex case, involving exactly the same principle, is the terrible choice of saving some people from a shipwreck and leaving others to perish because there are insufficient boats. We do the best we can under the circumstances. The pacifist frequently argues as though we are tempted "by specious arguments" to take a short cut. It is usually the other way round. The temptation is to avoid the immediately unpleasant or harmful action. This is the short cut to benevolence. It is both more moral and shows more concern for humanity to take the long and painful road which leads to the greater welfare in the long run.

Nearly everyone, pacifists included, make their ordinary moral judgments in this fashion. Even Aldous Huxley, though he says that "no man is justified in doing an evil thing that good, as he believes, may come of it," goes on to accept "a minimum of violence" as legitimate in the case of the police. But when it comes to war he abandons common sense for absolutism. In the first case he sees as clearly as any of us that violence, although in itself an evil, does not necessarily lead to evil, but may lead to good. But when he speaks of war he argues that war *aims* at destruction, whereas the violence of the police *aims* at social peace. But if, quite rightly, we are asked to look, not at the violence itself in the case of police action, but at the real aim, which is restraint of lawlessness and the general peace—an end which justifies the means—then in the case of war we must be allowed to look for the real aim, which is no more destruction than the aim of the police is violence.

War, in fact, always has aims which are quite distinct from the destruction involved. These aims may be bad, as when war is fought for sordid ends; or they may be good, if war is genuinely defensive. The aim of many wars is profit to the war-maker, a fact which is overlooked by treating war as if it could be divorced from the people who make it, as if it were only what it immediately does. The moment you consider it in relation to those who wage it, its aim is seen to be something beyond the killing, whether it is a just war or an unjust war. Police action may have a bad aim, in which case the violence (*e.g.* batoning defenceless crowds in Parliament Square) is wrong. War may have a good aim (*e.g.* to prevent aggression), in which case its violence is right. War, like every other evil, is not just of one kind. Just as the slash of the knife, the blow, the shooting is good or bad according to the total consequences, just as the painful loss of a tooth is totally different according to how you lose it (was it knocked out in a fight or pulled out by a dentist?), so is a war good or bad according to its purpose and result. It is therefore a complete fallacy to characterize *war* as either good or bad in itself.

The upshot of this argument is not that war is necessarily right, but that there is at least the possibility that in certain cases it may be so. It will be right if the evil consequences are more than offset by the advantages secured. The problem thus ceases to be one of absolute principle, and must be settled on utilitarian grounds. If the utilitarian pacifist can make out his case, then pacifism still holds, but its basis will not be certain absolute principles, but the fact that in actual experience no war shows a balance of good over evil.

The Absolutist case rests on two positions: (1) the absolute wrongfulness of violence, and (2) the error of seeking to achieve good ends by wrong means. But in discussing the first contention we have really covered the second, too, for we have argued that the only way to judge whether the means chosen is good is to ask, not whether in itself it is evil, but whether it leads on the whole to desirable

results. Whether violence is a wrong means depends not on whether it is evil in itself, but on whether, in the particular case concerned, it achieves good or fails to do so.

As we have seen, the surgical operation is an evil in itself, but as a means it is good if it saves life. War is evil, but if it can be shown to preserve independence it is the means to a good end, and therefore it is good, as means. If the threat of violence or a demonstration of violence brings an aggressor to the sharp realization that he is going to meet with powerful resistance and may be defeated, and he desists, violence will have led to peace, as it did when the Soviet resistance to Japan at Lake Hassan in 1938 had the effect of stopping the threatened Japanese war on Russia.

This argument is equally valid if it is stated in the opposite way. Apparently good means may lead to an evil end. A typhoid-fever patient is ravenously hungry; if he eats, that, to him at the moment, appears good, but it kills him. Something good in itself—food—thus becomes the means to his death, and must surely be bad and not good. A mother may indulge her daughter's whims, neglect her education, fail to have her trained for a job. The girl's life may be filled with activities, pleasures which are not bad in themselves, but *for this girl*, and under the circumstances, they may be very bad indeed, and may result in real disaster for the girl in later life. Applying this to violence: to pass by a fight and do nothing about it means a quiet, safe evening, but we may have failed to save an innocent victim from a footpad. During the Russian revolution a captured White officer, General Krasnov, was released by the Bolsheviks. To release a man from prison is in itself a good thing, but as a consequence he launched the counter-revolution on the Don, which led to the loss of thousands of lives. If he had been shot, these lives would have been saved. We shall have to examine later the contention that the growth of pacifism in a State against which aggression is contemplated might actually determine the decision to invade it, in which case pacifism itself would lead to war. It appears, therefore, that not only is the bad

means sometimes conducive to good ends, but good means sometimes lead to bad ends. Once again, therefore, we are compelled to the belief that the quality of "means" is twofold: what it is in itself, and what it is in relation to the desired end. No matter what its specific character, its goodness *as means* can only be determined by whether or not it leads to a good end.

One thing more needs to be said to make the position clear. It is by no means true that any course of action which leads to a desirable end is therefore justified. Decapitation is an excellent cure for toothache, but it is not to be recommended. The cure may be worse than the disease. What we have argued is that in each case the *total* good and evil must be estimated and each case judged on its merits. That means that the difficulties and pains and other evils of any proposed course of action have to be balanced against the value of the end achieved. Is it worth enduring cold, fatigue, and facing great risks to get to the top of a mountain or to reach the South Pole? This is an individual judgment—at bottom every such judgment must be individual, and there is no external infallible rule which will save us the trouble of judging for ourselves. Apply this to the question of undesirable means and desirable ends. Is violence justified to preserve one's property? That depends on the amount of violence and the amount of property. It also depends on one's point of view. A commander may reject a plan of attack which will prove too costly in human lives, but will be prepared to sacrifice even more lives if the particular objective is essential for the winning of the war. This is the answer to those who fear that any departure from the principle of never using "bad" means will open the door to the most frightful iniquity. Nothing of the sort. In every case the cost must be weighed on the one hand, the good secured on the other. Should a young man avow his abandonment of religious faith at the cost of causing his parents grave distress? Should a spy take advantage of the mistaken trust reposed in him by a friend in high position? Should a

police spy win the trust of members of a revolutionary movement? Should a doctor pass on information which he has received in the course of his professional duties? Should civilians be exposed to peril in order to win an engagement? Should a ship containing munitions, but also innocent passengers, be sunk at sight? Is "third degree" justifiable? Is torture? None of these questions can be answered by reference to the general principle that "the end never justifies the means." In every case all the circumstances have to be taken into consideration before a decision can be arrived at. A doctor should, under certain circumstances, be prepared to break the most sacred rule in his professional code. Suppose a patient unwittingly revealed something vitally affecting someone's welfare, would he not be bound to take action on that knowledge? If one could save the life of a traveller by misdirecting someone following him with the intention of doing him an injury, would not such a deliberate lie be justified?

This principle is of vital importance in connection both with war and social justice. Violence is an evil, and will not be resorted to by a wise Government except under great provocation. It is better to endure a certain amount of disorder than call on the police to use force, *but only up to a certain point*. Even then the police may not be able to cope with a severe outbreak of violence. At what point do you abandon police action and call out the military? At what point do you suppress a Fascist movement? At what point do you take drastic steps to eliminate piracy? Was it worth while resisting Franco by force of arms? In every case one has to weigh up the balance of good and evil, and of course the evaluation will depend entirely upon the point of view. It can never be otherwise. There is no easy infallible rule of thumb which dispenses with human responsibility and with the scale of values as we see it.

Consider the arguments about Soviet Russia. Was the revolution right or wrong? It is an over-simplification of the issue to say that the forcible suppression of violent counter-revolution and the ultimate expropriation of private

capital involved violence, and therefore the revolution, since it used bad means, cannot achieve good ends. The real point is not that at all, but whether very real achievements in social welfare are or are not counter-balanced by the toll of human suffering involved in the revolution. This is not a question that can be settled in the abstract. It depends on the actual facts. Our judgment, of course, will depend on what we consider those facts to be. Those who exaggerate the sufferings and minimize the achievements will say that it was not worth it, and those who value the achievements highly and estimate them as sufficiently extensive will say that it was. My point for the moment is not what conclusion we come to, but *how we come to it*. We do so not by cutting off the means from the end and considering them in isolation, as though their goodness or badness could be decided without considering what was achieved through them, but by weighing up the whole series of events and balancing total good against total evil.

But does not both logic, and indeed any sound scientific view of cause and effect, teach us that like follows like, that the effect is equal to and similar to its cause? If so, then violence will produce violence, just as heat produces heat. Resistance will provoke attack, cruelty will breed cruelty, hate will cause more hate. If this is so, then it follows that you cannot ensure peace by engendering fear. To oppose the violence of aggressor nations with greater violence prolongs war, and can only lead to the destruction of civilization.

We are concerned in this chapter entirely with *a priori* principles, not with arguments based on experimental evidence. The absolutist case is based on absolute and eternal laws, the consequences of which *must* be; therefore we shall consider elsewhere whether history and experience actually show that war necessarily leads to more war. For the moment we must confine ourselves to the general principle which is supposed to be responsible for this fact: *the end must resemble the means, just as like produces like and*

effect is similar to cause. That is the fundamental "logical," "scientific" law which is said to buttress the pacifist case.

But so far from being an example of scientific logic, this principle is wholly false. If like produced only like there would be no change and no development in Nature. Actually every causal sequence manifests change—that is to say, an effect which is different from the cause. If I pull *down* a rope running over a pulley the other end of the rope goes *up*. If I apply heat to water at a temperature of 100° C., it does not get hotter, but turns into vapour *without rise of temperature*. Heat has not produced heat at all, but vapour. In a refrigerator we use heat to produce ice. Biologically it is not the case that men breed men and women breed women, or even that the offspring are identical with the parents. All evolution depends on mutations, on the fact that, so far from the amoeba only producing more amoebae, it has produced, by a series of changes over countless generations, something as different from itself as man. In society it is also true that effects differ from their causes. Capitalism produces trade unionism and Socialism, tyranny produces the love of and the struggle for liberty, not just more tyranny. Nor does violence always produce violence, and fear always produce fear. The dacoits or thugs of India were successfully suppressed by force, so was the burning of widows. Fear can deter evil-doers from lawlessness and violence, and under its protection law-abiding people can get on with their jobs and live out their lives.

The means we choose are not always directed positively to the ends we have in view, but negatively to obstacles to those ends. We climb over a mountain pass because that is the only way to the town we wish to reach; we destroy mosquitoes to prevent malaria; we restrain criminals because they get in the way of honest men going freely about their business; we use water as the means to extinguish a fire, and police to extinguish dacoity. The means, therefore, are not always directly related to the end, and the end is not affected by means directed solely to

overcome these obstacles. The pacifist is therefore wrong when he says that the nature of the end must determine the means; the nature of the means must be determined by the character of the obstacle.

If like always follows like and effect is always identical with cause, then it can also be argued that not only does all war produce more war, but that war is always produced by war. If this were not the case, the fundamental principle would no longer hold. If war can *be produced* by something quite different from war, war can also *produce* something other than war—which is denied. It is, indeed, frequently argued that all wars arise out of previous wars, and therefore to stop war finally we must stop fighting, that a war to end war is ridiculous, and that to try to stop military aggression by violence is equally absurd. But this again is fallacious. It is perfectly true that many wars have arisen out of previous wars, but wars are also caused by the demand for markets or territory, and violence may be caused not only by previous violence, but also by cupidity, jealousy, the desire to preserve privilege, or a sadistic tendency confronting a masochistic victim.

Once again effect and cause are not necessarily identical.

It may be instructive to look at the question the other way round. As we have seen, means good in themselves do not always have good effects. Once again the effect differs from the cause. To make every task easy is not the way to build up mental strength or skill. To pamper is to spoil. To be easy-going is to encourage dishonesty and laziness. "A man may smile and smile and be a villain." There is charity which is twice cursed: it curses him who gives and him who takes. There is a peaceableness which is mere acquiescence in evil and encourages it. There is a refusal to fight which is the occasion of war.

But the absolutist may base his case on one particular case, and a fundamental one, in which the wrong means seems to determine an evil end. Are not all individuals ends in themselves? If, in our endeavour to accomplish desirable ends, we override or destroy their personalities,

can any good come of it? Is not violence directed towards persons always wrong?

To put the matter in other terms, using the words of one of my correspondents, "Any action, whatever the circumstances, is evil if it violates the law of love on which the whole of life is based, and good if it encourages the growth of love. War in its aim violates the whole philosophy of life and is therefore wrong." But what is the "law of love"? Is it simply the *feeling* of benevolence, or is it the desire to achieve the highest welfare for other people? Surely love implies two things—respect for personality and desire for welfare. Now, unfortunately, we cannot always achieve everybody's welfare simultaneously. If some people benefit, others will suffer. We cannot keep the law of love to some without violating the law of love to others. Nor are we always in the position of being able to respect certain human personalities without injuring others. If we treat the criminal as a personality against whom violence must not be used, then the criminal uses violence against other personalities. If we treat the gangster's life as sacred, we must be responsible for the destruction not of one but of several lives very much more valuable than his. The pacifist may declare that *he* at any rate is guiltless, that *he* has offended no human personality. But that is surely the height of irresponsibility. A negative course does not always have negative results (once again effect is different from cause). To refrain from action may, under certain circumstances, allow very positive and very harmful things to happen. *Not* to put a fire out in its initial stages, because it is none of our business does not mean that a little and harmless fire continues, but that it becomes a great and dangerous conflagration for which we are responsible. It is as much a crime to leave undone what we ought to have done as to have done what we ought not to have done. There is a real danger of pacifism meaning for some people a sense of innocence arising from simply *not* participating personally in violence, even if the immediate effect of their negative attitude is an outbreak of violence

against the innocent. It is therefore not possible to contract out of a situation and do nothing, for to do nothing is to be responsible for what follows from our very passivity. We may therefore be compelled to choose, whether we like it or not, between two courses of action *both* of which involve doing violence to some personality. All that we can do in such a situation is to choose the lesser evil. We cannot treat all people as ends under all circumstances. Just because we reverence personality we must deal sternly with those who, if left unhindered, will destroy other personalities. It was Christ Himself who said: "It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble."¹ Does this "violate the law of love" as far as the man is concerned? Or does it fulfil the law of love by saving "these little ones" at the cost of destroying him who would destroy them? The more we reverence personality the more firmly we shall interfere with criminal minorities who threaten the welfare of inoffensive citizens.

Let me hasten to add that it is, of course, not always the case that we are confronted with such alternatives. There may sometimes be three possibilities: well-intentioned but disastrous non-intervention; violent restraint of the criminal; and moral appeal to the criminal. In some of these cases moral appeal may stand a real chance of success, but it is *not always* either possible or effective. What are we to do then?

It thus appears that the absolute prohibition of violence and the taking of human life is a dogma based upon *a priori* considerations and strong intuitions, but involving those who rigidly obey it in serious contradictions. When Captain Philip Mumford says: "Because of the fundamental unity of man, the killing of any individual can only result in loss, never in gain for the whole species or for any section of it," he forgets that while it is obviously true that the taking of human life is a loss, it is also true that it is *less*

¹ Luke xvii. 2.

loss to the species than allowing that particular man to live and kill ten other people. No one says that pure gain follows the destruction of human life; what we say is that we gain more than we lose, whereas under a pacifist course we should lose more than we gain.

Let us be perfectly clear what it is that has been proved. We are not doing more than attempt to disprove the *general law*, held to be absolutely true under all circumstances, that the choice of means which are in themselves evil necessarily leads to evil consequences and is under no circumstances permissible. We are not considering the question of war for the moment. Our illustrations are not analogies proving that war is right, but examples—quite a different thing—proving that this general law is false. There can be no exceptions to an *absolute* law. If we say it is a scientific law that all metals conduct electricity, and then find one example of a metal which does not, that law falls to the ground. If we say that “good ends cannot be achieved by bad means,” and then find that in many cases we have to adopt bad means to secure good ends, this general law falls to the ground. It may still be true that we should never “violate the law of love,” but that raises a *different* problem,¹ and cannot be solved by bringing it under the wider principle of “Ends and Means.” It is because so much pacifist argument assumes the validity of this “law” that it must be made absolutely clear that it is baseless.

One final question remains to be discussed.

Underlying the failure to distinguish between the different forms of violence and the different kinds of war is the metaphysical error of attributing fixed properties to things apart from the relations in which they are found. This can only lead to the substitution for concrete realities of formal concepts or abstractions. Thus “war” taken in this way becomes something evil in itself and under all circumstances, something which is the opposite of “peace,” which is a good thing under all circumstances. But in

¹ This problem is fully dealt with on pp. 74-77.

actual life there are innumerable kinds of war, of all degrees of evil, and seldom or never unmixed with good. Moreover, the abstraction "war" neglects the causes of the war in question on the one hand and its objects on the other. It also fails to relate the war to the two opposing sides, which may have the result of concealing the fact that it is a "just war" on one side, and at the same time an "unjust war" on the other side. The circumstances of every war are far from being irrelevant. They may make some wars better than peace, for "peace," too, is not something which we know all about apart from its conditions. A bad peace may be worse than a good war.

The fact that the absolutist case falls to the ground does not mean that the case for pacifism has been destroyed. All that we have hitherto proved is that you cannot say *a priori* that all violence is wrong and deduce from this that it ought never to be used. But it is still possible that in actual experience violence does more harm than good, and that wars do not achieve anything worth while.

An argument of this sort, however, is experimental, and not deduction from intuitively apprehended principles. It depends on a careful examination of experience, of concrete evidence, with a view to finding out exactly how far the pacifist contentions are borne out. It may well be possible to sum up that experience in the generalization that all wars are on balance evil, thus getting back to something like the full pacifist position. But a generalization from concrete examples can never reach absoluteness. You can never argue from the fact that you have never seen the giant sloth or the sea-serpent that it does not exist. An exception to the rule may at any moment turn up. It would therefore be thoroughly unscientific to argue that because all wars hitherto had been a mistake, therefore no war could ever do any good. On the grounds of experience that can only be probable, never certain. Nevertheless the argument from experience may be able to show *why* so many wars are evil, and it is always possible that some sound reason may be found to prove that this is *necessarily* so. All

that we can say for the present is that a reason of this sort cannot possibly be the absolute principle, apprehended intuitively by the conscience, that war and violence are by their very nature wrong, and therefore always lead to more evil than good.

To the arguments from experience and from the nature of war we shall return in Chapter VII. We must now resume the study of Absolute Pacifism from another point of view.

CHAPTER III

PACIFISM AS A RELIGION

THE REALIZATION that pacifism is not practical politics would be gravely disturbing to many absolute pacifists, especially to those who believe that pacifism is not only right in principle, but bound to produce desirable results immediately, and not only in the long run. (We are not at the moment concerned with utilitarian pacifism, which bases its whole case on results, and not on abstract principles at all.)

But a considerable number of pacifists do not find their position in the least shaken under these circumstances. They reply that they are not primarily concerned with immediate results. "Even if the immediate consequences involve the destruction of all I hold dear," writes one correspondent, "I believe that in the long run the ultimate consequences will be good." The pacifist is looking at things *sub specie aeternitas*, and can take longer and more profound views. He is concerned with the more fundamental problems of the soul of man. The important thing is to cast out entirely the old Adam, to be renewed throughout in one's whole relationship to life and to eternal truth. Only out of such regeneration can we expect a renewed society to emerge. This is the only thing that matters. It is not for us to calculate the consequences. The call of duty, of the absolute, must be followed apart from all utilitarian considerations.

Thus Middleton Murry refuses to do violence to his own inner sense of right, to his own sense of the unity of mankind and of the sacredness of human personality by taking another man's life. It would, he says, endanger his very soul to thrust such a responsibility upon it. It is not for a moment argued that the immediate consequence of pacifism will be the cessation of war. That may be the result in

the long run, but not necessarily in the short run. Middleton Murry says :

*“Pacifism is not politics; and cannot be translated into political terms. Pacifism as we understand it, is not the politics of peace. Its foundation is a decision of the individual as to what his own conduct will be in time of war and thence before that time; and as a movement it aims at persuading and helping others to come to the decision. But it may well be that a movement of this nature is not the best calculated to prevent the outbreak of a European war; and certainly we believe that Pacifists are in error if they suppose that by pledging themselves as individuals to take no part in war, they are directly contributing to the avoidance of European war.”*¹

Joad comes to the same conclusion :

“It is of course admitted that as a method of preventing war pure pacifism is at present negligible. The movement is thus religious rather than political in its nature, and aims at the preservation of individual integrity in the face of war rather than the prevention of war. Its effect is to withdraw a substantial number of young men and women from active participation in politics and to concentrate their attention upon the discipline of self-improvement.”

Not all absolute pacifists take this extreme position, but it is in full harmony with the absolutist attitude to life, and reveals its intense preoccupation with inner rather than with outer problems. It is concerned more with eternal things than with things of time, and more with the world of the spirit than with questions of immediate success or failure.

Every religion has its saints, its dedicated souls, its monastic orders, its mystical sects, whose members practise an asceticism, an idealism far beyond the common practice. In the earliest days of Christianity there were the Montanists, who protested violently at the decline of the Church

¹ *The Adelphi*, November 1937.

from its primitive purity; later came the Albigenses, the Franciscans, the Fraticelli, the Pietists, the Quakers, and the Methodists, to name but a few of many such sects and movements, which tried to establish a purer ethic than the political order could permit. They frequently separated themselves from ordinary society, and in some cases even from the responsibilities of family life. They dissociated themselves from the collective life of man, feeling that their exalted ethic could only be realized in the intimate religious community, membership of which meant sacrificing wider social responsibilities. The Church owes much to their single-mindedness and heroic idealism, and yet it has frequently condemned them as heretics, not out of sheer worldliness, but because this excessive preoccupation with personal sanctity had the tendency to weaken social ties, and to impose an unbearable burden on ordinary Christians. The Church at its best aimed at helping men to live in the world rather than at taking them out of the world. If religion is pure asceticism or nothing, then the plain man feels it is too much for him, and abandons it altogether. He finds it too great a task to apply ruthlessly and absolutely the standards of perfection to his ordinary habits and ways of life. He rightly resents being required

To wind himself too high
For mortal men beneath the sky.

Where perfection has been insisted on, as with the Pharisees of Jerusalem, the Calvinists of Geneva, or our own Puritans, the results were a hard self-righteousness in the "holy," and a resentful and merely external conformity among ordinary people. The Church has therefore condemned this unmitigated rigour as likely "to break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax," and, drawing a distinction between the religious and the secular vocation, has laid down two roads: a higher for those called to utter renunciation and perfect sanctity, and a lower for ordinary people.

In Ibsen's *Wild Duck* the fanatical idealist Gregor Werle

invades the home in which some of life's harshness is veiled by illusions. He makes it his business to demand an immediate and wide-eyed acknowledgment of "the whole truth." They cannot bear it; tragedy and death supervene. One of the characters sums up the situation in these words: "Life would be all right if we could only be rid of these infernal fools who come to poor people's doors presenting their 'demands of the ideal.'"

It is difficult for perfectionism to avoid one of two difficulties. Either it tends to become harsh and puritanical if it tries to lift the whole world with undue haste to its own level, or it tends to take up an increasingly irresponsible attitude in ordinary affairs, to become intensely and morbidly preoccupied with its own inner life. Perfectionism, with its pursuit of the absolute, has little to do with the real world. Monasticism is its inevitable outcome. It is compelled to abandon any serious attempt to incarnate its ideal in society as a whole. It is a policy of despair, but perhaps it arises out of despair rather than creates it. Failing to overcome or control powerful economic and political forces and class interests, it gives up the task, hoping in this world only to qualify them or modify them somewhat by the impact of its sanctity.

Thus there are many pacifists, like Max Plowman, who frankly declare that you cannot get peace through politics, because politics is concerned with justice and "to achieve justice is not to achieve peace. The sort of peace which politics can give us is a war to end war, and those who look to politics to provide them with blessings which are only resultant upon the human qualities which condition politics, are preparing themselves for disappointment."

This type of religion tends to be pessimistic in regard to the whole political order. Its devotion to the absolute causes it to transcend the relative, partial, and historical, and therefore not to concern itself with practical problems. It therefore frankly confesses the contradiction of ideal and real, but nevertheless renounces neither, hoping that through

the permanent condition of tension which results there may be some mitigation of the world's wickedness. The example of the saint becomes a permanent rebuke; he is the embodied conscience of mankind, reminding Caesar and his court continually of that world of higher values to which something even in Caesar cannot but respond. It is this type of religion to which pacifism essentially belongs. That being so, it is obviously useless to point out to it that from a practical point of view pacifism involves us in immediate difficulties. The saint is not concerned with such questions, nor does he imagine for a moment that many people are likely to follow him. He is perfectly content to make his lonely witness and leave the issues with God.

There is something impressive in the other-worldliness of such a position, and it has sometimes been felt that once the argument has been lifted to this high plane, common men had better keep silent, or be content only to admit that before spiritual intuitions of this nature argument falters, and there is nothing more to be said except that the majority of us cannot live in this rarefied atmosphere, nor are we prepared to face the consequences of unflinching loyalty to the ideal.

I am not convinced that this is all that there is to be said. Granted that the ideal is a true one, to adopt it as an immediate goal may be a mistake. This was clearly seen by Lord Allen when he wrote :

“We pacifists must be honest with ourselves. If our renunciation of armed force, in a world of force, is a matter of absolute principle; if to us the loss of some hundreds of lives in the applying of forceful police sanctions is the same in principle as the loss of some millions in an anarchic world war, then since economic pressure may steadily turn itself into force in the full sense of the word, we must reject economic sanctions too. If we reply: ‘It is no good, we cannot countenance the use of force in whatever form,’ then *we shall have to face up to leaving politics to others, and devoting ourselves instead to the*

work of the religious prophet and educator, until we have changed the heart of the world. . . . And so I think we shall have to find a new understanding of what we mean by this faith which we call Pacifism. Let us cease to speak of it only in terms of abstaining from force, and come to think of it as much or more in terms of cultivating reason. It seeks for both, but it does not emphasize both alike. It must be constructive or nothing. It will not so much insist that the world would be saved if reason were given a chance. We shall eliminate force, not to the extent by which we renounce our intention of using it, but to the extent by which we set free the capacity of the human race to be rational and inspired by love. It is not by appealing to men to refrain from evil that we shall most quickly make them good and peaceable but by the building of institutions through which they may develop the habits of goodness and peace.”¹

In other words, it is confessed that the purpose of such ideals is rather to determine the direction of our efforts than to determine day-to-day decisions. The way to the goal is never in straight lines ruled across the map, but must wind to discover the most practicable path. It is never even straight up, but often descends to climb again. The task, after all, is not only to know the end, but how to get there, and that means guiding and training the fumbling and confused minds of multitudes. The skilful teacher has not only to understand mathematics, but children, and the leader of men must adapt his message to his followers, or cease to lead them. It is not enough to have pure and passionate ideals and urge them in season and out of season. It is not good to dazzle people with more light than they need for present duty, or to terrify them with burdens that they cannot bear. In such lofty idealism we detect a note of arrogance, a lack of consideration for the weaker brother, of common sense, of patience. Arnold wrote of his father, the great headmaster:

¹ Our italics.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

Idealism can become the enemy of precisely what it proposes to serve.

One detects in this stern upholding of distant ideals, with its merciless condemnation of everything humanly possible and practicable, a profound pessimism that has really given up the fight while still pretending devotion to the ideal. To demand all or nothing is to paralyse all effort and spread confusion and despair. The surest way of getting nowhere is to demand nothing less than perfection. The psychologist has pointed out that this attitude, which is described as "putting up a distance," may be a way of dodging responsibility. For while it secures all the credit for condemning present evil, it is careful to set itself a task which cannot be accomplished, and to have ready, as the explanation for the failure of ordinary people to attempt the impossible, the doctrine that the world is a very evil place and the heart of man deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

It is, of course, easier to condemn man and society as hopeless (but for Divine Grace), and to do nothing more, than to find out remedies and apply them, and make the best use of such powers and virtues as men possess. The religious man may reply that he *is* doing something: he is working continuously for spiritual regeneration. Well, let him be sure that he is not deceiving himself and that this claim of his is not solemn self-delusion.

There are reasons for thinking that it is. Mysticism is founded upon a philosophy which separates mind and matter, the spiritual and the material (even though sometimes the distinction is in terms of "reality" and "appearance"). This has its origin in the despair of such great thinkers as Plato, Descartes, and Kant of conforming the real world to the ideal. They therefore tended to believe in a perfect world of ideals and eternal verities and a temporal world in which these were imperfectly realized. The reason for this dualism was on the one hand an almost entire absence of scientific knowledge, so that man could not control Nature, and on the other a social system in which the work was done by one class and the thinking by another. The result was an over-valuation of the activity of the mind in itself as compared with mind as the guide to action and achievement. Pure thought could create ideals which were unattainable in practice. Kant, following a somewhat different course, held that the material world was the field of scientific causation, but the soul was not subject to its laws. The soul could function in its own moral and spiritual sphere, free from the limitations of the body and utilitarian considerations. This philosophy suits admirably a world in which, owing to the social and economic structure, ideals cannot be realized. But when the moment of real change comes, when the frozen river melts, when mind becomes, through understanding, the agent of social transformation, as has happened not once or twice in the world's history, then this whole philosophy becomes a rationalization of cowardice and reaction, an excuse for not co-operating in the task of re-making the world.

That is why mysticism is not, as is often claimed and too often believed, an accepted way of religious life. The Church has, on the contrary, regarded it with intense suspicion, and is prepared to find that not a few who make exalted claims to mystical experience are self-deluded. Christianity judges moral pretentiousness with severity, and Christ rebuked the rigour of a moral law which bound upon men's backs greater burdens than they could bear. According to

the teachings of Christ, the divine is not to be found in detachment from the common life, but in discovering in the concrete demands of each particular situation "the best way in which to serve our brethren: "for inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me."

The truth in the ascetic way is that under certain conditions and at certain periods in history social and moral decadence makes decent behaviour exceptionally difficult, and men tend to contract out of society in order to find the possibility of a moral life in the monastic community. In a period of complete social collapse, at a time when no way out is either conceivable or possible, this is understandable. But is that the case to-day? Some of us think not. If there is a way out, but difficult to find and hard to follow, those who flinch from it may be glad to persuade themselves that it is impossible, and to substitute a world-denying creed for the way of courage. If, as some of us think, an entire social order is in process of certain dissolution and the new order inevitably demands the overthrow of that privilege which buttresses the old, then a pacifism which only preaches a remote ideal is not even a real programme, but, in effect, only an apology for supporting the old one. Under certain circumstances one cannot do nothing. Even to cease to act, or to refuse to act in an effective way so as to let things go their own way, is a form of acting:

"The web of physical and social relations that binds men into one universe ensures that nothing we do is without its effects on others, whether we vote or cease to vote, whether we help the police or let them go their way, whether we let two combatants fight or separate them forcibly or assist one against the other, whether we let a man starve to death or move heaven and earth to assist him. Man can never rest on the absolute; all acts involve consequences, and it is man's task to find out these consequences, and act accordingly. He can never choose between action and inaction, he can only choose between

life and death. He can never absolve himself with the ancient plea, 'My intentions were good,' or 'I meant it for the best,' or 'I have broken no commandment.'"¹

Exalted religious idealism may conceal a thoroughly selfish and individualistic motive. The worst form of protestantism is a morbid care for the purity of one's own soul. There is a pacifism closely akin to this, which is mainly concerned with good will as a personal emotion. The pacifist is determined to preserve this at all costs, and count it unto himself for righteousness, regardless of the consequences to others—consequences, indeed, to which he resolutely shuts his eyes. His criterion of right conduct is not its effect on others, but its effect on himself, on his own sanctity, on his own feelings. One sees this in Tolstoi, whose Biblical literalism, vegetarianism, abhorrence of sex, of violence, and of wealth, are nothing but a tremendous attempt to attain peace of soul, not to face as a neighbour and comrade the demands made upon him by the needs of his fellow-men. Deep down it is a frantic desire to escape personal defilement. So also Mr. Joad :

"Something, however, may be saved by a refusal to fight, even if it is only peace of mind."

But "he who saveth his life shall lose it." Salvation is not to be found in an intense preoccupation with the self, but in a concern for objective duties and in self-forgetfulness. True moral emotion is not self-centred, it is a window through which one sees the world of men and their needs. It kindles responsibility and issues in action. There is a sympathy, the psychologist tells us, that can weep at the suffering of others, but which does not dream of succouring the afflicted; it may, indeed, find relief by carefully avoiding contact with suffering. Pity, on the other hand, issues in alleviation—that is its natural and necessary expression. Pacifism tends to fall into the former category, and its profound emotional reaction against war is sometimes (not of course always) a reaction from the emotionally un-

¹ Christopher Caudwell, *Studies in a Dying Culture*.

pleasant. In answer to a question as to what could be done practically in the face of tyranny, a well-known pacifist replied, "We can at any rate refuse to fight and *carry on with our own way of life*; perhaps that is just what we have got to do." Even, presumably, if our freedom is taken from us and our weaker brethren are made into the helpless robots of a servile State; even if nations like Abyssinia, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and China are absorbed by Fascist empires. Is it seriously and honestly expected by such people that the example of personal sanctity in a handful of pacifists is going to tame the tigers of class oppression and international aggression? Is it not simply the old cry of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

These reflections must not be taken as a wholesale condemnation of every form of mystical pacifism. I merely wish to point out that it can easily conceal a morbid and self-centred refusal of social responsibility, and in some cases almost certainly does so. Every sincere pacifist will acknowledge the need for scrupulous self-examination in this matter, and will not flinch from acknowledging self-delusion if it is discovered to be present.

But those who are completely sincere in their acceptance of non-violence as a way of life must acknowledge that they cannot stop at pacifism. It is an attitude to life which, once accepted, involves the complete denial of all that the world can offer—"wealth and wife and will." Those who take up this position must face its implications and recognize that it is but part of an ascetic and heroic moral system which only a small minority of mankind can ever be expected to attain. Those who make this profession of faith must be more than pacifists—they must cast off all fear and anger, and have no need for these material things for which men fight. It is not pacifist simply to hate war and reject it. It is not true pacifism to be aggressive and irascible in everything but war. The largest pacifist society in this country has, we are told, 133,000 adherents. A country containing so large a number of genuine pacifists would

know it—could not help but know it. Men and women of this calibre would surely possess a power which nothing could resist. Are evidences that this power is at work amongst us sufficient to justify such claims?

One has to be very sure of oneself and of the value of one's contribution to the welfare of mankind if one is to take tremendous risks for others. Yet pacifists, who sometimes accuse others of involving the innocent in suffering, are prepared to go a long way in this direction themselves. The Reverend Paul Gliddon, in a letter to the *Church Times*, makes plain what the cost of pacifism may be to those who do not accept it. He says: "Just as one recognizes that obedience to the laws of Christian marriage must involve 'hard cases,' so one acknowledges that the Christian repudiation of war would lead to consequences of a corresponding character. But the devil is not to be obeyed because his renunciation involves hardships, *hardships which sometimes have to be suffered by people who would much rather he were not renounced at all, for it is the burden of sinners to suffer through the saints.*"

That is to say, pacifism, as Joad, Middleton Murry, and many other pacifists also contend, is not so much a method of preventing war as of being good. Its immediate consequences, therefore, may actually involve the infliction of suffering upon multitudes of non-pacifists. But, as Mr. Gliddon reminds us, it is not the saint who is crucified for the sinners, but the sinners who suffer through the policy of the saints. No doubt at this level of spirituality the cross which the saint has to bear is even more terrible than if he were crucified himself. His is the supreme sacrifice of having to crucify others in order to save himself!

There is always a danger that behind a truly prophetic absolutism a great deal of mere escapism and morbid egoism may take shelter. Real pacifism has a martyr quality about it like that of the original Peace Army, at any rate in its first intention. It is convinced that war will never be conquered until pacifists can show the same heroism as those who fight. It is prepared to stand between the warring

hosts and offer *itself* as sacrifice for peace. But this spirit tends to wane. The arguments are the same, but the martyr spirit is gone :

“The effect has been to produce a vague sham pacifism which hides ordinary cowardice or ordinary selfishness behind a cloak of supposed Christian principles. It is sham pacifism to desist from doing right and helping the oppressed at the threat of violence. It is sham pacifism to refuse to give any help to Chinese or Abyssinians for fear that their oppressors may make war upon us if we do. To refuse to help may be prudent ; it may be sensible ; but it is not conspicuously Christian and not a policy to be proud of, nor is it anything like the real pacifist position. ‘Real pacifism’ is active over the oppressed. But sham pacifism wins support for its ignoble policies from those who would never support them if they could not somehow persuade themselves that they are being conspicuously Christian in the process. This sham pacifism is not heroic. It is the outcome of disillusion and despair. It is in danger of making us forget that valour is a Christian virtue.”¹

We conclude that pacifism as a religion should submit itself to relentless self-examination, particularly in view of the serious consequences to others of a creed which is influential enough to “weaken the hands of the men of war,” but not sufficiently widely embraced to bring war to an end, with the result that aggression may actually be encouraged. There may be some value in the permanent witness of a saintly order to ideals which the exigencies of practical policies obscure, but such counsels of perfection must not be recommended as an immediate course of action to those who are not ready for them, or who can snatch at the negative side of pacifism while failing utterly to practise its lofty precepts. The only consequences of such a policy are likely to be widespread hypocrisy and social disaster. As Donnington says in *The Citizen Faces War* :

¹ A. D. Lindsay in *Time and Tide*.

“Such a view must command our respect; based as it is upon a personal religious faith, it is not possible or perhaps proper to attempt to undermine it. But it is also clear that it will not show men the way out of their present material dilemma; or rather, that the way out to which it points is one that we are well aware they cannot be prevailed upon to take. The pure pacifist can therefore only throw himself into the long-range side of the job, and do what he can to convert humanity to his own idealism; he will not help the cause of peace by entering the short-range political field with proposals too utopian to be got across or too partial to meet the contemporary chaos.”

CHAPTER IV
PACIFISM AND MORAL
RESPONSIBILITY

A WELL-KNOWN statesman has recently said: "Pacifists can claim that their pacifism is a virtue, but it is certainly not a policy. We can respect their principles and their moral standards are beyond question, but we have to govern and government often means distasteful action." This is borne out by the admission of Captain Mumford of the Peace Pledge Union, who has gone so far as to say: "Most pacifists would admit that a world in which the Covenant of the League of Nations worked at its logical face value would be an advance upon the present chaotic nationalism, *but it would not be a stepping-stone towards the pacifist goal*"¹ and must therefore be rejected.

History never moves upon the purely moral plane. Optimism and shallow philosophies, which expect both the internal struggle between classes and the clash of national and ideological forces to be settled by the display of a little amiability and good sense at the conference table, are to-day finally discredited. Politics are not like that. What then?

The temptation is to try to lift the problem out of the realm of imperfect morality altogether. Because there is no entirely moral way out, there arises a passionate desire to pretend that morality can be divorced from the demands of the actual circumstances. The pacifist succumbs to this temptation and proposes conformity to the moral ideal without regard to the actual situation and its possibilities. But you cannot withdraw from a situation you wish had never arisen.

The moral problem is not solved by the discovery of absolute moral principles and their rigid and legal applica-

¹ *An Introduction to Pacifism.*

tion regardless of consequences. The choice is never between rigid obedience to the moral law and wilful transgression, but, as we have seen, between two courses both of which have evil consequences either immediate or remote. Morality, however much we wish it might be otherwise, is a question of choosing the lesser of two evils, doing the best possible under the circumstances. This is a very difficult and responsible task, and there is no way of avoiding it and being a moral person. In fact, this is the moral task, the very essence of it. In every situation we have to weigh up the gains and losses of several possible courses and choose the one which seems on balance to be the best. Having done so, the chosen course must be followed resolutely, even though it involves a certain amount of evil. Regretfully, perhaps, but firmly, we must do the evil, lest a worse evil befall. To abandon the task is simply to let evil have its unchecked way. To accept the task is to prefer incomplete good to complete evil.

The pacifist who sticks to the antithesis of *force*, which is wholly evil, and *non-violence*, which is wholly good, is imposing a rigid formula on the complexities of real life into which they cannot possibly be forced, and is refusing that moral discrimination which is essential to responsible conduct: "The pacifist is the man whom over-sensitiveness has made blind and deaf to concrete details, who by insisting on an overstrung moral claim fails to respond to the manifoldness of moral values, who prefers the formal completeness of an ideal value to an incomplete penetration of reality by value."¹ Finding life harsh and difficult, he declares that he "won't play," because he prefers that it were not so.

This has well been described as a form of spiritual snobbishness. To belong to the spiritual level does not mean redemption from natural necessities and impulses, it means their control. It is the old problem of form and matter. The pure formalist is impatient with the limitations imposed on him by the medium in which he works, but the

¹ Aurel Kolnai.

other extreme is the man who is dominated by his material to the complete loss of all coherence and design. There are would-be artists who prefer to keep their creations in their heads, but everyone knows that true artistic creation attains its value in the compromise between design and material, between aim and limiting circumstances. Art would not be greater if unlimited. It would not exist at all. It is so in the realm of morals. To exalt pure ethics, and then to leave actual conduct without any ethical guidance, because in no situation can one do right absolutely, is not to be a saint. It is to renounce morality altogether. It is the abdication of man as a free personality, of man as a rational and moral being. It is lack of faith in civilization, in man's liberty to handle and control events, in objective values and demands—that is to say, values embodied in historical circumstances. It is to take refuge in the imaginary purity of non-participation in a wicked world.

The philosophical pacifist appears to regard man as driven by mere natural powers and dangerous impulses which are almost inaccessible to judgment and discrimination. It is from the base nature of man that war comes. On this baseness, however, an angelic superstructure of pure love is miraculously imposed. One way of escape is offered, one safe port of the soul: the abandonment of violence—that is to say, retirement from the administration and practical handling of ordinary reality, for that is what a flight from the problems of power really means. Philanthropy, preaching, "solidarity with all men" may remain, but large-scale decision and formative action are abandoned. It is therefore base nature which in effect legislates for man, while the lofty spiritualism of the idealist offers merely a consolatory supplement. This judgment on man is closely akin to that of Fascism, for in such a world naked power will rule in spite of irresponsible moralists. Pacifism acknowledges the rule of bestial nature by not interfering with it, by yielding to it. But if we resisted, says the pacifist, we should thereby surrender to it even more completely. That, of course, is the crux of the whole question. Surely using power is

exactly the opposite to yielding to it. There are two ways of fighting, and the fact that they can be distinguished shows that both are possible. One can abandon oneself to the violence one wields, in which case one becomes identical with one's opponent; but one can also control that violence and use it to secure the restraint of destructive violence. Quite simply we have not to *yield* to power either by giving in to aggression and tyranny or in succumbing to aggressive and tyrannical tendencies ourselves. We have to *wield* power. Man the doer knows perfectly well that the whole of life is a succession of alternatives of this kind, and he naturally rejects the philosophy which flinches from facing the necessity of controlling natural impulses and powers.

In holding to the pure sublimity of his spiritual way of life, the pacifist cultivates "man" as an object of value in himself, as though reality could be controlled by developing mental habits. But man is not to be judged as if what he is could be separated from what he does. We do not want man to be a beast of prey, but neither do we want him to be a beautiful and inoffensive flower considered under the aspect of his qualities, not of his control of things. It is no moral test that a man should always sustain a polite smile. There is something akin to Christian Science or to magic in this preoccupation with "inwardness," in this desire that men should behave meekly rather than responsibly. We do not defeat evil by being good in ourselves. Motives are of tremendous importance, but our thoughts do not control reality. Reality must be dealt with directly, for what it actually is. It is not enough to condemn inwardly the murder about to be committed next door. The central meaning of the moral situation is that the murder ought not to take place, and I ought to stop it if I can, not that I ought to be convinced of its sinfulness.

The pacifist replies that only where he stands, above the battle, is it possible to remain loyal to "humanity" as such. If one stoops to kill, one degrades oneself and breaks the spiritual unity of mankind. This is the comfortable philosophy of the peaceable. But it is the *peacemaker*, not the

peaceable, who is blessed, and he sees this unity as something which is yet to be achieved. The conflicts which confront him are not simply regrettable interruptions of a unity already existing, or temptations to divert us from our loyalty to it; rather do they indicate issues on which mankind *must* come to a settlement, if not peaceably, then by war, if any real unity is ever to be attained.

Our quarrel with this form of pacifism is not that it is too moral and too little practical, but that it is basically immoral, because it tries to settle the fundamental problem of conduct from the wrong point of view. Such pacifists are not so much unpractical dreamers as moral saboteurs and dangerous barbarians disguised as angels of light.

The habit of mind which settles moral problems, either by abstract principles or the inner feeling, has not yet learned what moral self-determination is. Moral responsibility implies the ability to break the rules when the occasion demands. It is the power to do the novel and unexpected thing, to escape from the customary and also from the rut of moral habit. The life of Christ was full of deliberate breaches of the moral law of His age. His reply was to point to the compulsion of circumstances and the higher law which commands the breaking of all the rules when necessity demands. He reminded his critics that David, the hero of ancient Israel, ate the sacred bread from off the altar because he and his men were starving. He argued that the holy Sabbath on which no man must work should not prevent a man getting his ox or his ass from the pit into which it had fallen on the Sabbath day, nor should it stand in the way of healing the sick or succouring the needy. The great religious and moral leaders were never conventionalists or legalists: they scorned every moral law when the occasion demanded.

Moral rules only hold for routine existence; here they are useful enough, just as the rule of the road is useful. But the moral judgment itself is that which makes a new rule, and it is exercised in moments of crisis. Pacifism is trying to

hold on to a rule of non-violent behaviour that belongs to the quiet stretches of normal life. It flinches from a realistic grappling with the exceptional.

What are we to do when a fundamental clash of wills and intentions arises—when at least one side will reason no longer, but expresses its determination to have its way at any cost? The pacifist fails to see that this creates a new and critical situation in which the moral rules of normal behaviour cease to hold good. The failure to adopt violent resistance when the moment for it arises is not to cling to morality and refuse immorality, but exactly the opposite. It is to abandon morality. Of course we must avoid crises of this kind as far as we can, but not at all costs, or we lose our very souls. To refuse to see that such a crisis may be necessary, and to inform history of one's unwillingness to do one's part when it comes, is to be infantile.

It is a peculiarly sophisticated and unrealistic type of mind which takes this attitude. Thought, as we all know, interposes reflection and the consideration of what consequences may flow from alternative courses between stimulus and reaction. But the abuse of thought is reflection which paralyses action. There is a habit of mind which fears decision, risk, conflict, and getting to grips with evil. If the possibility of action is remote it will speak confidently of what is to be done, but as the moment for decision approaches it begins to find difficulties, to suggest alternatives, to qualify and delay and excuse. Suddenly ideas, ideals, qualms, scruples, eternal "laws," sentimental reluctances, fine-spun speculations, lofty, remote, and utterly impracticable alternatives begin to appear as an impenetrable tangle between the man and the deed. It is, of course, an elaborate escape mechanism. The plain man knows nothing of these difficulties. The Spaniard sees his liberties attacked by armed force, and he fights. Why is there no pacifist movement in Spain? Why is there always so little pacifism where people are right up against reality, in China (where the soldier has never been glorified), in

Russia, in France during the Great War? Pacifism flourishes behind the lines, far from the battle front or in periods of intense sophistication and morbid introspection, as in Russia before the revolution. It is essentially a phenomenon characteristic of the middle-class intellectual or religious devotee who is alienated from realities and lost in a fictitious world of ideas.

Very many pacifists, perhaps most, would lose their pacifism in an instant if anything they seriously valued were threatened by violence. They continue to be pacifists either because there is no serious threat, or because they do not expect to lose anything, or perhaps even because they do not value what is threatened. In Shaw's play *Androcles and the Lion* both Ferovius and Spintho the humanitarian abandoned their pacifism when the testing-time came. I believe that most pacifists, if they had been in Spain, would have fought Franco, and if they lived in Russia, and its great achievements were threatened by invasion, they would want to help to defend them. I believe that an attempt to destroy our institutions and bully our workers into complete surrender by brute force would be forcibly resisted by most pacifists. The shock of reality, of an immediate and deadly threat, of the visible presence of evil has the effect of dissipating a host of ideas and arguments that at a distance from critical events seem to present insuperable difficulties.

When Lavinia, in Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*, is face to face with death in the arena, her convictions suffer a remarkable change. They are sifted by this contact with reality in its most searching form. The Roman Captain is taunting her about the "Christian fairy tales." She replies: "Captain: all that seems nothing to me now. I'll not say that death is a terrible thing, but I will say that it is so real a thing that when it comes close, all the imaginary things and all the stories, as you call them, fade into mere dreams beside that inexorable reality. I know now that I am not dying for stories or dreams."

It is a test of this kind that all our beliefs need, and

pacifist beliefs in particular. Once again, in fact, we are back to the question of responsibility, but in a different form. Irresponsibility is the separation of theory and practice, of ideals and realities. It is the vice of abstraction.

CHAPTER V

PACIFISM AND CHRISTIANITY

*"IT WOULD seem that the spirit of Christ's teaching is plainly against war and the use of violence. If the Church can find a justification for the horrors of war, they do so at the expense of losing touch with the spirit of Christ's teaching. It is not necessary to be a Christian in order to be a pacifist, but if one is a Christian, it seems obvious that one must also be a pacifist."*¹

This argument has an immediate appeal. May I add, particularly to non-Christians. It expresses a very general belief that Christianity is, quite simply, gentleness and peaceableness, and reflects the popular notion of Christ, the figure in religious pictures and hymns—a gentle, utterly selfless saint conquering the world by meekness.

If this is Christianity, it follows that the Church is utterly corrupt. It also follows that Christianity is an ideal to be worshipped, and not a practical creed for normal people—and this again is a common conception.

This is a sentimental rather than an historical picture of Christ and Christianity. Christian theology has never condemned all war as it has condemned certain other forms of conduct. For several centuries, while Christians were a persecuted sect which had abandoned the world and simply waited for the judgment day, it was commonly preached that to join the Roman legions was conduct out of all keeping with Christian otherworldliness. But this was at a time when despair of a corrupt civilization drove tens of thousands of Christians to the Egyptian deserts as hermits, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to have any part or lot in the degenerate life of the times. But when the Church took its place as an educational and civilizing organization within society, this fanatical renunciation of

¹ Ronald Duncan, *The Complete Pacifist*.

marriage, work, responsible social life, politics, and war disappeared or became the vocation only of those who followed the monastic life. The truth is that the ethics of Christ are not, and never were, intended to be a code so otherworldly and exalted as to be incapable of guiding the conduct of common men. That is why the moral ideal of the Church never required of men absolute renunciation of "wealth, of wife, or of weapons" but rather their right use.

However, the most careful and historical treatment of Christian origins still leaves pacifism with a strong case. How can we believe in a common Father and yet compromise with a system that destroys masses of men with utter ruthlessness? How can respect for the worth of human personality be compatible with the murderous passion bred by war? What can murder by machinery have to do with the religion of one who taught us not to resist evil? If men are persons, can their freedom ever be overborne by violence, for one who follows in the footsteps of the Master? And beyond precepts, what stable social order can exist that is not based upon sacrifice and love rather than violence and hate?

It is, of course, true that "the spirit of Christ's teaching is plainly against war and the use of violence." It is also true that the spirit of the overwhelming majority of normal people is against these things. But by violence we mean primarily the lawless violence of the robber or the murderer, and by war we mean the wanton invasion of a peaceful land. Because we are against such things, they must be put down, and it is not un-Christian to use force to do so. We are also "against" the violence which is necessary to suppress this lawlessness, in the sense that we regret the necessity to use it; but however much we regret it, we recognize that under the circumstances it is a necessity. The "spirit of Christ's teaching" is against all violence in this sense, and in this sense only. We shall hope to show that it does not reject the necessity for preserving the lives and rights of peaceful members of society by force under certain circumstances. The fallacy which vitiates all

pacifism is the attribution to all forms of violence of the particular evil that belongs to criminal violence, so that the condemnation of the latter is extended to the measures necessary to deal effectively with it. It is true that defensive war and legal violence are evils, but they are necessary evils when we are faced with aggression, and if we attempt to avoid them altogether, because they are evils, we shall only increase the total evil in the situation by allowing aggression to rage and spread unchecked.

There is less evidence than is usually supposed for attributing to Christ the doctrine of pure pacifism. The real originator of pacifism as a religion was not Jesus of Nazareth, but Tolstoi, and the Christian pacifist movement to-day really derives far more from him than from sub-apostolic Christianity or from Christ Himself. Shaw rightly said that, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild is a snivelling modern invention with no warrant in the gospels." The man who was executed by his contemporaries "as a dangerous anarchist and a blasphemous madman" was no pacifist. Eleanor Rathbone says :

"Every mind which does not feel compelled to accept the authority of some particular Church must form its own impression of Christ's personality and of the general tenor of His teaching. But can anyone fail to share an impression of inexorable sternness and fierceness towards evil and towards unrepentant sinners, and are any evils more sought out for condemnation than cruelty and hypocrisy?"¹

If Jesus steadily refused to use violence in His own cause, it was obviously because a military revolt of the Jews against the might of Rome would have been madness. It would also have been a quixotic attempt to resist historic necessity. There are times when nationalism comes into its own, but a successful struggle for national independence is not a possible course for every tiny State in every age. In the first century of our era it was inevitable for Judaea to be a

¹ Eleanor Rathbone, *War Can be Averted*.

Roman province. Every sane Jew was against the reckless adventure of insurrection. Least of all was a military insurrection the contribution which Jesus felt Himself called to make to His nation and to the world. Hence, though He claimed leadership, He repudiated the role of a Judas Maccabeus for Himself, though many desperate spirits wanted Him to play it. Is not this the real significance, and the only significance, of His one or two scattered sayings against racial hatred and military violence? Nowhere do we find a considered judgment on war itself, or statements which could be regarded as fixed principles in a rigid ethical code. Nor does Christ lay it down that violence is never to be used against evil men; on the contrary, as we have already seen, He declares that "whoso shall cause one of these little ones to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." He denounces the religious leaders of His day in unmeasured terms as hypocrites, false prophets, blind guides, ravening wolves, whited sepulchres, serpents, and offspring of vipers; He exclaims, "How shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" He declared of the city which refused to hear Him that "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." On those who have neglected to feed the hungry and clothe the naked He pronounces the curse, "Depart from me, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels." Speaking of His fierce struggles with the possessed, He says, "How can one enter into the house of the strong man and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house"—a generalization which should be taken to heart by those who expect to transform the social order by securing the consent of the privileged to their own abdication! Again, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword!" These and scores of similar passages bear witness to a spirit of extreme indignation and severity in the face of cruelty and callousness—"the only man I have ever known

in whom compassion has the vehemence of wrath." The passages more frequently quoted cannot be allowed to cancel out this side of His character without doing violence to the Gospels, they can only supplement the sterner picture, a conclusion entirely unfavourable to the Christian pacifism that requires an entirely Tolstoian Christ.

The view that Christ was in some circumstances moved to anger and threats and in others full of tenderness and compassion is a reasonable one. But if we conclude from certain of His sayings that He was purely pacifist in His outlook, then we cannot possibly explain that side of His character and teaching which is inconsistent with that point of view. There are only two alternatives: either Christ was a completely inconsistent character, at one time preaching the purest pacifism and at another advocating violence, or the sayings which are usually taken to be pacifist are capable of another interpretation.

Pacifists who build their case on certain selected sayings from the Sermon on the Mount are apt to take these in a crudely literal way which itself contradicts the spirit of Christ's teaching. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." It is, as a matter of fact, quite impossible to accept the letter of Christ's teaching as applicable without exception to every situation. A religious novel of the last century called *What Would Jesus Do?* tried to set forth the consequences of a literal following of His commands. The result was only to show its impossibility. Jesus Himself was opposed to every form of literalism, and was at pains to show those who took this point of view that following "in His steps" meant sharing His outlook on life. From a renewed mind a renewed life flows spontaneously. This attitude brought Him into conflict with the religious leaders of His time. Kenneth Ingram says:

"It seems therefore impossible to escape from the conclusion that the Christian ethic throughout consists of certain eternal and immutable principles which have to be related, because they cannot be transferred absolutely,

to the world of space-time, *i.e.*, to a world-situation which is changing and which is vitiated by human failures and error. The weakness of the perfectionist case is that it ignores the distinction between these absolute principles and the manner in which they can be applied to the world in which we live. The difficulty lies not merely in our own individual incapacity to live up to the Christian standard; much more significant is the fact that, if we were able to carry out Christ's moral teaching as an exact law, we should discover that, because of the complicated system in which we are placed, we were producing results very different from those at which we should be aiming or which Christianity itself envisages."¹

For instance, Christ says, "Give to him that asks of thee," but indiscriminate alms-giving would be disastrous. Whether under feudalism or capitalism, charity is not a solution of the economic problem.

Jesus believed in human equality, but He does not embody in His religion a hard and fast rule against slavery. On the contrary, He accepts the services of a slave-civilization. He eats the food and accepts the necessities of life produced by slave-labour. In other words, He did not *literally* apply His own words to His own actions. He was perfectly right. The time had not come for an attempt to abolish slavery. A long process of development was necessary before society would be ready for the attainment of a community of free and equal persons. The premature launching of a policy which is good in itself may actually cause defeat and disaster. Jesus insists on the evil of violence, but that does not prove that it is our duty to apply the maxim of non-resistance without the slightest regard for conditions. If we did so, once again we should produce results quite contrary to those intended.

Does this mean the comfortable doctrine that Christianity is just an unrealizable ideal? Not at all. It indicates the direction in which all Christian energy must be turned in

¹ Kenneth Ingram, *The Defeat of War* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd.).

a life-long effort to change the situation until the full realization of the Christian ideal becomes possible. This is not a lower conception. It is crude literalism which degrades Christianity. Moral legalism relieves men of the very responsibility which Jesus lays upon His fellows. He was no dictator. He left us to discover for ourselves how to relate the fundamental principles of Christianity to the concrete situation.

Many scholars attribute the crucifixion of Jesus to the fierce opposition aroused by this rejection of religious legalism. He opposes the strict moral and ritual commandments of the Jews, the keeping of the Sabbath, fasting, ceremonial washings, even moral commands such as "to love one's neighbour as oneself," when treated as legal precepts. The genius of Christianity is not to be found in a new and even more difficult moral code, but in a renewal of the heart, a transvaluation of values, a surrender of the spirit to the claims of that divine fellowship which is the Kingdom, "for out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, thefts, false witness: these are the things which defile the man," therefore "Make the tree good and the fruit good."

To treat the teaching of Jesus, which was aimed at substituting spirit for law, a renewed mind for the futile attempt to conform to an external code, as itself a code, is to miss the whole significance of Christianity. Did not Jesus criticize Judaism precisely because "it bound on men's shoulders burdens grievous to be borne"? Did He not come as the saviour, not of the "unco' guid," but of publicans, sinners, outcasts? The Pharisees said, "This multitude which knoweth not the law is accursed." Was Jesus a super-Pharisee with a still more exacting law? On the contrary, Jesus seeks to induce a change in the spirit of man out of which will arise a new attitude to others, a deeper humanity, a more profound respect for human nature. This leads to the succour of the needy and an attempt to reclaim rather than to harm the erring. The new spirit of compassion, however, is not incompatible with resistance to evil, but may actually demand it.

In the light of these principles let us examine some of the well-known passages from the teachings of Jesus that have been widely quoted in support of pacifism.

“Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn unto him the other also.”

Now, this is clearly not a literal command. Is it not rather a rebuke to those who are unduly sensitive to personal affronts, quick to resent insults, concerned about their own dignity and superiority? Does not Jesus point to the very different reaction of the man who is not concerned with what people think of him, with his personal dignity, who has no false pride, who is not irascible, who is humble, generous, and ready to overlook affronts? And, moreover, is not this magnanimity often more successful than angry retaliation? In other words, is not Jesus describing a new type of man and his reaction to rudeness and insult? It would be perfectly possible to obey the literal command and turn the other cheek, while boiling with malice and injured pride. It would also be possible to knock a man down without malice, and to put a prompt check to violent insult, without feeling personal resentment. It is not the question of violence that is being discussed, but the personal attitude. The true disciple of Jesus is he who, in his purely personal relations, is less touchy and irascible, less resentful at aspersions directed against his character than other people. Is there not a danger lest, by applying this teaching simply to the question of war and peace, its real meaning may be overlooked and the precept broken? Jesus is not saying, “If someone is injuring other people leave them to it,” yet this is how the pacifist sometimes comes to interpret this passage, making of Christ’s rebuke to personal pride and resentment an excuse for not defending other people. What could be less in accord with the real spirit of the gospel?

“Resist not him that is evil.”

Once again this was never intended as a universal rule of

non-resistance under all conceivable circumstances. Carried out in this crudely literal way, it would make laws impossible and give encouragement to bullies and blackmailers. Does Christianity really absolve us from maintaining a system of public law? Is not the real intention of this teaching also directed to a transformation of our personal relations? Is it not an attempt to shake us out of always and implacably standing on our rights, exacting our pound of flesh, always giving tit for tat? The real application of the Sermon on the Mount is once again to be found not in a crude literalism, but in an examination and purification of human motives. The psychologist who analyses our truculence to discover beneath it our insatiable power-complex, and who helps to dissolve it, is carrying on the real moral task of Christ. A literal non-resistance that nevertheless leaves the hate, the inner violence, the fundamental power urge untouched is not impossible.

"The refusal to use force," says Dr. A. D. Lindsay, "might be an even greater failure than the necessity to use it. The truest way to love your enemies may sometimes be to resist forcibly the evil they are trying to do, as we ourselves should hope to be resisted in like case."

"They that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

These words were spoken on the night of the arrest of Jesus when one of the disciples behaved with reckless and utterly futile violence. Christ clearly has special reasons for the abandonment of force on this occasion; but speaking of the political upheaval which He anticipated after His death, He exhorted His followers to sell their garments and buy swords when the right moment should come.

"Love your enemies."

Once again there is no reference here to possible military action or to the attitude of a whole nation in time of war. Christ's clear intention is to give guidance as to individual relationships. His aim is essentially to purify the heart of personal rancour. A right attitude to one's fellows rules

out "getting one's own back," cherishing resentment, meditating and plotting evil against those with whom we do not get on too well. The Christian must show a positive desire for all men's good, not excluding his enemies, and of course not excluding foreigners, who are often regarded as natural enemies, especially by "chosen races." Such an attitude to an "enemy" considers the man's own needs, whether he himself is conscious of them or not. It is the attitude of the doctor to the patient, of the successful schoolmaster to the difficult boy, of the psychiatrist to his patient. It is nothing to do with personal liking, which cannot be determined by anything but our own feelings. It is not love in that sense at all. It is rather the attitude of the healthy to the sick who needs succour, of the wise to the foolish who needs guidance, of the strong to the weak who needs support.

Christian pacifism in treating the Sermon on the Mount as a rigid code of precepts applicable without modification to all ages and conditions is both unspiritual and un-historical. It is unspiritual, as we have already argued, because the whole essence of Christianity is to set the human conscience free to legislate for itself, to purify men's hearts so that they can freely will the right. Christ died to liberate men from Jewish legalism. He was martyred by it. Out of His heroic witness to spiritual freedom arises the Pauline gospel of salvation through grace for liberty, which breaks entirely with Judaism.

Christian pacifism is un-historical because every great teacher must be a child of his age. The Koran reflects the conditions of life in the Arabian desert in the sixth century. It cannot be used as a guide to conduct in London to-day. The sacred classics of India and China, while they contain truths common to all times, reflect in their precepts requirements and conditions utterly different from our own. Jesus is addressing the Jewish people, under conditions of political servitude to Rome, a people versed in Hebrew prophecy and anticipating the end of the world. So far from being independent of the currents of thought of His

times, modern scholarship has shown Jesus to be saturated with apocalyptic notions of the approaching end of all things. He speaks as one who foresees the immediate break-up of civilization. His moral system has been called an "interim ethic." If within a few months the earth will open, the sun and moon be turned to blood, the heavens pass away as a scroll, Jerusalem fall in ruins, while the Messiah and His angels appear in the flaming sky to bring judgment on the wicked, why lay up treasure on earth? Why build mansions? Why plan long-range political moves? Why take anxious thought for the future? If you and your neighbour will be overwhelmed by the end of the world in the next five minutes, or five hours, or even five months, why harbour resentment? As a man faced with instant death finds his whole attitude to men suddenly transformed, so does the Christian who believes with Christ that "the end is at hand."¹ This is by no means to make nonsense of the teaching of Jesus. As Schweitzer has shown, perhaps it is precisely in the shock of facing eternity that our moral judgments are most completely purged. To act always as if the end were upon us is perhaps salutary advice. But it does make nonsense of this intensely otherworldly prophet, thundering his warnings on the eve of world dissolution, if we codify his precepts into a rule of thumb for the modern world.

The apocalyptic interpretation of the New Testament moreover is completely incompatible with the pacifist attitude to life. The teaching of Jesus is full of dire threats and terrifying prophecies. He speaks of the purging fire, the day of judgment, the winnowed grain, the axe laid to the root of the tree, the separation of wheat and tares, the destruction of the worthless, the evil, the inhumane by fire. Truly:

The vision of Christ that thou dost see
Is my vision's greatest enemy.

¹ Those who have overlooked the apocalyptic element in the New Testament should turn to Mark xiii and Matthew xxiv.

The book of Revelation is not inconsistent with this teaching of Christ, but a development of it, and here we have the overthrow of the Roman Empire described, and war to the death between the angels of God and the forces of evil. What is foretold is war, war against the cruel pagan states of the time in their politically organized form. Evil is to be checked, thrown back, and ultimately annihilated by sheer physical force. It is assumed that when the forces of righteousness are strong enough, evil can and should be overthrown. The whole conception of pacifism is utterly foreign to this attitude. Pacifism thinks in terms of gradualism not cataclysm, peaceful persuasion not violent overthrow, reconciliation not "a great gulf fixed" between heaven and hell. Its world is a convent world, sweet, placid, smooth, incapable of acknowledging the existence of implacable evil and downright wickedness. The World of the New Testament is the world as we know it; it is a realistic and shocking world, of violent wickedness and ruthless cruelty, a world of strife and violence in which justice will perish if it is not defended, and evil can only be restrained by force. The pacifist's world is a wish-fulfilment dream. It is the world as he would like it to be, not as it really is. The New Testament is not an exercise in wish fulfilment, but in realism. It knows sin and cruelty and evil men to be grim realities. It speaks continually in terms of warfare. The military metaphor is frequently employed in Christian literature. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a passionately religious and highly moral book, but it is full of fighting and military allegories. This would be completely incompatible with a genuine religious spirit and moral tone if war were really the same foul thing as murder and nothing more. To be forced to this judgment on Bunyan's great work is to bring one's own moral sense under extreme suspicion rather than to condemn the book. If warfare is utterly contrary to the teaching of Christ, if all war is wrong, if the real sword invariably means evil, how can warfare be used as the symbol of Christian struggle? Why should we be exhorted to "fight the good fight," to take the

“sword” of the spirit and the breastplate of righteousness? If a sword is a wholly evil thing, you cannot possibly use it as a metaphor of Good. Right through the Bible, both in the Old Testament and in the New, the sword is frankly accepted as the instrument of righteousness, and a pacifist judgment on the sword could only mean discarding the Bible as a book vitiated with militarism and murder from cover to cover. The righteous Kings of Judah and Israel rule with the sword, the Hebrew prophets preach a peace based on justice and attained through judgment and restraint, not by disarmament. The prophetic books are full of descriptions of the overthrow by violence of the cruel barbarian empires of the East.

It is not enough to say that the New Testament supersedes the Old. If pacifism is the new truth, the old error must be explicitly repudiated and the Old Testament purged of its corruptions. In point of fact, the New Testament only repudiates crude vengeance, “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” It does not state that the Old Testament belief in the necessity of violence is everywhere and always wrong. If pacifists are right about the New Testament, it ought in fact to do what a certain heretical sect once did, and drop the Old Testament as an immoral book, in which quite a different God from the God of the New Testament is worshipped. This is probably exactly what many pacifists feel like, but it is not the view of Christians who hold that wars have in the past achieved good, and are therefore not inherently and necessarily evil. Pacifism denies even a partial good in war. If we stick to the rigid logic of the pacifist position, as pacifists themselves usually do, we cannot defend force under any circumstances, for it can *never* have effects which are more good than bad. The moment the pacifist admits that under certain circumstances and in certain ages good may come out of war, his fundamental principle collapses. It is no longer an absolute and scientific certainty that by the adoption of forceful means evil must result. One exception destroys the invariable rule, and every case must then be decided on its merits.

The non-pacifist has never claimed that all wars do more good than harm. He simply claims the right in each instance to weigh the good and bad results likely to follow from fighting on the one hand and from abstaining from violence on the other. If the pacifist allows that Old Testament wars may have been right and may have achieved a balance of good in spite of the accompanying evil, then pacifism falls to the ground. If the pacifist is consistent, then the Bible becomes from cover to cover (because the New Testament fails to repudiate the Old) a thoroughly immoral and pernicious book, and no pacifist ought to have anything to do with it.

The pacifist, in abandoning war to the devil, is pursuing the same course as all those who fail to distinguish the use of a thing from its abuse, and because there is a real danger of abuse try to avoid that peril by not touching the accursed thing. On these grounds marriage, alcohol, novel-reading, the theatre, art, science, and even the printing of books have been condemned and avoided by moral, religious rigorism. The result is to bring about by our insistence the very evil we denounce. By continually asserting that the theatre is vicious, it can be made so. By abandoning anything to the devil, it becomes devilish just because decent men cease to use it and use it rightly. By insisting on the unredeemed brutality of war, we actually help to brutalize it. A more Christian attitude would insist on the stern necessity of war under certain conditions, but make every exertion to mitigate its horrors and wage it only in a just cause. There are Christian soldiers uncontaminated by their duties and of pure conscience. The men who returned from the Great War were not degraded and morally ruined, as they certainly would have been if they had been literally committing murder, as pacifists declare.

Biblical and Christian history is not pacifist. It is not sentimental and romantic about war, but it accepts it as one of life's grim tasks and an inescapable responsibility. It is a nobler morality which accepts the inevitability of inflicting and enduring suffering in the defence of justice

and the restraint of crime, than that which self-righteously absolves itself from the sterner duties of citizenship.

But can we possibly imagine Christ as a soldier?

“To that we may reply, Can we imagine Him at all different from what He was? *But that is not because we do not think other activities would not have been right for Him, but because of the supreme nature of His particular task and the very special character of His vocation.* But suppose Him a man with such a vocation as ours, is it impossible to imagine Him like Tolstoi’s peasant soldier, who, even in war, is filled with inward peace, or like Socrates, marching barefoot as a common foot-soldier, still in pursuit of wisdom? Had He, like Socrates, been a citizen of a free state which had to defend against barbarism a higher civilization which was to bless humanity, might He not, like Socrates, have participated in the task?”¹

But historical considerations, though primary and important, are not fundamental. The case against pacifism rests ultimately on the true meaning of Christian ethics. Are there or are there not “moral laws as inescapable as physical laws”? to quote a correspondent. If one says that under certain circumstances we may lie or kill, “evidently a moral universe with immutable laws is rejected. But there must be a moral law, and a plain one, or faith in human progress is absurd. Therefore we will *not* do evil that good may come simply because we know that good cannot come of evil, any more than an apple can fall upwards.”² My correspondent’s view that there must be a system of moral laws is an extremely common one, but Christian ethics does not support him. There are not *many* such laws, but only *one*, for no law is absolute which can be justified by a higher law, and every so-called moral law but one can be so justified. The one supreme law from which all the others derive is usually known as the principle

¹ John Oman, *The War and its Issues*.

² Mr. Frank Hancock, Labour Candidate for Monmouth.

of love, by which is meant, however, not love as a sentiment, but as the desire that we shall do men good rather than harm. There is nothing more fundamental than this, and no other moral law which can be put alongside. It is final and comprehensive. Supposing a pacifist claims to add another fundamental moral principle: "Thou shalt not kill." We have the right to ask "Why?" If there is a reasonable answer to such a question, that shows that the principle "thou shalt not kill" itself is not ultimate, but derives its validity from a more general principle. What, then, is the answer to the question? It is that to kill someone is not to do him good, is contrary to human welfare. "Thou shalt not kill" is how the principle of love works out in certain circumstances. "Thou shalt not kill" therefore is a *rule* derived from a wider law, and there are, of course, many such *rules* of conduct, but no rule has the same validity as the fundamental law from which it derives.

But if the *fundamental* guiding principle is the maximum welfare of our fellow-men, we shall soon discover in real life that two *rules* for human welfare sometimes conflict. It is wrong to lie, because men must be able to depend on one another, because it is contrary to human welfare to deceive. But it may be necessary to lie to a sick man, or to save an innocent man from an enraged and dangerous enemy. Lying is bad, but under certain circumstances not-lying is worse. *We are forced to choose the lesser of two evils.* This principle must be firmly established, for in all problems of actual conduct we more frequently have to choose the least of two evils than simply pure good from pure evil.

It is not correct, however, to describe this as "doing evil that good may come," for, as we have shown in the preceding chapter, the evil character of the means is itself modified by the very fact that it is the only way to a certain kind of good. It may still retain some of its unpleasant characteristics, but not all. What makes a blow evil is not only the pain it inflicts, but the evil motive behind it. A similar blow to fell a bully and save his victim retains some of the evil qualities of the first blow, but it is funda-

mentally different because its intention is different. It is not a case of "doing evil" that good may come in the sense that one has struck the same kind of evil-motived, cruel, and bullying blow as a man striking a child in anger.

The choice, moreover, is frequently between good to one person plus harm to another, on the one hand, and harm to the first person plus good to the second, on the other. It is necessary to shut a man up in prison if he is a really violent and dangerous character. If we leave him alone we leave him his freedom, which is good; but by doing so we become responsible for the harm he inflicts on his victims. We cannot do good to his victims without doing harm to him. The moral principle of always seeking human welfare requires, therefore, a certain modification. We must seek the maximum human welfare possible under the circumstances. We must face the difficult moral decision of trying to weigh up the balance of good and evil, since no course that is open to us permits us to choose pure good.

The confusion of thought that exists on this subject is further encouraged and increased by the claim sometimes made that in such a dire situation, when one is confronted with such stern alternatives, a Christian is never under obligation to choose *either* alternative. Professor Macgregor, for example, says explicitly: "*It is impossible to believe that God will ever face the wholly consecrated Christian with a dilemma in which there is only a choice of two evils.*" This is an entirely mistaken notion. It is contrary to the facts of everyday experience. Every surgeon called upon to perform a painful and urgent operation has laid upon him just such an ineluctable dilemma. He can choose either to operate or he can allow his patient to die. There is no other alternative. As an honourable man he is morally bound, in such a dilemma, to choose the lesser evil. Of course, when, as occasionally happens, the alternatives presented are equally bad, or equally insignificant, a refusal to choose may be pardoned. But when one evil is immense, as compared with the other, a good man's conscience obliges him to choose the less. When it is a choice between, on the one hand,

stopping with the threat of force a bully bent on violence, or, on the other, allowing society to revert to anarchy, I can see no possibility of evading a choice of the lesser of two evils.

This obligation to choose the lesser of two evils is not got rid of by describing the mere refusal to act as "the acceptance of a cross." The *obligation to choose* is indeed a cross; the *refusal to choose*, however, in such a hard case is really not the acceptance of a cross, but a dereliction of duty. I, therefore, entirely dissent from the opinion of Rev. Leyton Richards, when he says: "There is always an exit from a choice of evils by the way of the cross, or its equivalent, if only men have sufficient faith to take it." The will of God may mean a cross, and it often does, but the cross that is really laid upon us ought never to be identified with refusal to do one's duty, even though that duty may mean the choice of the lesser of two evils.

This whole attitude assumes that life presents us only with problems which fit our own conception of what constitutes ethical choice. Life is, unfortunately, full of forced options where, whatever course we choose, someone will be harmed. Can pacifists deny the existence of the following actual dilemmas, which might be increased indefinitely?

If you feed one group of refugees, say a group of children, you must starve another group and many will die.

If you use up your bandages on some wounded men, you will have none at all left for others and they will die. (These are from actual incidents in Spain and France.)

If you take all the people which the boats will hold away from a sinking ship, you will yet leave some to drown.

If you use the fire-escape to save people on one side of the house, those on the other side will burn to death.

I am merely driving home the inescapable truth that actual problems of conduct are complex, and not simple. There are hundreds of examples in real life in which none of the courses open to us are free from disadvantages, in

which case all we can do is to choose the least evil. We simply cannot avoid doing harm to somebody.

It may be replied that in such a dilemma we can at any rate follow the higher moral law. It may be necessary to imprison a man, but it is not necessary to kill him. There are two separate points involved here. Firstly, it is not possible to arrange moral principles in order of importance. Is lying more or less evil than increasing a sick man's pain? It depends on circumstances. Sometimes it may be better to endure a blow or a theft than to imprison a criminal, but at other times it will not be so. If this is the case we are once again deprived of any infallible rule and are thrown back on our own judgment, *to which we must allow the ultimate right to subordinate any moral rule to any other if the circumstances justify it*. Secondly, it is not the case that "Thou shalt not kill" is any exception to the rule that any moral rule may be found not to hold under certain circumstances, or may be subordinated to another rule which under certain circumstances becomes higher than the principle of not-killing. There are several possible cases. In the first place a man's death may be a lesser evil than the moral harm he might do to a child, or a man may choose to bring about his own death by continuing to propagate Socialism under Fascism, or by manipulating X-rays in the interest of medical science. In the second place we may not even have that choice; we may have to choose which of two men is to die, as in several of the instances given above.

Now, I am not at this point proving that wars are Christian. I am proceeding step by step. I am clearing up what is meant by moral principles and how we are to apply them, because if this task is impatiently shirked and we pursue the very common course of *starting* the discussion with the Christian attitude to war, we shall be unable to reach satisfactory conclusions, because we have not troubled to think out in the first instance how we ought to solve moral problems.

We have reached the position, then, that conformity to the fundamental principle of always seeking the **maximum**

human welfare *may* involve us in the taking of human life. We cannot therefore say that violence in itself, or killing in itself, is invariably morally wrong, though it is, of course, always evil. (We must again draw this sharp distinction between evil and moral wrong.)

In practice, a very common moral dilemma is presented when injury to a third party is threatened and someone is present who can prevent it. In this case the aggressor seeks the harm of his victim, but the victim does not seek the harm of the aggressor. Surely one owes an immediate duty to the victim. If one refrains from assisting the victim, one becomes an accessory before the act, since by not interfering we have allowed a crime to take place. Further, if we assure the criminal that, on Tolstoian grounds, we do not propose to prevent his assault, he will, on the basis of that assurance, commit his crime, for which we become as much responsible as the criminal himself.

Pacifists often try to escape this kind of dilemma by saying that the situation ought never to have arisen. They argue that if even one side in a dispute had taken a consistently pacifist line there could have been no threat of violence at all. Does this mean that pacifism is practicable only if one side is already pacifist? In that case it is never practicable, so what are we to do? Are we in such cases to wash our hands of the whole affair on the grounds that we have nothing to say to two parties both of which have constantly adopted wrong methods?

Does not this ignore the fact that even if the side least in the wrong has not behaved with "perfect charity," its course is nevertheless the more just? That being so, there are three alternatives:

(a) The unlikely alternative of the side most in the right adopting a purely pacifist attitude.

(b) The defence of the right leading to the prevention of grave injustice and cruelty.

(c) The refusal to defend the right leading to the perpetration of injustice and cruelty.

As the first of these three alternatives is almost always out of the question, the real choice is between the other two. If our belief in the first leads us to take no action at all, we throw our (negative) weight on to the side of refusing to defend the right. We therefore become responsible for the worse of the two possibilities being realized. In view of the fact that the perfect course is *at the time of action* impossible, is it right to choose the worse of the only practicable alternatives?

It is surely morally irresponsible to refuse to act because the actual situation is not what we think it ought to be. Moral action is surely the choice of the course likely to lead to the greater human welfare out of all *practicable* possibilities at the moment.

How is the Christian to apply this principle to matters affecting the State as a whole? Once again we have to accept the fact that the community is mixed and imperfect and cannot be expected to take a perfect course—perfection, in fact, is utterly meaningless in politics. But a nation is always in the position to choose between two *possible* alternatives, one of which is definitely more just than the other. Now, if for the nation, in its imperfect stage of development, one course is higher than the other, then that is its duty, for it can see no higher course. In these circumstances is it really religious to say: This course may be right on your lower moral plane, but I can have no part or lot in it because my moral plane is a higher one? If any duty confronts the nation as duty, as the highest it can know at that juncture, the religious man should surely be the one person to press his nation to acknowledge no other consideration save that duty. Even if an entirely pacifist attitude was right, if it is not at the moment possible we are entirely unhelpful in not encouraging the nation to do the best that it knows.

But is pure pacifism ever right in the face of the threat of war? The answer is a simple one. War is an evil, as all admit, but it is right if the evil it avoids is a greater evil, and that has to be determined in each particular case.

War is always the alternative to submission to the will of another State. The question is whether submission to that will involves less evil than the acknowledged evil of war. Whichever course is followed, evil will result. The only question is which is the greater evil. We cannot say, *a priori*, that any course which involves shedding blood must necessarily lead to more evil because, as we have taken pains to show, there is no absolute principle involved here. It may be so, but if so it has to be proved by weighing the balance of good and evil in every separate case under discussion.

In this chapter we cannot do more than work out the implications of the Christian ethic: the detailed consideration of the balance of welfare as between a just war and an unjust peace belongs elsewhere. What we have tried to make clear is that violence, while it always remains evil, is not a moral wrong, but a moral duty, where it results in a balance of human welfare, as for instance where it is used to protect an innocent victim, to restrain anarchy and violence, or to maintain a just social order. If this is so, we must draw a sharp distinction between the use of violence to achieve an unjust end and its use as police action in defence of the rule of law.

“Is it, then, true to say with the pacifist that force is always evil, the work of the Evil One? In the absolute, yes; and no words can make it otherwise. But it is still true that, in this stage of society to which the human story has come, force in the form of coercive restraint cannot be dispensed with, and does bring good and lessen evil since it is the only weapon within the present reach of mankind for dealing with the wrecker, the gangster, the enemy of society. That is no Devil’s work. We cannot employ the purer weapons of the spirit, because mankind so far still rejects and despises them. The alternative is not peace and goodwill, but anarchy and barbarism beyond belief, and an end to such opportunities as now exist for the slow enlightening of the hearts of men.”¹

¹ Donnington, *The Citizen Faces War*.

If it is permissible to use force to restrain lawless violence within the bounds of a national community, can it be contrary to the will of God to employ it for the same purpose in the international sphere? The principle which must guide us is surely the same in both realms. When justice has been fairly determined, and when the force available on its behalf is overwhelming, and when the good to be achieved is enormous as compared with the evil involved in its use, then we are equally under obligation to use that force in one realm even as in the other, otherwise no moral order of society could exist.

The matter has been put with great force and cogency by the Archbishop of York:

“Power of coercion is indeed a part of the State’s necessary equipment. Force is entrusted to the State in order that the State may effectively prevent the lawless use of force; and from the moral standpoint the use of force to uphold a law designed for the general well-being against any who try to use force contrary to the general well-being, is in a totally different class from the force which is thus kept in check. If the police draw their truncheons to quell rioters they do not thereby become rioters. Because the State aims at the general well-being it should not use more force to control violence than is necessary; but it is still more important that it should use enough. If once the State has recourse to force at all for the maintenance of law the primary requirement is that it should employ sufficient force; otherwise it leaves lawless force triumphant . . . if it is known in advance that to attack an individual is to challenge the community, such attacks rarely or never take place. When once the principle is established they will probably, in the case of nations, never take place at all, since individuals who defy the community hope that their misdeeds will never be traced to them, but such a hope could not be entertained by a nation.

“The third principle which follows necessarily from

the second, is that individuals should defend the community, since only so can the community defend the individual. Within the confines of a nation, this duty is in practice delegated to paid servants—the police—but the reason why a small handful of men can keep order among a large population is that behind the authority of the police there is, in the last resort, the whole force and power, first of the armed forces of the Crown, and eventually of the whole body of citizens. The chief argument against applying this system to nations is that it would represent an endeavour to suppress war by making war. This is not the case; there are essential moral and practical differences between the abuse of, and the restraint of, violence, as is shown by the example already given of the use of force by the police for the suppression of a riot.

“The basis of collective action is the strength of all for the defence of each—a conception which, once generally accepted, makes the defence so overwhelmingly strong in relation to any possible attack that the resultant feeling of security transforms a state of fear and uncertainty into one of safety and enterprise. . . . Our present measure of liberty has not been reached by diminishing the relative volume of force available to the central national authority, but by increasing it until it is incomparably great and resistance to it is futile. The first necessity was for the Crown to gain control over the feudal nobility. Till that was done, national life was a chaos of private wars. Those wars ceased when the Crown was strong enough to call both parties to book. Now order is tolerably well established, but it rests on the force at the disposal of the Crown as central authority to suppress all disorder. That force is relatively so overwhelming that no one, broadly speaking, challenges it. So we forget it, and enjoy the orderliness which it guarantees, and the liberty thus made possible. Our freedom and capacity to enter on the intercourse and aspirations which spring from freedom, rest on the fact that the State has at its disposal

lawful force sufficient to control all exercise of violence which is lawless force.

“It can be also among nations. There is no reason to suppose that order and liberty can be secured in any other way. Especially is there no reason in Christian revelation for hope by any other way than this.”¹

Pacifism seeks to avoid any complicity with evil whatever, and cannot bring itself to face the ugly fact that a policy of washing one's hands of all violence, so far from diminishing the amount of evil, and even violence, in the world, actually increases it. It is extremely painful to have to weigh up the balance of good and evil in two courses both of which will involve us in evil. There is a powerful temptation to seek perfect purity, to avoid all contamination, by contracting out of the situation. But this is not so noble a motive as it seems. The quest of peace is not always the quest of true holiness, but a form of infantilism, an impulse to return to the security and innocence of the maternal arms where one is just passively good. Whatever may be *said*, or even intended, about positive pacifism, as we shall show in a later chapter, the only effective side of most actual pacifism is the negative side—the bald refusal to get mixed up in violence.

Force as the instrument of just law minimizes violence, whereas the abandonment of social restraint increases it. The coming of the King's law into England, with its system of travelling judges and officers, “to keep the King's peace,” undoubtedly diminished lawlessness and violence in this country. International violence will continue until the nations combine to put it down.

The policy of rejecting united action, backed up by a vociferous pacifism supporting each surrender, actually had the effect of spreading war over China, Abyssinia, Spain and Poland and has now involved us in the second World War. It is distressing to think that so many Christian pacifists fell into the trap and accepted at face value the

¹ *Christ and the Way to Peace.*

propaganda of the cynical imperialists who argued that united intervention to preserve the peace and integrity of those nations would mean war.

The Christian must also ask himself what the result of surrender to Fascism will be to the mass of ordinary people. If we consider the aims of Japan in China or the achievements of Hitler and Mussolini in their countries, the only answer is, the servile State. The Christian must, then, consider whether war is really a worse evil than slavery.

“To treat a man as a chattel is a much graver denial that he is an end in himself than to say to him: You must die, as I should be willing to die in like case, rather than live as the instrument for giving victory to an unrighteous cause. To enslave others is always an acuter opposition to the whole Christian order than fighting others, unless we are merely fighting to enslave them. To make life an end in itself and to make a man an end in himself are things so different that every good by which a man’s soul is saved must be valued above life; and freedom, the condition of truly possessing a soul, no man can ever have except by setting it above life.”¹

Man is certainly an end in himself, and just because he is so, and there can be no manhood apart from liberty, it may be necessary to sacrifice life to preserve manhood. To set life before liberty is surely a failure in moral perception. Neither freedom nor justice has ever been won except by men who placed them above even human life. That is why the evils attendant on a war against exploitation and subjection may be less than the evils of submitting to them.

“That is not to hold life a light possession or war a small evil, but it is to hold that there are worse evils than war—moral surrender against which we must contend even to blood, and it may be the blood of others as well as our own. No mere material end can be sufficient

¹ John Oman, *The War and its Issues*.

justification, for all that a man has he will give for his life, but justice and liberty are spiritual blessings which never have been maintained at less hazard than life."¹

Those who reverse these values, putting life above liberty and asserting that not even freedom is worth a war, lay themselves open to the suspicion of under-valuing liberty only because it is someone else's liberty and not their own that is threatened. The middle-class man may not fear Fascism, supposing that if it comes it will only be the "lefts" who will get into trouble. Liberty for many people mainly concerns property rights. It is interference with these that is chiefly feared. Fascism, however, defends private property, and is therefore not likely to be a serious menace, whereas it puts a stop once and for all to Socialist threats to "liberty." Socialists may be prevented from free speech by Fascism, but nothing that the believer in private property is likely to want to say will be interfered with. Fascism therefore is no foe of *his* liberty, and is not greatly to be dreaded.

Even many of those who hold advanced views do not hold them seriously enough to think them worth fighting for. With regard to the liberty of Spaniards, Chinese, Czechs, and Frenchmen, few pacifists are overwhelmingly convinced that interference with self-government and the permanent continuance of capitalism is an evil so great as to be worth a war on their behalf. Pacifists also value the advantages of Socialism too little to be prepared to defend them by force against counter-revolution. The comfortable do not suffer enough from social injustice to hate it as an unemployed miner would. Few men will ever be so intelligent and idealistic as to see the needs of others as vividly as they recognize their own. The middle-class man cannot feel the utter necessity of breaking the chains of the workers. There is no categorical imperative for him about proletarian aspirations.

The test comes when violence is used by a Conservative

¹ John Oman, *The War and its Issues*.

Government to break up peaceful demonstrations and bully the unemployed. There are few pacifist protests against this, only definite disapproval of the demonstrations themselves. The real weight of pacifist protest is always directed against the violence that resists tyranny, not against the violence of tyranny itself.

Perhaps this is why the Church was not greatly concerned with the wickedness of the last war, for it was a war to preserve the wealth and privileges of capitalist England. But when war is the defence of Soviet Russia or of the Spanish Republic against intervention, it becomes a wicked thing which Christians must repudiate. The Church is unfortunate. It is militant in an imperialist war and pacifist in a war for true liberty. It always manages to find itself, with perfectly good intentions and the noblest ideals, on the wrong side. As Bishop Gore said: "How utterly, on the whole, has the official Church failed to exhibit the prophetic spirit! . . . This is the first great claim that we should make upon the Church to-day; that it should make a tremendous act of penitence for having failed so long, on so wide a scale, to behave as the champion of the oppressed and the weak; for having tolerated what it ought not to have tolerated; for having so often been on the wrong side."

There is one last Christian pacifist argument to consider. It is often suggested, on the analogy of the Cross, that the way to the world's peace will be found in the voluntary sacrifice of some martyr nation. The theory is that when a nation has been found sufficiently devoted to the ideals of peace to discard all its armaments and accept in quietness any injustice that may be inflicted upon it, then war would for ever cease and injustice would be broken by the rebuke of suffering righteousness. The impressiveness of such a sacrifice would, it is claimed, transform the world. This appears to me to be extremely doubtful. Despite the power of heroic example to touch and change men's hearts, it is difficult to believe that submission to wrong would quell the spirit of war for ever. One might as well hope that, if

a father could be found who was ready to allow his child to be kidnapped, the underworld would be so startled and impressed that all baby-snatching would cease. The restraining power of non-violence is no substitute for a framework of law and order that is at once just and strong. Nor can I see any hope at all of ever persuading any nation, or even a substantial majority of any nation, to accept such a policy and make such a venture of faith. Men will not believe in any great numbers that peace can be assured merely by allowing justice on all occasions to go by default.

We are debating, but events at last put an end to all debates and confront us with inescapable realities. Without at the moment passing judgment on the present world conflict there are occasions when on some vital issue war actually breaks out, when wickedness gathers itself together to batter down the opposition to its will, when righteousness and decency are in peril of utter annihilation. Such events are a moral judgment.

Not to see the wickedness for what it is, condemns us as morally insensitive. Not to value what is threatened to the extent of coming to its aid, is to confess an imperfect scale of values. Not to resist with all our strength, is to fall under grave suspicion of lack of courage. In such a struggle, says a distinguished theologian: "If a Christian cannot side in it and strike with every atom of his energy, then a Christian is a being who, so far as this world is concerned—and this is the world in which we have to do right or wrong—has committed moral suicide, and I have no interest in him. Such a war presents to every creature whose country is involved in it the one great moral issue of our time and for a man to say he can do nothing in it is to vote himself out of the moral world."

CHAPTER VI

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE AND THE EXAMPLE OF GANDHI

IN CRITICIZING the pacifist position there has frequently been a suggestion that pacifism is essentially a negative position, that, confronted with evil, its policy is at bottom one of contracting out of an awkward situation, abstaining from doing anything rather than running the risk of being involved in unpleasantness, anger, and violence. I think there is actually more of this pure negativism about pacifism than most pacifists are ready to admit, and that the complaint of the great Quaker saint Henry Hodgkin was well founded when, during the War, he quoted Lear's famous limerick as a true description of many pacifists of his acquaintance:

There once was a man who said how
Shall I soften the heart of this cow?
I will sit on this stile
And continue to smile
Till I soften the heart of this cow.

But pacifists are very angry at the accusation. They declare¹ that, so far from their creed being a negative one, "*True pacifism offers a stern resistance to tyranny and oppression. Indeed the course the pacifist has chosen is more strenuous than that of the warrior. So far from merely abstaining from action the pacifist adopts the only effective way of overcoming evil—the way of non-violent resistance. This non-violence does not mean doing nothing. It means making the enormous effort required to overcome evil with good. Pacifists believe that this is the most effective, the most equitable, the most economical way of overcoming violence itself.*"

¹ This statement of the meaning of non-violence is taken from Aldous Huxley's *An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism*, Ronald Duncan's *The Complete Pacifist*, and letters to the author from pacifists.

Wilfred Wellock says: "*The method of non-violence is a better way of overcoming evil or establishing good. I believe that violence creates new evils which tend to hinder any good that might be intended and often destroys altogether all chance of doing good or produces new evils which necessitate even worse clashes of violence in the future. So far from adopting a negative attitude, I stand for resistance to evil, but for the reasons stated draw the line at violent resistance. I believe in the development of a non-violent technique, and that whether in China or in Spain, had the people been trained in the method, it would have been infinitely more effective than violence is proving to be.*"

What is this new technique? It is based on understanding, forgiveness, sacrifice, and patience. The pacifist "*lives on a higher moral level than other people, believing in a spark of good, of love in every person and acting as if he believed in it.*"

In this spirit alone "*he can oppose to evil that efficient resistance which only self-sacrificing love can offer. Death does not conquer it. It lives where all true heroism lives—in the soul of humanity.*" He endeavours to "live in the spirit which takes away the occasion of all wars." We must therefore not simply consider the pacifist's refusal to fight, but the whole of his life, which is devoted to social service, international service, and education for peace.

Moving though this declaration of faith may be it is important that we should discover just how effectual it is when translated into action. We are assured that the few non-violent campaigns the world has known have been more completely successful than the many violent ones. The examples given are, however, a little disappointing. There are, among others, Penn and the Indians, numerous Quakers who were persecuted for not bearing arms and broke down the attempt to make them do so by their quiet faith, Pennell of the North-West Frontier, and of course the career of Mr. Gandhi.

Bart de Ligt, in his book *The Conquest of Violence*, mainly concerns himself with a passionate indictment of the behaviour of Europeans in their relations with coloured

peoples, of all forms of imperialism, of the League of Nations and of Soviet Russia, but his constructive proposals do not go beyond a general strike, which seems inconsistent with his rejection of economic sanctions against aggressor nations on the ground that this would deprive non-combatants of food. So would a general strike. He believes we ought to have stopped the Abyssinian war by the non-violent method of "asking the support of the Italian people against the Italian Government," which is not so simple as it appears! Mr. R. B. Gregg, in *The Power of Non-violence*, is more constructive and gives numerous examples of minorities securing concessions from powerful and tyrannical authorities, but he does not seriously apply his method to the case of war, and it can certainly not be assumed without proof that methods which are admirable for obtaining redress of grievances for a weak minority are likely to be equally successful in the kind of issue which usually leads to war. Mr. Gregg himself makes no effort to work the method out and show us how it would operate in such cases, and his book therefore leaves the case unproved.

Neither of these books indicates a practical line of action in the face of internal Fascism. If we could imagine a Labour Party coming to power pledged to the disbanding of the army, the first thing we should have to face would not be foreign invasion; it would be seizure of the Government by an armed Fascist Party. As Nehru argues, in opposition to Gandhi, after a progressive victory the reactionary elements are far more likely to use violence to reverse the situation, if they think that their violence will not be checked by the coercive apparatus of the new State. Such a Government would fall. The Fascists would send all pacifists to concentration camps, take over the Press, the radio, and the schools, suppress all pacifist literature, train every child in the country to loathe pacifists and take pride in war. And that would be the end of pacifism and the beginning of a new dark age which might endure as long as the last. The most heroic non-violence of even a powerful pacifist minority simply would not stand up to this sort of

thing, and no one has yet even attempted to show how it could.

The few successful examples given, apart from those of minorities securing redress, are irrelevant. William Penn was a colonist who dealt honestly and generously with the natives, purchasing the land he needed at a fair price and refraining from cruelty, from bullying, and from seizing what he wanted by force. But this is not pacifism. It is what any good internationalist, who might at the same time be a convinced non-pacifist, would do. There is no technique here for opposing lawless violence. It is rather a technique for preventing violence by simply refraining from provocation. The pacifist would begin to interest us if he would tell us what the *Indians* ought to have done when the non-Quaker colonists violently invaded their country, opened fire on them at sight, and seized their lands by force and without payment.

Pennell was a great man. I know of no evidence at all that he was a pacifist—that is to say, that he believed that order could permanently be kept without the British Army. He, like Penn, believed in treating the Afghans and Pathans with honesty, generosity, and respect. He treated them as equals and as friends and spent his life in ministering to their physical needs as a doctor. He was not a policeman, and he had no responsibilities or duties beyond those of curing disease and treating his patients as a Christian should. He overcame individual suspicion and hostility by unswerving and courageous friendliness. But he did not show the harassed and poverty-stricken frontiersmen how to throw off the yoke of the British Raj, how to establish a just social order, how to escape excessive taxation, how to build a new civilization in which men do not have to live by plunder, because a scientific agriculture operating in a just social order offers prosperity to all through co-operation. Sir William Barton in his recent book on the North-West Frontier¹ clearly shows what is the real nature of the problem of lawlessness among these intractable tribesmen:

¹ Sir William Barton, *India's North-West Frontier*.

“Here in a narrow mountainous strip of territory some 26,000 square miles in area, lying between Afghanistan and the administered districts of the North-West Frontier Province, we find a congeries of fanatical, warlike, well-armed tribesmen about three and a half millions in number, who owe allegiance to no master and who for centuries have been a law unto themselves. Their own barren hills afford them only the barest subsistence at the best of times, and they are in the habit of replenishing their resources by periodic raids into the richer, more fertile plains below them. Ever since the British took over the trans-Indus country from the Sikhs about the middle of the last century this state of affairs has been chronic, and our only answer has taken the form of an almost uninterrupted series of petty wars and expeditions to punish and subdue one tribe after another as occasion demanded, with enormous cost to the Indian exchequer and with no permanent results.”

He sees only one way in which the problem can be solved :

“Intensive efforts should be made to render these wild districts more self-supporting by the fostering of trade and of such local industries as may be possible in these circumstances. Additional roads are required in many sections, and should be constructed whenever opportunity serves.”

This is the considered judgment of a British official, and is hardly likely to exaggerate the economic cause of unrest or to envisage the possibility of radical social change. Pennell, if he had lived, might have seen the kind of social revolution which really dissolves banditry and violence by getting down to its roots. He would have seen it just across the Afghan frontier in Soviet Tadjikistan, but he would have found that it was a new order established by revolution and maintained against possible capitalist inter-

vention by force. And nowhere in the world would he find the abolition of the *causes* of anarchy and banditry apart from force of that kind. Of course the wildest of men will welcome the ministrations of such a man as Pennell and will be changed and softened by his influence, but it is altogether misleading to regard this as a beginning of what, on a greatly extended scale, would abolish war on the North-West Frontier. It is possible only because it is exceptional. A host of Pennells would want to change the whole situation, and at once they would be up against the British Government on the one hand and the brigand chiefs on the other. The situation is exactly the same in the East End of London. A saintly social worker can bring succour to individuals and uplift many social wrecks. This leads those who wish at all costs to avoid grappling with the social problem politically to argue that here is the real way of dealing with the misery and degradation of the slums. Social settlements touching 1 per cent of the population thus become a cheap substitute for social justice touching 100 per cent. The real good that is done becomes a sop to the conscience and an excuse for not doing more and not tackling the situation seriously. Pacifists, with their non-violent methods, are in precisely this position. These individual and local successes, which, indeed, are not to be despised, are the occasion for an improper application from the particular to the general, from the individual to society, from palliative to revolution. The method that certainly ought to be adopted in dealing with a resentful and hostile individual cannot be adopted by society as a whole when dealing with organized and implacable violence. Nor can the fact that we can and must deal as effectively as possible with anti-social persons, using psychological means and personal influence, be taken as an argument for not dealing fundamentally with the causes of social abnormality. The most effective way of dealing with an unemployed family in dire distress may be to give them your old clothes and ten shillingworth of groceries, but that is not the way to deal with unemployment. Non-violent methods have

their place, but their efficacy is partial and limited; beyond their scope quite other methods become necessary.

But the most frequently quoted and impressive example of the power of non-violence is that of Mr. Gandhi, whose achievements and methods are certainly worthy of thorough examination. The real Gandhi is a strange mixture of Machiavellian astuteness and personal sanctity, profound humanitarianism and paralysing conservatism. It is difficult to say which is most startling about the man, his immense power for good or his shocking limitations. One thing is quite certain: to take his career as a complete demonstration of the success of non-violence is entirely to misjudge the Indian situation. Let us briefly review the facts.

Gandhi's first attempt at passive resistance was, of course, in Africa, where he secured important concessions for the Indian community. It is, however, very interesting to note that he rendered services of marked loyalty to the Government during the Boer War, for which he was decorated, and never at that time came forward with the policy of non-co-operation as an alternative to war.

During the Great War he did not adopt a pacifist attitude, but enlisted men for service. He attended the War Conference at the invitation of the Viceroy and supported the resolution drafted to help the Empire in its hour of danger. "I recognize," Gandhi wrote, "that in the hour of its danger we must give ungrudging and unequivocal support to the Empire." He has never explicitly committed himself to the Anti-War position, like other democratic leaders, such as Jean Jaurès, Professor Foerster, Clifford Allen, and Bertrand Russell. He has been concerned with the suffering masses of India which lie under the subjection of a great Imperial Power. He is anti-British more than he is anti-war. He adopts tactics of non-violence because that is the most effective way in which a disarmed and disorganized multitude can resist armed troops and police. He has never suggested that when India attains full independence it shall disband the Indian army. The Indian National Congress,

even at its time of most intense devotion and loyalty to Gandhi and when it was most faithfully following his principles, never for one moment contemplated abandoning violence as the necessary instrument of the State they hoped one day to command.

Gandhi has never been an internationalist like Tagore. He stands rather for a self-sufficient nationalism far removed from a true faith in human progress. In spite of his zeal for certain reforms, he is a social reactionary. Those who know him well say that he has a conservative and extremely narrow mind. He is uninterested in culture, hostile to modern science, sanitation, medicine, and machinery. He has no interest in scientific agriculture and hates the idea of developing simultaneously the wants and the output of the Indian peasants. Unlike Nehru and Bose, he glorifies the poverty which they are fighting. He finds his social ideal in the past and glorifies the primitive village and handicrafts. Nehru says regretfully that since Gandhi refuses to fight the system which produces poverty, he finds himself compelled to justify it. Instead of a real change in the social system, stress is laid on charity and benevolence within the framework of capitalism, vested interests remaining where they are. He has, of course, drawn large sums for his Congress funds from Indian capitalists who ruthlessly exploit coolie labour in the Indian cotton-mills and other industrial concerns.

Gandhi strongly defends the caste system, and his campaign against untouchability must not be taken as an attack on caste itself, but on leaving certain classes as "out-castes," *i.e.* outside the caste system altogether. He wants to bring them in, and leave them at the bottom! His social approach therefore accepts the class divisions of society, overleaping them to an idea of mystical unity without equality. In Government he favours benevolent paternalism rather than genuine democracy. It will at once be seen how close this whole approach is to Fascism. His intensely parochial outlook is strangely out of harmony with genuinely progressive ideals. That India should

become free and self-governing is right enough, but that India should become self-absorbed, self-contained, and self-complete is surely to ignore the whole trend of human development.

Gandhi has launched several non-co-operation campaigns, and his methods have included boycott of foreign cloth, of the law-courts, of educational establishments and of legislatures, the surrender of titles, refusal of Government loans, and refusal to work for the Government in any official position. His followers have courted prison by making contraband salt, have faced the lathis of the police, have withheld taxes, and picketed drink-shops. Gandhi himself has often fasted with the determination to do so until death.

Gandhi calls this method of "war without violence," *Satyagraha* or "soul force." It combines truth, non-violence, personal ascetism, poverty, and fearlessness. It begins with those who practise it, who are dedicated to a stern process of self-purification. Gandhi has frequently said that when his followers are ready they will get their independence in a year. If anything goes wrong he at once confesses that in his followers and in himself there is still unpurged sin or spiritual weakness. After every failure he declares that it is better so, for people have demonstrated by this failure their unfitness for victory. Political failure therefore points the way to renewed self-examination, contrition, and penance, with much fasting and self-punishment. Gandhi even attributed the Bihar earthquake to the sin of untouchableness. "It is," he wrote, "an ennobling thing to believe this. It brings me nearer to my maker." Note the strange mind that not only attributes an earthquake to a social crime, but finds the important thing about that curious diagnosis to be that it is ennobling and spiritually helpful to Mr. Gandhi. Gandhi asserts that by *Satyagraha* it is possible to pit one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible, he affirms, for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

It has been asserted that the effect of these campaigns has been to direct the surging discontent of the masses making for inevitable revolution into non-violent channels. But in point of fact he has, by these very methods, actually aroused the masses to such good purpose that again and again he has had hastily to call off his campaigns because they were getting out of hand, as when the mob burned a police-station and several native policemen. Gandhi confessed that his first campaign, launched in 1919 as a protest against the Rowlatt Acts, was "a blunder of Himalayan dimensions."

A commentator has said: "There are forces of ruin behind him which he is anxious to escape but cannot. He calls into existence again and again forces which he can neither direct nor control. Then he abandons his activities, calls upon his followers to disperse and says 'I who wear the guise of a politician am at heart a religious man.'"

Three things stand out. Firstly, his intense hatred of British Imperialism; secondly, his burning sense of the suffering of the Indian masses; thirdly, his contradictions: sanctity and cunning, reforming zeal and conservatism, moral passion and crude superstition, religious devotion and political manœuvring. Someone has said of him: "Here is a man who has ceased to be one of us and has become an elemental being, a gust blowing from the earth, a passion enclosed in a wizened body. In him suffering is speaking, centuries of poverty and exploitation have found a voice. His history is all wrong, his economics out of date, his mistakes are colossal, but he levels the terrible indictment of the East against the West with deadly effect."

In estimating the effect of his personality and his methods, we shall find that the complexity and contradiction of the man are reflected in his movement. He has given pride and character to a cringing and demoralized people. He has turned the agitation of a few intellectuals into a mass movement. He has liberated and then harnessed the latent power of the Indian proletariat. He has restored to multitudes of Indians faith in themselves and in what they

can do. He has introduced a spirit of organization and discipline into the nationalist movement.

But it is not easy to estimate the political effects of all this. After the first failure Gandhi returned to politics in 1928. After a long and disappointing struggle civil disobedience was called off, and in 1933 Gandhi came to London for the second Round Table Conference, where he was not a success.

He then turned to the "untouchable" issue, which led to his great fast. By 1935 the whole civil disobedience movement had petered out and Gandhi had virtually retired from politics. Now once again (1939) he is playing an active part, this time in the movement to democratize the States governed autocratically by the Indian Rajahs. His object is to make federation between British India, with its democratic legislatures, and the independent Indian States a possibility, for he recognizes that a federation swamped by despotically governed principalities would prove an obstacle to genuine Indian self-government. The National Congress, however, seems more out of touch with Gandhi than ever before. Men like Subha Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, with more everyday and practical notions of politics, are steadily winning ascendancy. Gandhi is still revered as a saint, is still enormously influential, will still do great work for the untouchables, and in isolated campaigns against other abuses such as the drink and drug traffic; but his political leadership seems to be drawing to an end in spite of his recent personal victory over Bose. Indeed, a complete study of his programmes reveals how very little of politics there has ever been in them. They are social and religious programmes which have involved conflict with the Government simply because an alien power so thoroughly controls Indian life. Here are the most typical of his demands in his own words:

1. Removal of the curse of untouchability among the Hindus.
2. The spread of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and

the advocacy of the use of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, to the exclusion of all foreign cloth and even cloth woven in Indian mills.

3. Advocacy of simple life, and therefore, the avoidance of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

4. The establishment of unaided national schools, both for the purpose of weaning students from Government institutions as a part of non-co-operation struggle, and of introducing education, including industrial training, in keeping with the national problems.

5. Promotion of unity amongst Hindus, Mussulmans, Christians, Parsees, Jews, etc.

His recent activities suggest that Gandhi has finished his real work. He has already given up trying to reform the world. His aim to-day is the conquest over the senses, the salvation of the individual. He has been cruelly disappointed in his followers, and has become quite convinced that only he himself is really capable of civil resistance.

Politically the Swaraj so often promised "within a year" seems far distant. India is still in the vice-like grip of British Imperialism. The Congress movement has done practically nothing in the direction of radical social change. The villages are poorer than ever. Factory exploitation is unchecked. The spread of the hand-loom and some earnest efforts at local reforms have done little to improve the lot of the poor. Consider the effect of the non-violence movement on those who stand to lose if Gandhi gets his way. Will any class as a whole surrender their special privileges? Individuals may, but it is a fallacy to argue that because of this *all* the individuals are convertible. Gandhi has converted the masses, but he has not shifted the Government, and on social issues he would not shift the rich.

As we have explained, civil disobedience has always been abandoned when it seemed likely to lead to violence. This indicates to a shrewd Government a certain way of bringing every campaign to naught, since it is perfectly easy to

ensure that violence does break out if the Government wants it.

A great deal has been made of the effect of non-co-operation on British public opinion and of the possible effect of such a campaign on Fascist Germany if practised by a pacifist Britain. But it is always possible to suppress the news or present a completely distorted view of what is happening. It is unlikely that the people of a Fascist State would hear of a non-violence campaign outside their frontiers in some conquered country. It should be remembered that most Germans are even completely ignorant of the persecution of the German Church and of the heroic non-violent protests of their own clergy.

Gandhi has been looked to with great eagerness by those who still hope to win the world to righteousness through preaching and a saintly example, and thus hope to avoid the usual methods of political struggle. Gandhi, as a matter of fact, is more conscious of the power of evil in the world than his followers in this country, and he knows that devils cannot be cast out except by much fasting and prayer. "Indian politics," says Niebuhr, "will not be without marks of his influence. But ultimately the Indian will must be implemented by something more than Gandhi's technique if it is to conquer the British will, symbolized by men like Winston Churchill. The spirit can always gain a moral victory over such a figure simply by subjecting it to moral condemnation. But a political victory is possible only on the political level." It seems likely therefore that Gandhi will end his days as a religious saint rather than a political leader.

Gandhi has stirred the Indian people, and they revere him, but not even his great influence has really made them into pacifists. Yet it is clear that if pacifism is to play an effective part in current politics it requires the genuine support of multitudes of converted people, and must not remain the kind of movement which is liable at any moment to resort to violence. If a remarkable man like Gandhi, working on the susceptible masses of a pacific Eastern

people, cannot enlist an effective peace army after more than twenty years of sacrifice, prayer, and fasting, how likely is it that we shall have such an army here, sufficiently regenerate in spirit and at the same time sufficiently numerous, to change the course of events?

Let us examine the extent to which Gandhi's influence has penetrated the mind of his followers. Nehru says that they have largely ignored his fundamental philosophy. Although he has given character and backbone to some "there are many who have developed neither much backbone nor character, but who imagine that a limp body and a flabby look are the outward semblance of piety." Many who claim to be his disciples have become ineffective non-resisters of the Tolstoian variety or just members of a narrow sect, not in touch with life and reality. A worse result is that the most fervent of Gandhi's pacifist followers tend to gather round them numbers who are solely interested in maintaining the present order and who take shelter under non-violence for the purpose. Non-violence very easily becomes an excuse for inaction and the maintenance of the *status quo*.

One of those who has suffered with Gandhi and has supported him loyally admits that too often "the process of converting the adversary leads, in the interests of non-violence, to one's own conversion and lining up with him. It is comforting to call weak compromise the art of winning over the opponent."

This disappointment has of course been shared by Gandhi himself, who is under no illusions as to the shallow impression made by his profoundly spiritual faith upon the rank and file. We have already pointed out that absolute pacifism cannot be adopted as a creed in isolation to one's whole reaction to worldly values. Gandhi also takes up this position. "Generally," he says, "there are two kinds of fear in men's minds: fear of death and fear of loss of material possessions. A man of prayer and self-purification will shed the fear of death and embrace death as a boon companion, and will regard all earthly possessions as fleeting

and of no account. . . . No power on earth can subdue a man who has shed these two fears." The great Indian philosopher, Aurobindo Ghose, puts the same thought into other words: ". . . only when man has developed not merely a fellow-feeling with all men, but a dominant sense of unity and commonalty, only when he is aware of them not merely as brothers—that is a fragile bond—but as parts of himself, only when he has learned to live, not in his separate personal and communal ego-sense, but in a large universal consciousness, can the phenomenon of war, with whatever weapons, pass out of his life without the possibility of return." In other words, men may hate and loathe war and may wish to refuse to take part in it for a dozen reasons, some good, some, as Gandhi has pointed out, actually bad. Only one of those reasons is that of the genuine pacifist. The genuine pacifist has cast out fear and is above anger; he has no longer need of those things for which men fight, and have always fought.

Pacifists cannot claim Gandhi as a pure exponent of non-violence as the alternative to war. He is by no means an absolutist, and is prepared to accept violence as preferable to what he regards under certain conditions as something definitely worse. Thus he says:

"Where the only choice is between cowardice and violence I advise violence. I cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing. But to him who has not this courage I advise killing and being killed rather than shameful flight from danger. I would risk violence a thousand times rather than the emasculation of the race. I would rather have India resort to arms to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless victim of her own dishonour."¹

He defends himself for his action in enlisting men for service in the Great War in very similar terms.

¹ Cf. Roosevelt, "peace by fear has no higher or more enduring quality than peace by the sword."

Writing in *Young India* in 1925 he says:

“I did not hesitate to tell the villagers of Bettiah four years ago that they who know nothing of *Ahimsa* (soul-force) were guilty of cowardice in failing to defend the honour of their women folk and their property by force of arms. And I have not hesitated to tell the Hindus that if they do not believe in out-and-out *Ahimsa* and cannot practise it, they will be guilty of a crime against their religion and humanity if they fail to defend themselves by force of arms.”

On another occasion he repeats emphatically:

“I would rather see India freed by violence than enchained like a slave to her foreign oppressors.”

While our own pacifists, quoting Gandhi as the great example of successful non-violence, were strongly opposing the military resistance of the Spanish people to Fascism, Gandhi sent to Negrin a letter of cordial support. He wrote:

“DEAR FRIEND,

Pandit Nehru has taught us in India to look beyond our own border. He has now sent me a personal note describing the woes of your country and the bravery with which you are meeting the situation. Needless to say, my whole heart goes out to you in sympathy. May full freedom be the end of the agony you are passing through.

M. K. GANDHI.”

Now, if under certain conditions violence may be preferable to something worse, as Gandhi undoubtedly believes, then while it may still be correct to urge the higher course, we can no longer assert, as pacifists do, that violence is wholly and intrinsically immoral. If it were so, if what pacifists say about the inescapability of consequences which

are even worse than those which violent resistance averts is true, if violence actually breeds as much violence as it uses, then under no circumstances can it be a useful and satisfactory course, and one to be recommended as better than any other practicable alternative, as better than simply not fighting. The pacifist position is quite different from Gandhi's. It is that war is so completely wrong that it can *never* by any possibility do more good than harm, therefore even if men cannot rise to the heights of non-violent resistance and the use of "soul-force," they can still do something better than engage in war. They can simply refuse to participate in war, for that is *always* better than fighting. Gandhi disagrees. For he knows that although war is an evil, it is not the worst evil, but may be right and necessary and productive of more good than harm under certain circumstances. I do not claim that Gandhi would agree with non-pacifists who would have faced war over Czechoslovakia or on any other specific occasion. He might, but he might not. I am only concerned to show that Gandhi accepts the principle that war can be right for certain people under certain conditions.

Gandhi has also clearly stated that such non-violent methods as fasting are not to be used at all against hostile governments. "You cannot fast against a tyrant, for it will be a species of violence done to him. Fasting can only be resorted to against a lover not to extort rights, but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a father who drinks to reform him. I will not fast to reform General Dyer who not only does not love me, but regards himself as my enemy."

His 1939 fast on behalf of constitutional reform in Rajkot illustrates this. Gandhi's father had been prime minister of this little state, and Gandhi had long striven to maintain friendly and indeed fatherly relations with the Thakore Sahib. He fasts because "his erring son" has not kept his promises not to coerce an enemy.

The non-violent methods suggested by English pacifists often fall far short of *Satyagraha* ("the force that is born of

truth and love") as practised by Gandhi, while, unlike him, they are not prepared to advocate war when men cannot rise to the level of really effective non-violent resistance. Thus rent-strikes, stay-in strikes, refusal to obey laws and pay taxes, and other methods of a similar nature are frankly advocated by our pacifists, not as examples of *Ahimsa* at all, but as methods of coercion. The general idea seems to be to do every beastly thing you can think of to embarrass and defy the Government short of violence. It is a new technique of resistance which promises to be more successful than war, but is frankly a kind of war, and the motives behind it are not love and martyrdom at all, but what may be called non-military violence. Non-violence can be as completely coercive as violence itself, in which case, while it has the advantage of not involving war, it cannot be defended on spiritual grounds. It is a form of compulsion, and as such will arouse resentment, especially where the non-violent resisters have aroused public opinion, and thus beaten their opponents. R. B. Gregg even argues that the authorities will give way because they *fear* non-violent resistance. This also suggests that its primary aim is not the conversion of its opponents at all, but their coercion.

Pacifists who advocate non-violence should submit themselves to severe self-examination. "Not all that is high is holy," as Thomas à Kempis once said, and it is extremely easy for non-violence to become a very ugly and un-Christian thing. Even Gandhi has aroused resentment by the peculiarly cruel pressure which he exerts on his followers. A devoted disciple says, "Some of his methods of conversion are not far removed from courteous and considerate compulsion, while the psychic coercion he frequently exercises reduces many of his intimate followers and colleagues to a state of mental pulp." A friendly critic has said, "Gandhi's method is no more rational than violence. It is an attempt by will-power to coerce others to act against their better judgment." Everyone who knows the kind of moral pressure sometimes brought to bear in girls' schools, or by overbearing and extremely otherworldly

saints with a gift for putting one in the wrong, knows how destructive of all peace of mind and how cruel such methods can be. Such "saintliness" either crushes its victims utterly or arouses intense hatred. Is this really what is meant by pacifist non-violence?

Pacifists who consider that the New Testament stands for non-resistance should be opposed not only to violence, but also to these terroristic methods of spiritual coercion. The claim of pacifism cannot be that violence is always wrong and persuasion is always right, for persuasion itself may be in wrong ways and for wrong ends.

Non-violent resistance may be useful tactics under certain conditions, but it partakes of the nature of war. Moral coercion becomes, in fact, a form of violence, even if it is not physical violence. If the pacifist has been arguing that the quality of the means has its inevitable outcome in the character of the effect, then it is clear that means which are simply *coercive* in intention can only have a harmful effect. The evil character of the method chosen only differs in degree from that which belongs to war. It still remains coercive rather than persuasive, violent rather than loving. If, on the other hand, it is conceded that coercive—that is to say, violent—means may be legitimate, then once again the *principle* which denies that good can flow from evil means falls to the ground.

It would appear, therefore, both from the practical arguments of those who advocate the non-violent technique and from the remarkable case of Mr. Gandhi, that the strength of these methods does not lie in their pacifism, but in their value as methods of coercion under certain conditions.

The evidence for this is overwhelming in the case of India. Nehru says: "I did not give an absolute allegiance to the doctrine of non-violence or accept it for ever, but situated as we were in India it was the right policy for us." Scores of leading Congress men have said the same thing, indeed for Congress as a whole non-violence was not a creed or a religion or a dogma but simply tactics, to be

judged by results. Says one of them: "Non-violence was accepted as a policy only because it promised to take us to our goal in the most desirable and effective way. Nobody dreamed of saying that national independence must only be aimed at if it is attainable by non-violent means. As an inflexible dogma non-violence loses its spiritual appeal."

These tactics were determined by the particular situation in India. Civil disobedience was the only weapon in the hands of the people, who were unarmed and for the most part unenfranchised. It was successful in 1930 partly because it coincided with world economic depression and a great wave of agricultural poverty, while the Government was scared at the collapse of the economic system and at its political repercussions. In India the land war came to a head in this "general strike," and without it the campaign would have fizzled out. Non-co-operation, in other words, can be an admirable weapon if you choose the right moment, but that does not make it a universal panacea. Most Indians to-day recognize that even if non-co-operation had not been suspended in May 1933, it would gradually have petered out. But that is not to say that under changed circumstances it might not at any moment come forward again as the best possible weapon to use in the struggle against the Government, against the reactionary princes, or even against reactionary Indian Nationalist employers.

It becomes a politically realistic policy in a country like India, and wherever a mass of helpless people confront overwhelming power, or where a political minority has just grievances that the Government refuses to redress. It is a technique with immense advantages, and will be used by all sensible tacticians in those cases where violence is futile or likely to be too costly. If pacifism can bring courage and ingenuity and persistence to the help of those who, if they cannot fight by these methods, cannot fight at all, it will be doing a magnificent service.

A pacifism that rises to the full height of *Satyagraha* would not be without influence even where violence played its necessary part. It would help to reinforce the important

principle that true social order is based on persuasion and consent, and not on coercion—a principle by no means peculiar to pacifism. We are on common ground with pacifists in believing that the stern discipline and inevitable cruelty of war are not in themselves creative and that only positive good will can bring a new society into existence.

Religious orders have exercised a leavening and purifying influence in society in spite of their tendency to uphold a rather monkish standard of conduct. The pacifist is mistaken in condemning the conduct which responsible citizenship demands. He does not realize that his pacifism can only exist in a society protected by force from being overwhelmed by a paganism that would not tolerate it for a moment.

True idealism redeems the world not by separating itself, but by recognizing its worth, loving it with all its imperfections, acknowledging the legitimacy of social coercion. It is only by full participation that it becomes possible to purify and uplift by slow degrees our imperfect but not ignoble world.

CHAPTER VII

UTILITARIAN PACIFISM OR OBJECTION TO DEFENSIVE WARS

A GREAT MANY pacifists would not go so far as to say violence is wrong in all circumstances and regardless of the immediate consequences. They argue, not from absolute principles but on utilitarian grounds, that the course to be taken in preference to others is that which leads to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. War, they believe, while some of its results may be desirable, does more harm than good, and is therefore mistaken. By not fighting a great deal may be lost, but infinitely less than will be lost by going to war. In experience we find that the ends for which wars are fought are not attained and the noble ideals which are professed either prove to be pure delusions or are forgotten. Some pacifists would even say that it is mainly towards modern war that this attitude is taken, because of its "incalculable, insensate, and indiscriminate destructiveness," because of its penalization of the innocent. "If war breaks out to-day the whole of civilization goes over the precipice." Moreover, if we take up the sword to fight against such evils as Fascism we succumb to these evils ourselves. If we organize for war to defend democracy we destroy democracy and place in the hands of despots power over our lives which, once they have obtained, they will never relinquish.

It is important to note that this position is based on experience and not on absolute principles. Bertrand Russell, who takes this position, makes it clear that if any war "*promotes human happiness or civilization*" it is justifiable. Nor is such a possibility, in his view, ruled out. Of course every war produces much unhappiness, but if on the whole more happiness than unhappiness is the result, then human happiness is promoted and the war is justified. Much is

destroyed in every war, there is much slipping back, but it may be that we should have slipped back farther without a war, in which case that war "promotes civilization" and is justified. War, according to Bertrand Russell, "is to be judged by its outcome, not by any legalistic test, nor yet by any sweeping condemnation of all war as such."

We shall discover, however, in the course of the argument, that a great many pacifists, who honestly think they are reasoning from experience and not from *a priori* principles, are really not doing so at all. There is a tendency to assume the very point at issue and slip it into the discussion, the result being a foregone conclusion. Thus it is asserted that violence *necessarily* creates evils which are greater than those it seeks to defend us from, and therefore every war does more harm than good. This assertion is precisely what we are trying to prove stated in other words, and therefore should not be assumed as common ground, as unquestionably true. It is only *if* every war does more harm than good that violence creates evils which are greater than those it prevents. Therefore it cannot be brought into the argument before it is proved. If it is taken for granted, *before* setting out to discover whether wars ever do any good, and before investigating the actual results of wars, that violence always results in a preponderance of evil, on what grounds is this judgment made? We shall find, in most cases, that there is a prior belief *behind* the arguments used which is not openly stated. It is the conviction that in the very nature of things violence creates violence, good cannot come out of evil, hatred and murder cannot create freedom and good will. But this is the absolutist argument, the argument that evil means cannot produce good ends. In other words, we are introducing into an argument that proposes to build its case on concrete experience the sweeping condemnation of war as such, which Bertrand Russell rightly rules out. Very often the pacifist who feels the difficulty of condemning all war on absolute principles seeks to make his argument more convincing by shifting it on to experiential grounds; having gained this advantage, however, he then seeks to

prove his case by invoking the general principles he has just abandoned. He thus has it both ways. He uses arguments derived from abstract principles, and which therefore need no experimental proof, and then uses them in an argument which has promised to be purely experimental. Again and again in the case we are about to examine we shall find that the pacifist is really basing his objection to violence on the inherent impossibility of "good coming out of evil." Even if he repudiates this point of view, he finds his mind slipping back to it even while he tries to make good his case on utilitarian and historical grounds. Nine-tenths of the case for utilitarian pacifism is really absolute pacifism in disguise.

With this caution in mind let us examine the case for utilitarian pacifism.

We shall seek to disprove the pacifist contention that *experience* demonstrates that the evil consequences of war *in every case and under all circumstances* (in modern times at least) outweigh the good which may issue from such war. But may I say here, with the utmost emphasis, that with regard to each of the pacifist arguments with which I propose to deal I do not contend that there are no circumstances in which they are true. There are indeed. Very many wars are futile, destroy freedom rather than preserve it, exact far too high a cost, the evils they occasion far outweighing the good they do. I do not deny that. What I do deny is the general and inflexible rule that this is always so and must always be so. I am simply asking that each possibility of war as it arises must, however much we flinch from the terrible responsibility, be judged, as best we can, upon its own merits. It *may* be necessary to fight. It *may* be worth the lives laid down. Or again it may not.

As I write we are actually at war once more. Because I write as a non-pacifist I do not *therefore* say that we ought to be fighting this war. I only say that whether we ought or ought not cannot be settled *a priori* on the grounds that *all* wars are necessarily futile and self-destructive, but can

only be settled if it can be shown to be highly probable in any particular case that this is so.

- (1) "*War settles nothing, achieves nothing, creates nothing. Its results are entirely negative. So far from improving things it makes them worse. Nothing is ever really settled by a resort to violence.*"

But wars do settle things, even if they settle things wrongly. It is impossible to read the history of the world and say that nothing has been settled by war. Bannockburn settled the independence of Scotland, and the American War of Independence settled the independence of the United States; Marathon settled whether Persia was to enslave Greece or whether Greece was to be left free to develop its city states, its philosophy, and its art.¹ The long war between Carthage and Rome settled a great deal. Carthage was not merely a trade rival: she stood for naked despotism and knew nothing of freedom; her great general, Hannibal, was merely a professional soldier. Scipio and Fabius were the representative men of a democratic State defending the public rights and their common freedom, for Rome in these early days was a republic and her men fought as freemen. The Wars of Religion and the victories of William of Orange permanently changed the whole of Europe and established the Dutch Republic. Britain's defeat of France and conquest of India settled the fate of India. The Risorgimento which ended the anarchy and provincialism of the separated States and created a united Italy was no small achievement.

It may be argued that war does not settle things right. To that we shall return. But the original assertion was that war settles *nothing*, that war has no permanent effect on history. But manifestly its effects are enormous both for good and ill. Few great changes or achievements in history, whether we approve or disapprove, have been accomplished

¹ "The history of Herodotus, who was a youth during the great days when Greece repelled the might of Darius and Xerxes, is full of the exultation caused by the triumph of Athenian democracy over oriental barbarism" (H. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*).

without resort to arms. It is often extremely difficult to estimate whether on the whole the consequences have been advantageous, but this very difficulty proves that it is not a foregone conclusion. In many cases the general verdict is that advantage was gained. In other cases it is clear that evil resulted, *but because the war was settled one way rather than the other*. If this is the case, however, it is certainly not true that war can achieve nothing, because if when a war is *lost* nothing is achieved simply because it is lost, then if it is won the situation is a better one. If the defeat of Republican Spain was a "bad thing," then presumably its successful defence and the defeat of Franco would have been a "good thing."

It may be argued that war has no permanent effect, that what is achieved by force is always ultimately lost. But, in the first place, what is established for centuries is a permanent portion of world history which is not rendered non-existent if subsequently it is undone (*e.g.* the tremendous advance of European civilization under the Roman Empire). Secondly, nothing is ever merely undone. What is effected in turn affects everything that comes after it or exists alongside it. Fascism victorious in Germany affects Austria and Czechoslovakia and the whole world, even if subsequently it collapses. For good or for ill the results of struggle enter into the future of the race. Thirdly, it is not true that the pendulum simply swings back to its original position, that history moves in cycles. The decline of Greece was not the inevitable reaction from the victory over Persia, nor did it mean that the Greek contribution to Western culture was wiped out. The French Republic had the possibility within it of going on to a fuller democracy, and need not inevitably revert to monarchy because it was achieved by violence. Holland's freedom, which was won by the sword, was not rendered precarious by that fact.

Frankly this whole argument is not based on historical evidence. It is dogmatic assertion springing from pacifist principles and the vague recollection of the fact that many wars have been futile. The assertion that no war has ever

achieved anything is a rash generalization from this fact. The argument is really proceeding from generalization to facts, and not from facts to a generalization based on them. All war is wrong, therefore every war must have been futile. Then an example or two of useless wars and a hasty assumption that all the rest are just the same.

The most commonly quoted example is, of course, the Great War of 1914-18. It is true that this war was not, as our propaganda at the time tried to make out, a war in defence of justice and self-determination. Many of us, even during the war, exposed it as fundamentally a struggle between rival imperialisms. Germany was the first to strike. We, on the other hand, although from a legal standpoint we were fighting aggression, were at bottom fighting to preserve for Great Britain the economic hegemony of Europe, and to keep our trade rival in a condition of inferiority. The victory of the Allies was marred by harsh peace terms; but, as we shall see later, these were mitigated in the event, and did not bear so hardly on Germany as she has tried to make us believe. The terms we exacted, however, were reasonable and just compared with the Treaties of Brest Litovsk and Bucharest which Germany imposed on Russia and Rumania after their defeat. We shall discuss this whole question of the Peace Treaties later. There was, of course, a great deal of humbug, and therefore subsequent disillusionment, about the Great War. But wars have been fought which, though economic motives were powerful, were genuine wars of self-defence or freedom. Many such wars were fought by a progressive economic class against pure reaction. Many wars of our own time also differ fundamentally from the imperialistic clash of 1914. We may instance the resistance of the Soviet Union to intervention and the defence of Abyssinia. Even the Great War was not in its consequences simply a victory for one imperialistic group, and nothing else. It resulted in the German, Austrian, and Czechoslovakian Republics and in a great democratic upsurge in Russia, France, and Great Britain. Between 1918 and 1924 the Socialist movement in

this country reached its high-water mark. There were faults and setbacks and cross currents, of course, but taking the world as a whole, there was more democracy after the war than before it.

Civilization *does* get for'ard
Sometimes upon a powder cart.

- (2) "*War can never establish truth and justice for victory goes to the side that happens to be the stronger. So far from force vindicating truth it always suppresses reason and makes it harder to find the truth.*"

But no one for a moment proposes to substitute violence for persuasion as a better or shorter way. But what is to be done if the other side takes the law into its own hands? Must we not resist settlement by force instead of by rational adjudication, so that after violence is defeated the case can be returned to the bar of reason? In the face of force which refuses to arbitrate there is no other way.

Of course violence does not help "to find the truth" or validate justice. If we fight for truth and justice, that does not mean that we fight to *prove* them. But violence can cloak itself with lies, and violence can perpetrate injustice. Mussolini said that the Abyssinians were threatening him, and therefore he had to go to war in self-defence. It was, of course, a lie. If the League had decided to protect Abyssinia, they would have done so because Mussolini's statement was untrue and *because* the truth was that Abyssinia was being wantonly invaded. If this had meant war, in a sense we should have been fighting for the truth; but that would simply mean fighting *because* our view of the situation was the true one; not to *make* it true.

Consider the situation as it was in Spain. The Government said that they were fighting to preserve the constitutional rights of the people. Supporters of Franco often said that: (a) the republicans were rebels who had seized power, (b) assisted by Bela Kun and Russian revolutionaries. The republicans do not prove their case by beating Franco. They prove it by evidence. Nevertheless we rightly say they

are fighting for "the truth" in the sense that their presentation of the case is true and their opponents' false. If it were not so, they would not be fighting. If they are right, they cannot allow things to be done that would only be legitimate on the assumption that Franco's charges were true.

Take a simpler case. A man is threatened by violence because of mistaken identity. You protect him. Is it wrong to do so because violence cannot establish the truth? A Socialist is attacked by Fascists. His supporters defend him. This does not prove that Socialism is true. But it is right to defend him *because* Socialism is true and in defending him you are fighting for Socialism.

Similarly with justice. You do not fight to prove that your cause is just, but *because* it is just. If a man tries to ride off on your bicycle, you forcibly prevent him *because* it really *is* yours, not to *prove* that it is. Subsequently the force used to carry out a sentence does not make the sentence just; but justice would be worthless without it.

That brings us to the second half of the argument:

"Any half-witted, drink-sodden gangster with a revolver" (says a correspondent) "can kill the finest or noblest of human beings. This only proves that armed brute force can overcome unarmed courage. That side wins which can call on the biggest reserves of money, food, bombing planes and heavy artillery. Whichever side wins it does not prove that the winner's political philosophy is superior, but merely that their armed force was superior."

But the murder of an honest man by a gangster does prove something very conclusively, and moreover something that completely overthrows the case for pacifism. It proves that unless the noblest of human beings can either defend himself successfully or be defended by someone else, he will certainly lose his valuable life, if he meets a gangster who is determined to kill him. It proves that in many cases it is indeed "your life or mine." If the side with the better and bigger armaments wins, then it is necessary for the right side to get them. If it is to win, it must. This does not *prove*

that this side is right, but it preserves it from extinction. In the face of armed injustice and barbarism the values of civilization and the rights of man can be preserved in no other way. "Unarmed prophets," said a great political philosopher, "are always defeated." This does not mean that the prophet needs force to make good his case, but that however right he is, if his followers cannot defend themselves, their cause will be put down. If ideas are more important than arms, it is only because in the long run they command arms.

- (3) *"You cannot cast out Satan by Satan. Yet in war you try to fight an evil by adopting the same evil. True your cause may be right and the enemy's wrong, but the means you adopt to make your cause prevail are—idiotically enough—the same as those adopted by your opponent, and therefore there is little to choose. This is plainly the case where aggressive war is met by military resistance. You oppose such war by yourself becoming warlike, you oppose, for instance, the blatant militarism of fascist imperialism by yourself becoming militarist. But violence can only breed violence, war can only breed war. Therefore you are bound to fail."*

But to call upon military power is not necessarily to call in the military spirit, any more than to restrain the violence of a dangerous man by oneself using violence is to give way to the spirit which loves violence. The real problem is not the violence, but forcible constraint in order that something contrary to our welfare may be done. To throw off that constraint is not to identify oneself with the wrong-motived violence we are resisting. Is a Socialist imprisoned in a German concentration camp wrong if he breaks out and escapes by force? If not, why should it be wrong to struggle to prevent oneself being wrongfully imprisoned or enslaved? That there is a danger in all use of force one may readily admit, but it is a danger that cannot be avoided, and must therefore be guarded against and resisted. One can use things without loving them. "*Savoir obéir sans aimer*" should be the aim of all who use force to resist evil. Nor is it certain

that we shall be successful in resisting it, but this is not a reason for abandoning it if it is necessary. The possible, or indeed frequent, abuse of a thing is no reason for not using it if its use is necessary. Every power in life can be, and has been, perverted and abused. Violence and military power are not exceptional in that.

At the root of this objection is the gravest and most fundamental fallacy in the pacifist position. It is the contention that violence only leads to more violence, "Satan cannot cast out Satan," and to defend oneself against aggression is to sink to the level of the aggressor, whatever the crime that we seek to prevent. Many pacifists, however, do not openly accept this position. Joad does not even believe that human life is sacred. He objects to suicide being made a crime, and argues that the boon of death should not be refused to those who are in pain and desire it. He goes on to say that under certain circumstances he would kill a man if that was the only way to save others.¹ Unfortunately many pacifists, including Joad himself, who avoid the dangerous and indefensible formulation that violence is wrong in itself, are eventually found to be arguing on that assumption. We must therefore examine the position sufficiently thoroughly to get behind the assumption, if we can, and not merely to expose the more obvious fallacy.

We contend that violence is not wrong in itself, but only if it is the instrument of an evil intention. An action *in complete isolation*, apart from its conditions and purpose, is meaningless, and no moral judgment can be passed on it. If this is so, then *the moral character of a violent act, in distinction from its physical character, which remains the same, depends on motive and purpose*. Let us make this perfectly clear by emphasizing once again the distinction between *evil* and *wrong*. The physical character of all violence is evil—that is to say, it is unpleasant and causes distress. It involves inflicting pain, thwarting someone's will, a breach of fellowship, a condition of anger and resentment (on at least one side), and even the wounding or destruction of the human body.

¹ Joad, *Why War?*

These things are evil under all circumstances, but they are not always morally wrong. They are *wrong* only if the motive is wrong, as when a man murders out of jealousy, or to destroy a rival, or for purposes of robbery. They are not *wrong* if the violence is in self-defence, or to save the life of the innocent. I am not at the moment defending war, but establishing a general principle, and we must not break in on the argument, anticipating its application to the question of war, by saying that in war we attack the innocent. That is so, and it may or may not make all the difference. We shall decide this question when it arises. The pacifist is not at the moment arguing that war is wrong *because it involves violence to the innocent*. His argument is that we cannot cast out Satan by Satan, that to overcome crime by violence makes us criminals too. I am opposing this on the ground that it gives to violence itself an inherent moral (or immoral) quality. I contend that the violence is immoral when used for wrong motives, and moral when used for right motives. The dentist or the surgeon, in causing pain, causes that which is evil; but his action, judged by its purpose and ultimate intention, is good. At once the pacifist will say: But in war the soldier does not, like the surgeon, intend the good of the man he injures. I reply that I do not advance the illustration as an analogy to war, or as proving that war may be legitimate. This, once again, is to shift the ground of the argument, to run on to a subsequent point. I am establishing one limited but vital position, an important one, because the pacifist is always liable to forget that it has been established, and to assume the general principle upon which almost all his other arguments are based. Because what is actually done—wounding and the infliction of pain—is the same as what the criminal does, is it the same act? The answer is No, because the purpose is different. A man is knocked down by another with the intention of stealing his purse, and offers violent resistance. In the struggle both are fighting; but surely there is a difference in the moral situation, and therefore in the two kinds of violence used. Only the optical appear-

ance is really similar. Of course we still have to prove that in any particular case the purpose justifies the deed. That is another argument altogether. We have established, however, that the purpose *can* change the character of the deed. One last illustration: a man murders a child under revolting circumstances, or a man commits a series of brutal murders. Now, the deed in each case is a whole with the cruelty and perversion of the criminal. It is not a neutral physical act plus vileness, but an act that is itself vile all through. Moreover, to *commit* a crime as well as to intend it corrupts the criminal by the very act, and to commit a series of crimes is to sink lower and lower. On the other hand, the act in the case of the necessary taking of human life also derives its essential character from the intention. It is therefore not the same as the act of a child murderer just because in both cases it is "killing." The act is imbued with and given its own character by the circumstances. From this it follows that the act of killing, when it is not a crime, does not corrupt the man who is responsible for the act, nor does a series of such acts drive a man lower and lower. The pacifist always assumes that because the act is physically the same, it is morally and in its essence the same. That is why he says that in self-defence we become "like our opponent," that "idiotically enough, the means are the same and therefore there is little to choose."

A pacifist writes to me that when the deed is violent, then it springs from the same source as the violence of the criminal. "Fascists and democrats murder as a result of their convictions. Pacifists call for the expression of other convictions, of love and understanding, expressing themselves in loving deeds." This is the same argument, but expressed in somewhat different terms. Note, in the first place, that killing and murder are identified. This is almost universal among pacifists, and again shows that the act of killing is regarded as wrong in itself and always of the same character. Note, secondly, that according to the pacifist argument the character of the motive is determined by the inherently evil act—a conclusion which necessarily

follows if the act is really the same under all circumstances. But our whole argument is that the motive is different, and therefore the same physical act is a different act. The non-pacifist who uses violence to restrain criminals is, as far as the bare act is concerned, behaving exactly like Fascist thugs beating up Socialists, and this is the contention of the pacifist. But its motive and intention are really the opposite, and therefore it is the "expression of other convictions." The pacifist does not see that it is not the deed that reveals the conviction, but the conviction that changes the character of the deed, making it killing, but *not* murder. Experience bears this out. Violence does not always increase the sum of wickedness. War does not always lead to more war. The forcible restraint of criminals is not in fact a futile proceeding:

"The plain lesson of history is that the violence bred by wars and revolutions is but the smallest part of their consequences. Their total and relatively permanent effect is, on the other hand, to transform the character of human institutions, to alter the quality of men's lives, to provide them with different ideas and values, to raise or depress their material standard of living."¹

Many wars have led to long periods of peace. Many tyrants have been permanently put down (Napoleon, for instance, nor did his opponents institute a new Napoleonism). Many peace treaties have been just and have established a new order of affairs. On the other hand, many barbarisms have arisen which were the outcome neither of a previous war nor of a bad peace—for example the imperialist wars of Assyria, the campaigns of Sparta, the Mongol invasions. The Arabs did not invade Europe to avenge Poitiers, but were expelled then.

- (4) *"War degrades. Killing demoralizes and poisons the mind and so renders it impossible for good to come out of war. War is massacre."* It involves deliberately injuring individuals "with

¹ Shelvankar, *Ends are Means*.

savage weapons of assault, such as sharp pieces of steel to cut holes in them, flying missiles to pierce and kill them, bombs to blow them to bits and burn them, gas to poison, flay or choke them, or any other and worse instruments of torture and death that are still to be devised."¹ In the words of Joad: war provides an outlet for every evil element in man's nature. Cruelty and ferocity become honourable duties. A licence is given to every kind of crime. The human mind is degraded. Lying is encouraged and the lust for killing when it fails and falters is whipped up by frantic appeals to hate. Mankind is brutalized. To sum up it "promotes stupidity, puts a premium upon vice, discourages intelligence and diminishes virtue; in short, it leaves men intellectually and morally worse, thicker in the head and harder in the heart than it found them."²

It is true that war is a setback to civilization, that even on the side that fights for right many people find in it an outlet for tendencies restrained in peace, that we are compelled to do many dreadful things, and that in some degree callousness and cruelty are fostered. To admit that war may sometimes be a dreadful necessity, and to claim that in spite of the appalling evils which come out of it more evils would result if we did not fight; to go even farther and claim that in a war fought for justice, out of its very pain and horror we can pluck heroism and nobility of unusual degree, is not to glorify war, or to prefer it to peace, or to engage in it lightheartedly. Pacifists can see no alternative between the denunciations of war and its glorification, but the truth is in neither attitude.

The pacifist case is completely vitiated by the failure to draw any distinction between a war fought for justice and an unjust war. What is denounced is simply *war*, as though it were something in itself, as though it consisted in the mere act of fighting. Now this is just the fallacy we have been exposing in the previous section, where we saw that an act cannot be separated from its circumstances and motive.

¹ Rose Macaulay, letter to *New Statesman*, May 22, 1937.

² Joad, *Why War?* p. 65.

Just as the pacifist confuses killing and murder, so he confuses just and unjust wars. The pacifist sometimes replies that there are no just wars. Does he not really mean that wars have usually been waged by imperialists or militarists who, while proclaiming loudly the justice of their cause, were in fact fighting to gain economic advantage, territory or power? But if that is the case, and their wars were therefore unjust wars, I should have thought that their opponents were in the right. The more the pacifist demonstrates the iniquity and injustice of such wars, the more he is affirming the justice of the other side. If one man inflicts an injustice on another, he cannot do so without the cause of his victim being to that extent just. So that every such war *was* a war for justice *on one side*, though of course it was an unjust war on the other side. It is to be hoped that pacifists will not attempt to make out that in every such case there is really quite as much injustice on the other side. Injustice and aggression are not always on *both* sides. The Boer War, for instance, was unjust, because Great Britain was virtually annexing two independent countries because of their gold and diamonds. But were the Boers who were fighting against us also fighting in an unjust cause? On the other hand, of course, the struggle between Britain and France for the control of India and Africa between 1870 and 1910 were quarrels in which all the European Powers were without exception in the wrong.

While there have, of course, been wars in which there was little to be said on either side, there have also been many wars in which justice was overwhelmingly on one side rather than the other. The present war between China and Japan is a case in point. Now, it makes as much difference to the act of war whether your cause is just as it does to an individual act of violence. Just as the motive of the criminal makes his deed not only evil but vile, so that to commit a foul murder is to degrade oneself, so, knowingly to fight for a bad cause is to degrade oneself, is to expose oneself to the dangers of that moral degeneration which to the pacifist belongs to all war. But the right motives of a legi-

timate war of defence undoubtedly give to the acts of war a legitimate and non-criminal character, so that those taking part are not degraded by their actions.

Concrete examples bear this out abundantly. Men fighting in self-defence do not necessarily become cruel and brutalized. You can extirpate evil without becoming evil. You can repress violent crime without perpetuating it or lapsing into crime yourself. In pioneer communities lawlessness was put down, and put down thoroughly and satisfactorily, by the citizens themselves. In certain United States cities there has recently been an effective "clean up" of gangsters and racketeers. Racketeering does not, as a pacifist would have to argue, increase with the growth of firmness and determination on the part of the law or with the resolute use of force in stamping it out; on the contrary, it is reduced to insignificant proportions. Lawless force, indeed, cannot be broken but by lawful force. Violence and crime are fostered by its absence. It is cowering before evil, not standing up to it, that identifies us with it by guaranteeing non-interference. Men who fought in the Great War, believing themselves to be fighting for democracy, were not brutalized. Soldiers can be and are as honest, fair-minded, kind, and disinterested as ourselves. One knows scores of them, officers and men, now in business, schoolmasters, manual workers, writers, and politicians, who lost nothing morally by their participation in the last war, whose characters are as upright as those of the pacifists who held aloof. The men of the International Brigade were not degraded by their experiences. These cruel and unjust accusations betray something like moral obliquity in those who make them, rather than offer convincing proof for the pacifist case. Wars may be cruel, but soldiers are not cruel men. Nor are wars to-day very much worse or more cruel than before. Only an entire ignorance of history could lead anyone to suppose otherwise.

On the other hand, in wars of wanton aggression the leaders certainly know what they are doing, a considerable proportion even of the rank and file have few illusions, and

in some cases a whole army may with open eyes devote itself to an unjust war. In such cases war must definitely have a harmful effect on the character. Savage militarism, inhumanity, and callousness are the characteristics of armies knowingly fighting aggressive wars, and more especially of the leaders of such armies. The Fascist thug beating up Jews is a degraded being, and sinks lower each time he uses violence of this kind. To interfere with violence in order to defend these victims would surely not degrade those who came to their help.

The Japanese who bomb Chinese cities and massacre civilians degrade themselves and become bestial. But the Chinese who are defending their country have been strengthened in character by the struggle, as testimony both from the battle front and from behind the lines clearly shows.¹

It is simply not true that in war equal cruelty is shown on both sides, that everyone commits atrocities, and that civilians are wantonly massacred by all modern armies. Wars have been fought in which an amazing self-restraint has been shown, in which the sacredness of the cause did much to prevent excesses. Atrocities are very frequently more on one side than the other, and mainly on the "unjust" side. In the Abyssinian war Mussolini was responsible for bombing undefended villages with mustard gas. In the Spanish Civil War it was German and Italian airmen who machine-gunned refugees, bombed defenceless towns and villages. The Council of the League of Nations passed judgment on the insurgent bombing of Republican towns. Not even the blindest and most prejudiced can now deny that Franco quite wantonly bombed open towns containing no military objectives. *But the Republicans did not retaliate.* No counter-charges were levelled against them, and the League of Nations Commission was not even called upon to investigate allegations of Republican bombing in Franco territory. No war can be fought without some atrocities and without cruelty, but the knowledge that one is fighting for a good cause, and the quality of leadership in such a

¹ See *China Fights Back*, by Agnes Smedley, etc., etc.

war, makes all the difference to the manner in which it is fought. The many accounts of the Spanish Civil War by eye-witnesses and participants which we now have do not bear out the pacifist contention that war degrades all who take part, yet these books are written by men of a realist temper, not by sentimentalists, by men of high integrity and with sensitive minds. There is no need to romanticize war in order to prove that under certain circumstances it may ennoble rather than degrade.

Eleanor Rathbone says :

“The War in Spain has not yet thrown up, as far as I know, a single really great statesman or military leader. But on the Republican side it has thrown up a great people—great at least in the qualities of courage and devotion to unselfish ends. Think of those men and women, with centuries of oppression behind them, bred in bitter poverty and ignorance, deserted by most of their natural leaders, delivered over defenceless to their enemies by the democracies which should have aided them. Think of them as I saw them last April in Madrid and Valencia, men and women, young and old, without a trace of fear or dejection in their faces though bombs were crashing a few yards away and taking their little daily toll of victims, going about their daily business in cheerful serenity, building up a system of social services that would have been a credit to any nation at war, submitting to unaccustomed discipline, composing their party differences, going to the front or sending their men to the front as though to a *fiesta*, unstimulated—most of them—by hope of Heaven or fear of Hell, yet willing to leave the golden Spanish sunshine and all the lovely sights and sounds of spring and go into the blackness of death or the greater blackness of cruel captivity without a thought of surrender.

“An irreligious people? Yet they have grasped two of the essential truths of Christianity—that except a seed die, it abideth alone; if it dies it may bring forth much

fruit; and that greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend."¹

Open conflict which does not shrink from physical struggle has the effect of giving a spiritual conviction that can come in no other way. So far from pacifism offering a moral alternative to war, it frequently gives up even that, for fear of irritating Fascism or arousing hostility. Hence the soft pedalling of pacifists on the great moral issues in international affairs to-day. But does not this destroy the moral sanction equally with the physical? It appears that to abjure the physical struggle actually has the effect of paralysing the spiritual struggle. On the other hand, to take up arms definitely reinforces the moral judgment and clears and strengthens the mind. Pacifism undermines the distinction between right and wrong in international relations by its refusal to differentiate between the good and evil cause. The attitude of the pacifist suggests that it does not matter what the dispute is about; both sides are fighting, and that is the real wrong. This is becoming more and more noticeable. Pacifist condemnation of the iniquity of Japanese aggression and its accompanying horrors, of the brutal illegality and ruthless methods of the Fascists in Spain, becomes perfunctory and reveals little moral indignation. That is reserved for the mere act of fighting, of which the Chinese and the Republicans are declared to be as guilty as their opponents. Such a judgment surely implies a blunting of the moral sense.

The restraint of social injustice, of international aggression, of barbarism, is condemned as evil. It is declared to be as bad as these things themselves. In suppressing them we are said to become like them. But the effect of such teaching is to make the shouldering of our responsibilities immoral. Morality comes to belong only to an ideal world quite out of touch and beyond us. This is to drain out of our responsible conduct the moral sense that should control it and to project this moral ideal into a world which does

¹ Eleanor Rathbone, *War Can be Averted*.

not exist. The pacifist thus takes refuge from his duties in the imaginary purity of non-participation in a wicked world.

Summing up our criticism: We have attempted to show that war does not simply thrust its participants back into pure barbarism; that it does not fatally overwhelm the souls of all combatants in evil; that it is not intrinsically wrong in the sense of a supreme evil or of being necessarily worse than any possible alternative choice; and that it cannot be judged irrespective of its issue and outcome and the character of each hostile party.

- (5) *War cannot be used to defend liberty because it is incompatible with liberty, involving as it does military slavery both for a conscript army and for all civilians. "Even before war has broken out, the process of military preparation will have transformed the liberty, the justice, the democracy for whose sake violence is to be used, into slavery, hierarchical privilege and tyranny." Modern war is totalitarian, which means that if we take arms against Fascism we ourselves become a Fascist State. Democracy disappears the moment war is declared. In fact, "to fight Fascism is to become Fascists in everything but name."*¹

"Fascism," says Captain Mumford, "is a glorification of war—therefore to fight it by war is to succumb to the disease you seek to eradicate. . . . The defence of Socialism against Fascism by military means entails the transformation of the Socialist community into a Fascist community."

Behind this position are three errors: (1) the idea that emergency organization and centralization are incompatible with freedom; (2) a totally false idea of liberty; (3) a misunderstanding as to the nature of Fascism. Underlying the whole argument is the idea that if we resist evil by violence we ourselves succumb to the evil we resist.

Provided that a war is fought by a democracy and for a democracy, and against real aggression, as was the case

¹ Max Plowman, *The Faith called Pacifism*.

in the Spanish Civil War, centralization, organization, and a certain restriction on our liberties in the emergency of war are not demoralizing, do not imply a permanent loss of freedom, and are not totalitarianism in the Fascist sense. Not all interference with freedom is Fascism, and not all violence is Fascism. Every community, if it is to exist at all, must prohibit certain anti-social activities. To do so does not lessen the total freedom, but increases it. If there were no traffic regulations, there would be more traffic jams and so less freedom of movement. In an emergency the only way to freedom is through rigid control, but this *is* the way to freedom. In a sinking liner there cannot be freedom to do as one pleases. It is unfortunate that so many people, when they speak of freedom, really mean an insipid Utopian anarchism which has nothing to do with liberal democracy, nothing to do with Socialism, and nothing to do with true freedom of personality. In social life we are constantly limiting freedom in order to extend it. It is only by such limits that freedom is kept alive. How much freedom would there be for the workers if the freedom of employers were not limited by Factory Acts, trade unions, and legislation of every kind? Freedom, we need to be continually reminded, is not a gift from heaven, but something that man achieves by organization and law. The right of the free man is not the right to live in isolation and do what he pleases. Rights depend on belonging to a society to which we contribute positively, whose rules we keep, and which we are pledged to defend. Only the member who fulfils his obligations has the right to enjoy the advantages of social life. Every form of sound social organization increases liberty by increasing opportunity. Organization for war is only another form of organization, this time for the defence of the community. It does not differ essentially from industrial or any other form of organization.

Under Fascism, however, the limitation of freedom is not secondary and functional. It is not marginal, but the central pattern. It is imposed not to preserve and enhance freedom, but because freedom is regarded as a bad thing.

The *aim* of Fascism is a State in which freedom is replaced by hierarchical organization. Now, when a democracy goes to war there is not the slightest deviation in this direction. The discipline and order imposed are not a surrender of freedom, but strictly its defence. Democracy in its defence, indeed, is ten times democracy. Democracy that abandons military defence speedily disintegrates spiritually. The Austrian Republic was subdued spiritually as well as physically by not taking arms against Hitler. Both Germany and Italy succumbed to totalitarianism not, as the pacifist would argue, because they resisted the dictators by armed force, but because they surrendered without a blow.

A war situation, like all emergencies, calls forth various unpleasant necessities, and even morally objectionable features which are technically inevitable. Public liberties cannot be respected in war-time in the same measure as in peace-time; public discussion cannot function with the same objectivity and the same breadth; official propaganda and guidance by the State must gain an ascendancy which happily they lack in a democracy at peace. But all this has no bearing on the basic problem.

The pacifist argues that democracy must necessarily revert to Fascism if it goes to war, because war requires the rigid totalitarian form of State structure. He assumes that dictatorship has an overwhelming superiority under war conditions, and therefore cannot be avoided. All this is totally untrue. Neither centralization nor censorship implies the end of democracy. As long as there is wide scope for criticism, the preservation of parliament and other democratic institutions, and above all as long as the Government enlists the understanding and consent of the people in prosecuting the war, the essentials of democracy not only remain, but are an immense source of strength. In the American War of Independence Washington was granted dictatorial power, but he nevertheless maintained the democratic spirit of his people and had their intelligent consent to the measures he adopted. There was no loss of democracy when the war was won. On the contrary,

the dictatorship was at once withdrawn and the republican constitution adopted.

War itself, and the organization necessary to prosecute a war, do not at all decide the features of a community *irrespective of the issue at stake*. It is a dangerous delusion, which cripples the soul and rots the will from within, to believe that democracy can only survive in peace, and that the very fact of war ensures the triumph of reaction. It must be replaced by the iron conviction that a strong and self-reliant democracy will wield power without yielding to it. Unless democracy is firmly rooted in us, it will perish as easily in peace as in war; if it is strong, it will assert and strengthen itself in war. It is not peace which supports democracy, but men. It is signally untrue that a democracy that must be saved by arms is not worth saving; the truth is that a democracy which is not ready to save itself by arms is not worth saving. Democracy is not some rare flower that cannot grow unless sheltered from every blast. The rights of self-government go with the power to preserve them, the courage to defend them, and the intelligence to see that they are not filched away. If democracy is so weak that the mere fact of defending it is sufficient to let it slip from our grasp, then it can hardly be said to exist at all. It is, however, not the democracy that is weak, but the pacifist democrat. His lack of faith shows how little he himself really believes in democracy as an existing fact. It would indeed, require very little to induce him to abandon all efforts to defend it, so puny and imperfect is it in his eyes. The cynicism and defeatism which prophesy in advance that democracy cannot preserve itself in war easily become an excuse for doing nothing at all to defend it, and certainly contribute not a little to the demoralization of those who still believe in it. There is a very slender line between this attitude and real surrender to Fascism.

As a matter of fact, the anti-militarist bias of many Democrats and Socialists can only be explained by the immaturity of their convictions, or, to put it differently, from historical causes which have still a hold over their minds in an altered

situation. In pre-democratic monarchy the army is the monarch's chief instrument of power over an unarmed people of "subjects," who in civilian life are yet invested with a certain stock of individual rights, or even rights of citizenship; hence it comes that the "Left" mind has grown accustomed to the idea of playing off "society" against the "State," the power which dominates society "from above." The sphere of civic liberties should be extended; the sphere of authority, of discipline, which limits and opposes it should be restricted; democratic progress demands the strengthening of Parliament or the trade unions, the weakening of the army. In an actual democracy this conception has lost its meaning. Even in an incomplete democracy it is, to say the least, inadequate: first, because even an inadequate democracy must also be protected, not merely perfected; secondly, because anarchist anti-militarism implies a mental fixation to the pre-democratic stage of extra-popular "authority" *versus* popular "rights," and thus obstructs the scope of an integral conception and completion of democracy. But how shall we qualify such an attitude in the presence of powerful, aggressive Fascist States full of anti-democratic virulence? To put the question is to answer it.

- (6) *It is always claimed that wars are being fought for justice, freedom and democracy or even "to end war." They never are. Even if you commence by fighting for justice you don't get it, for war inevitably creates greater injustices than it redresses and thus leads to further and greater wars. In fact, war leads to more evil than if we negotiate any kind of peace. The ultimate result of every war for liberty is that men exchange one tyranny for another. "The best objects that modern wars have been fought for could always have been obtained by other methods, and would have left no open wound behind."*

The fact that in almost every dispute both parties claim to have justice on their side does not *prove* either that both are right or that both are lying—though this *may* be the case. No pacifist believes this to be true about all legal disputes or about his own particular differences of opinion

with other people. Why, then, should it be the case between nations? We are not dependent on what is "said" in judging whether a cause is right or wrong. We base our verdict not on the claims of spokesmen, but on the facts as we know them. It is not sufficient for a pacifist to bring forward Japanese statements as to Japan's "constant efforts for peace" in China, and her "attempts to deal peaceably with China's consistently hostile behaviour" as sufficient reason for disbelieving the Chinese case, on the ground that both parties are protesting their desire for peace. He knows very well that Japan's protests are hypocritical and false, and China's sincere and true. He knows that Mussolini's excuses for the invasion of Abyssinia and for intervention in Spain were false, and that Hitler invented most of his grievances against Czechoslovakia. The cheap sneer that it is always six of one and half a dozen of the other is not true to facts. It is, I suspect, a generalization from the experience of the last war, and perhaps from a vague recollection of certain European conflicts. Let us be honest. Was it a lie that Spain was fighting for democracy? Was it a lie that Abyssinia was fighting for independence? Is it true or false that China is fighting a defensive war?

History is not lacking in many examples of wars fought for just ends, nor is pacifism right in claiming that these ends are never achieved. We have already mentioned the wars against Persia for Greek independence and the Punic wars of Rome. In 732 the Mohammedans crossed the Pyrenees and invaded France, but were defeated by Charles Martel at Tours (Poitiers). In 1529 Vienna was unsuccessfully besieged by Sulieman the Magnificent. In 1683 Vienna was again besieged by the Saracens, but was relieved by John III of Poland (Sobieski), who delivered Hungary from Islam. Can anyone suppose that the Mohammedan conquest of Europe would not have involved a serious setback for civilization, remembering the slow decay of every country which has long remained under Mohammedan rule.¹ A reference to Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* will

¹ "Under the Crescent the olive does not grow."

demonstrate clearly not only the justice of the Dutch cause, but the real success they met with in freeing themselves from the Spanish yoke and from the Inquisition. Moreover, they did not become like their enemy. They did not succumb to Spanish imperialism or Spanish religious intolerance by fighting it, and, far from suffering moral decay, the Dutch republic was in every way an advance from Spanish autocracy, an advance which may be measured by comparing modern Holland with the Spain of Alfonso. The English Civil War preserved British parliamentary liberties and broke the power of irresponsible monarchy. Under the Stuarts England had lost in prestige. Under Cromwell's administration, with Blake in command at sea and Monk on land, she recovered it. War did not bring about her decline. At home, for all the narrowness and iconoclasm of the Ironsides, they brought into political conflict a seriousness and a high purpose which uplifted all England. Captain Mumford says that "the aims of the Parliamentarians were neither helped nor achieved by the brutality of the Ironsides." But there was more about the Ironsides than brutality. Of course it was not their brutality that achieved anything, but it *was* their fighting, their valour, and the convictions which inspired them.

English liberties have been won and defended by military means, and every democracy has been founded and preserved by force of arms: the French Republic, Switzerland, the United States, Czechoslovakia, and many others. Of particular interest is the successful defence of the young French Republic against the war of intervention launched in vain against it by the reactionary Powers of Europe. The historic Battle of Valmy (1792), in which the raw untrained republicans defeated Prussia in spite of an overwhelming inferiority both of equipment and numbers, simply because they knew they were fighting for justice and freedom, is one of the decisive battles of the world. The American War of Independence was for a just cause and was entirely successful. The American Civil War, though it has occasioned much controversy, is, with the passing of the years, clearly

seen to have been both necessary and right. It was not a war to free the slaves, as is sometimes supposed, but to maintain the Union. The question was whether a minority of States, not approving certain legislation (in this case limiting the area of slavery), could contract out. There are some who think that a minority should always be free to reject laws that they do not like, but the result could only be anarchy. Consider what laws would be most likely to be repudiated by a recalcitrant minority in a powerful democracy. Would they not be laws defending or extending the rights of the common people against privilege? The universal authority of law *must* be upheld by legislators and democrats, and more than one war will have to be fought to establish that principle. Lincoln was right. His nobility and courage did not suffer, but were enhanced by the long struggle in which he was involved. The United States gained in liberty and in the possibility of social progress as a result. It is sometimes argued that if no war had been fought, the slaves would ultimately have been freed, and without the heritage of bitterness and the severe losses occasioned by the war. But the war was not a war waged by the North against the South in order to compel the South to free the slaves. It was war forced by the South, by the secession of the Slave States, in anticipation of anti-slavery legislation. If no war had been fought, emancipation would have waited until, for instance, Virginia passed State legislation to emancipate her own slaves. Legislation that has to wait until an owning class passes laws abrogating its own privileges is likely to be slow in coming. It is regrettable, but such minorities have always to be compelled to "let their people go." It is better that they should recognize that if legislation to that effect is passed, they must abide by it, than that coercion should in every case be needed; but if they will not accept the law, force must be used. Do pacifists believe that factory-owners should be allowed to determine the hours and conditions of work? We know what appalling conditions existed before the Factory Acts, and we know that the law had to override the will of the cotton

manufacturers, who knew that behind the law were its sanctions, and therefore submitted. The Civil War in Spain was another example of a privileged minority refusing to abdicate at the behest of a majority. This war, too, would have been a successful civil war but for the support of the reaction, not only in Fascist countries, but in France and England, aided unintentionally, but none the less effectively, by those democrats and pacifists in this country who were afraid that to allow the Republican Government its legal rights might mean a war!

At the end of the Great War Greece invaded Asia Minor with the object of wresting it from Turkey. The Turks under Mustapha Kemal put up a strong resistance, utterly routed the Greek army, and drove them back on Smyrna, which was captured. The Greeks were literally driven into the sea. This was an entirely just and an entirely successful war. Turkey was not demoralized by it—on the contrary, it was the beginning of a great national awakening, as a result of which considerable progress has been made.¹

The next example which I shall give is the successful defence of the Soviet Union in the wars of intervention from 1918 to 1921 in which thirteen nations participated. In this war Japanese troops marched far into Siberia, Poland invaded the Ukraine, the German armies seized the whole of Western Russia, occupied the Ukraine, and marched an army up the Baltic to Petrograd; a Czechoslovakian army co-operated with the Russian counter-revolutionaries; French, American, and British military missions supported Kolchak and Denikin; munitions and uniforms in abundance were placed at the disposal of the White generals; and a British army was landed at Murmansk to march south and join forces with Kolchak. Were the Russians right or wrong to resist? Would there be a Socialist State in Russia to-day if they had given in? And does anyone suppose that to-day the Social achievements of the new Russia would be

¹ For other examples of successful wars see Bertrand Russell, *Which Way to Peace?* Chapter VII.

worth a moment's purchase if her frontiers were undefended?

We have already mentioned Spain. It is worth while looking at it once again to see whether the resort to war in defence of democracy means the extinction of democracy. The republican regime was certainly not so liberal and tolerant as some European democracies before the present war. But can it possibly be contended that "Red" Spain was a Fascist Spain; that the regime of Azana, Negrin, and Miaja was a Fascist regime? If so, we can only say that words lose every meaning by being so applied; we could then say that all pacifists are militarists, because they object to fighting foreign militarism by efficacious means. But, if not, what remains of the pacifists' interpretation of Fascism? The answer is simple and precise: nothing remains. If pacifists are right, Azana's regime in Spain would be essentially and practically the same as Franco's regime in Spain, only differing from it by a slightly different flag and a slightly different phraseology, and by an absence of German, Italian, and Moroccan troops; Spain would have been conquered to Fascism because part of it has been occupied by Fascists and the other part turned Fascist by "meeting the Fascists with equal force." Reality, however, bears no resemblance to this conception. In reality, the Republican part of Spain—though strongly "militarized"—has been absolutely different from the Fascist part, different in general outlook, political methods, social structure, and innumerable details; and *Spain has been conquered to Fascism only to the extent that she has been conquered by the Fascists*. More, these Fascists were largely invading armies sent by foreign Fascist Powers.

But what about the Great War? We have already discussed this. It was indeed mainly an imperialist war. But because the War of 1914 was imperialist, that does not prove that every subsequent war must be. Because we were then misled by propagandists, it does not say that there can never be a war of self-defence and that, for example, all Chinese propaganda to-day is necessarily false.

Moreover, from 1931-38 we were faced with the attempt of Fascist Powers to build new empires by absorbing one after the other their weaker neighbours, the result being not only the acquisition of their resources and their reduction to coolie provinces, but the extinction of their democratic institutions. In the face of the rapid conquest, one by one, of the free States of Europe and the successful onslaught on democracy everywhere, united defence would have been right.

This is not to say that there could not be another imperialist war, *i.e.* a war in which imperialism is the main driving force *on both sides*. I am only insisting that there can be modern wars which are not imperialist in that sense—that, indeed, at least one war now raging is not imperialist and is not only *declared* to be for freedom, but is for freedom. I refer to China's war against Japan.

- (7) *The war for which we are arming will be infinitely more destructive than all previous wars. It will not be confined to battlefields, but will exterminate ordinary men and women on the other side with whom we have no quarrel. "I would defend someone from attack," says Lord Ponsonby, "but I would not go to the home of the attacker, kill his family and burn down his house. War means killing innocent German and Italian civilians while the real criminals go scot free." War cannot be defensive. The best defence, we are told, is attack. It is certain that even if the intention is simply to drive off aggression the means chosen will be air attack behind the enemy's lines and civilian blockade. The next war will not be fought by soldiers against soldiers, but by airmen against a defenceless population. Furthermore to go to war with the German people, many of whom are opposed to Hitler, simply drives them over to his side. A pacifist attitude would leave him with no excuse for re-armament and for war-like speeches against encirclement.*

The Fascist Powers have indeed made war on civilians, but that is not so much a consequence of war as of their criminality. The Spanish Republicans did not take the same line, nor is it true, as has been suggested, that they lost

the war because they were not ruthless enough. They lost because they were blockaded and deprived of arms, while their opponents had the overwhelming might of German and Italian guns, tanks, and aeroplanes behind them. The terrorization of the civilian population completely failed. Not only was it found possible to construct efficient underground shelters, but the effect was more to enrage and stiffen the defence than to weaken it. Even in China, where protection was impossible, there was little panic, but a tremendous determination not to give in, and to drive the Japanese beyond the frontiers. While an unbroken army is in the field, destruction behind the lines cannot bring victory. It is being increasingly realized that as a military method the bombing of civilians has been considerably over-estimated, and that it is no more than an expression of blind and wasteful hate, killing ruthlessly and uselessly where it can. Blockade is a different matter, and presses with terrible hardship on the whole population. In any considerable area of country, however, even our own, enough foodstuffs can be produced under good organization to prevent starvation. But a whole population would be prepared to face famine rather than the loss of all that makes life worth living, and has done so again and again. Spain was reduced to as near starvation as any people is likely to, but this by itself would not have beaten them, any more than it beat Russia. They would have gone on, and through endurance won their freedom, if it had not been for the overwhelming might of Franco's Fascist allies and our own betrayal. Such sufferings cannot be endured except in a cause in which the people know that their own welfare is at stake. Imposed by a dictator in a war which promised less than essential liberty, it could only lead to a crumbling of morale and resistance, internal revolt and defeat.

How far are we ever justified in involving innocent civilians in the horrors of war? This raises a question that has already been discussed in principle. The death of innocent people is, of course, an evil, but the question is whether greater evil would not result if we refused to fight.

There are unfortunately many cases where we have to inflict suffering on innocent people because that is the only way to prevent even worse suffering, and war is one example, no different in *principle* from the others. Thus relief workers in Russia in 1921, and more recently in Spain, have had to deprive some famine victims or wounded men of the means to save their lives in order to save others, and the relief workers had to reserve rations for themselves, and thus were compelled to refuse people dying of starvation. On one occasion in Russia supplies of food were sent to a colony of children, though the relief workers knew this meant death to many adults in the town from which the supplies were sent. Let us be clear what we are proving. Of course, this is not analogous to war, but it is an example of doing harm in one direction to do good, and a greater good, in another. We are in this instance doing harm to innocent people, and yet, of course, it is right to do so. Another example would be the case of an airman or motorist who has to decide between crashing into a crowd or killing himself and his passengers. To take a military example, we might get to know that a ship laden with munitions was approaching an enemy port. If it arrives thousands will perish by their use. If we sink the ship innocent passengers will go down with her. In every case the right course is to aim at doing the least evil, or, what is the same thing, the most good, *even though the innocent suffer*.

The case of war itself has to be proved or disproved on precisely the same grounds as every other case. Are the total consequences good or bad, if so the evil done is outweighed by the good. Only if we take the Absolutist position and refuse to do anything evil in itself, whatever the consequences, have we any grounds for refusing to inflict suffering on the innocent. If we decide the issue on utilitarian grounds, why should it be wrong to inflict pain on the innocent or to take the lives of the innocent if the good in the long run outweighs the harm?

Let us suppose that by the sacrifice of one innocent life we save fifty, is that permissible? And on what grounds?

If it is permissible, it is clear that the only question at issue is, in any particular case, is it worth it? If we exhort a whole people to fight for the freedom to govern themselves, even though the cost may be grave loss of civilian lives on both sides, it is because we hold that freedom is worth the cost, and because we believe that ultimately a democratic State will preserve in lives and human happiness far more than is lost in the war to defend it. It is already becoming plain that the sheer gain in lives saved from premature death by disease, and in a higher standard of life for all, more than compensates for the losses in the Russian Civil War and the subsequent hardships. If we believe that the total sum of human happiness will be immensely increased by resisting Fascist domination, then this is a sufficient reason for calling upon the civilian population for sacrifices in resisting it.

Russia demonstrated again and again that in fighting for the revolution against her own counter-revolutionary generals, even though they were leading monarchist Russian troops, it was not against the common people that they were struggling, even though many of the common people had been misled into fighting for reaction. It was that reaction that Revolutionary Russia was fighting, and it could fight it in no other way. The Russians, as part of their warfare, used every form of propaganda. Leaflets were distributed, agitators penetrated behind the lines, with the result that whole regiments went over to the Bolsheviki.¹ The German army was severely shaken by these methods, and even more so by the effect of Russian propaganda on the German workers. So far from being driven into the arms of the Prussian Generals by Bolshevik resistance, they were seething with revolt, and the proclamation of the Russian War Aims, "No annexations and no indemnities," by wireless and other means, discredited the German imperialists in the eyes of their people. Incidentally, here is a clear case of avowed war aims not being mere propa-

¹ Russian aeroplanes dropped leaflets in English over the British lines in Northern Russia.

ganda designed to cloak imperialism. No one would venture to deny that Russia did believe in a peace based upon no annexations and no indemnities.¹ Her subsequent behaviour in all her international relations was in fact, above reproach.

Spain is beaten for the time being, but not annihilated, and her people in the course of the war have received a tremendous political awakening. It will not be possible to eradicate the new ideas, the new knowledge of their own strength, the new faith in their destiny. Reaction cannot annihilate the common people, because it needs them as workers and soldiers. Yet their very existence is always a menace to their masters, never more than after so glorious a defeat as we have witnessed in Spain. Man is less than man if, having the power to resist, he submits to the attempts of evil to destroy the supreme values of civilization. There is one guarantee, and one guarantee only, against the ultimate victory of evil, and that is so to fight it that even in defeat men are awakened, strengthened, and given an undying faith which will rise again, maybe after successive defeats, until the ultimate victory has been won. To give in without a fight is to make spiritual and moral disintegration inevitable. As George Bernanos has said, "The greatest misfortune is submission to injustice, not the suffering of it. Submission without understanding! I believe that to be the only form of damnation in this life."

These considerations do not mean that war is not horrible, but only that it is not by any means the worst evil. Not every war is just, not every war is worth the sacrifices involved. There will doubtless be occasions in the future on which it will be wise to make great sacrifices rather than involve two countries in a death-grapple, for a small war is a greater evil than a small injustice. But, on the other hand, even a great war may be an incomparable lesser evil than a great injustice, or than the unchecked ascendancy

¹ In ill-informed quarters it is sometimes stated that in 1920 "Lenin decided to invade Poland." The opposite was the case. The Poles launched another attack on Soviet Russia, but were driven back on Warsaw. (See *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article.)

of proud, malevolent, tyrannical, expansive powers. In face of these altruism becomes the vice of base self-surrender and irresponsibility as to the world's fate.

(8) The belief that fighting *for* democracy means imposing an idea by force on those who do not agree with it is behind a great deal of pacifist argument. For instance Lord Ponsonby says:

"It is a fallacy to think that by killing a sufficient number of people you can kill an idea. As a matter of fact an idea or a policy can only be killed by the people who suffer under it."

The P.P.U. says much the same thing. *"You can't preserve democracy by killing off all those who are against it. Even if you suppress half the population what is to prevent your own half splitting again and so on ad infinitum?"*

Who has suggested going to war to "kill an idea"? As far as we are concerned we are prepared to leave every issue to discussion and democratic decision, but if our opponent, being unable to convince us, resorts to force to get what he wants at our expense, are we not to resist? If we do, are we forcing our "idea" upon him? According to the pacifist, if I have the "idea" that I should prefer to live rather than die, and I therefore resist someone who tries to kill me, I am "trying to impose my idea upon him by force"! Is not there a dangerous ambiguity here? If we use the perfectly sound objection to trying to hammer a notion into someone's head by force rather than persuasion in order to discourage fighting for one's liberty or for democracy, are we not paralysing resistance to an "idea" which is really a decision to destroy us? Obviously in such a case to resist the destruction is to resist the decision or idea. If Czechoslovakia had resisted Germany it would not have been a war fought to kill off Fascists because it had been found impossible to convince them by argument. It would have been simply a struggle to prevent invasion. You may not be able to kill an idea, but you can certainly preserve

one, in the sense that you can save freedom by successful defence, including your freedom to think, speak, and write as you please.

(9) Bertrand Russell devotes a whole chapter entitled "Wars of Principle" to this question. He, too, falls into the mistake of imagining that to fight *for* democracy means fighting to impose it instead of fighting to defend it. However, he is mainly concerned to discover whether wars for independence or democracy can achieve the purposes for which they are undertaken. It is worth noting that Russell does not agree with those pacifists who say that no war is ever genuinely fought for such objects, and that such claims invariably mask base imperialist aims. On the contrary, he is prepared to admit that many wars have been genuinely fought for religion and national independence. Nor does he say that it is impossible for an ideology to be eradicated by force:

"Persecution (during the Wars of Religion) was so successful, that in most European countries, the dominant religion at the present day is that which was held by the Government in the early seventeenth century."

Nor is it impossible to defend a political or religious system by force. Although he says of these wars that "*neither side gained anything*," he at once contradicts himself by adding, "*but if one side, and not the other, had been willing to fight, the peaceable side would have lost everything*"—a surprising admission which completely overthrows the pacifist argument here. But Russell still says, in spite of the real success of such wars in saving a nation from "losing everything," that *nothing is gained*. This is because he cannot get out of his mind the idea that fighting is always to impose something, therefore if nothing is imposed as a result of fighting, "nothing is gained." But is that really so? If Switzerland fights for her independence by resisting invasion and drives off the invader, Switzerland does not gain any territory, and neither does her opponent. Therefore, the pacifist

argues, they might just as well never have gone to war. But Switzerland has gained a very great deal. By maintaining the *status quo* she gains her independence. The fact that "nothing" (in one sense, in the sense of imposing something or seizing something) is gained by either side, means that "something," in fact *everything*, is gained by one side. Russell admits this in so many words by confessing that if this war which "gained nothing" had not been fought, "*everything would have been lost*" by the peaceable side. Russell concludes that:

"the wars of religion were fully justified on one side if it could be assumed that the other side was, in any case, determined to fight," which was a fact. He continues "*it is not easy to see how what was useful in the aim of the Roundheads could have been achieved without war. And of the French Revolution the same may be said.*"

He adds that in his view there was more violence than was useful in each case. That may or may not be, but it does not prove that these ends could have been attained without a minimum of violence, nor does Russell himself think so. The fact that nothing is done perfectly does not mean that nothing should ever be done at all. Only if the violence is so excessive that it overbalances the good can violence be said to have failed, and this Russell does not claim. Granted that there is excessive violence whenever violence is resorted to, it is still true that the avoidance of the violent course, even with its excess, would in many cases result in even more evil. We cannot in the midst of history and in real life choose perfect instruments and accomplish exactly defined ends. We have to achieve as much progress as is possible, working with the human material actually available. To shrink from this course is again irresponsibility.

Behind much of the pacifist objection to what is called ideological war is a failure to appreciate the issues at stake. Pacifism sometimes appears to be a hypersensitive, personal reaction to quarrelsomeness and rowdiness, as if all war

were of the nature of a public-house brawl. According to this view what is wanted is, quite literally, and not in Chamberlain's sense, appeasement, for war is a psychopathic condition. Both sides are wrangling about nothing. But when the pacifist cries "a plague on both your houses," assumes an air of aloofness from the struggle and declares that both sides are as bad as one another, he is avoiding a moral judgment, not making one. His neutrality is an avoidance of moral responsibility, not the sublime detachment of a god who stands "above the battle."

Impartiality has become a kind of snobbishness. In refraining from taking sides, in appreciating the standpoint of both parties, we imagine ourselves to be superior to both. Neutrality is believed to be more refined, distinguished, sober, and rational behaviour. He who is *for* something appears to be prejudiced. Mass prejudice is above all things to be avoided, and yet in present-day conflicts that is just what is being whipped up. This attitude frequently leads to a tendency to sympathize with the other side just because it *is* the other side. It frequently manifests itself in carping and cavilling at defects in the right cause, thus giving help to the evil cause by meticulous dissatisfaction with the good. This is the typical attitude of the moral dilettante. It is based on a simple enough error. Objectivity and neutrality are not the same thing. Objectivity means calling a good thing good because it is good, and a bad thing bad because it is bad; neutrality means refraining from calling a thing either good or bad, whatever it really is, because I do not choose to make it my business to do so. Objectivity is simply adequate response to an object. Neutrality is the withholding of any response at all; it is therefore as subjective as the narrowest prejudice or the blindest passion.

We see this clearly enough in the case of crime. A judge is objective, but because he is objective he cannot be neutral if the evidence points to the guilt of the accused. He can, on the other hand, be neutral if, as the result of objective investigation, there is found to be as much for the accused as against. The pacifist is neutral *a priori*, before examining

the facts, assuming in advance that the evidence will work out at fifty-fifty. Behind such neutrality is a fundamental moral irresponsibility. Objectivity, on the other hand, is responsibility.

It is said that to take sides drives men into opposing camps and that this is to be regretted.

Why is it to be regretted if the issue is of moral significance? What would be shameful would be the fact that evil was allowed to rage without opponents. The enemy stands by his ideology. Why should we run away from ours?

CHAPTER VIII

THE CAUSES OF WAR

INTERNATIONALISTS OFTEN believe that with sufficient good will, with the fullest use of the method of the round table conference, it would be possible to remove the major causes of war. The powerful economic motives behind Fascist aggression are acknowledged, but it is believed that if the Haves are ready for sacrifices and reasonable concessions and the Have-nots are prepared to negotiate, it should be possible to arrange for open access to markets and raw materials, the removal of tariff barriers and in consequence the expansion of international trade, which would mean all-round prosperity and the disappearance of international friction.

Since the last war there have been many attempts to face these difficulties. International Conferences have been called to deal with economic problems, with disarmament, with reparations and war debts, with territorial questions. The League of Nations offered every opportunity for the peaceful settlement of differences. How is it that, in the words of Aldous Huxley, this "more or less well designed machinery is incapable by itself of affecting the fundamental causes of war"? Huxley and many others attribute it to the defects of human nature, to pride, the love of combat, corruption of motive and will. If this is so, then the economic difficulties are secondary, since they could be overcome if men were better. We are thus driven behind the economic causes of war to something very much more fundamental. "The real obstacles to peace," says Aldous Huxley, "are human will and feeling, human convictions, prejudices, opinions. If we want to get rid of war we must get rid of all its psychological causes."¹ If this is the case, then the way out becomes the method of personal conversion and

¹ Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*.

regeneration. At bottom it is the sinful heart of man that must be renewed if war is to cease. Sir George Paish supports this view. In an appeal to the Bishop of London, he says: "We economists cannot save this world by ourselves. It is you Christian people who alone can save it, for, if you can get a new spirit of love and trust established instead of a feeling of suspicion and hatred, you will get a new world." Huxley carries his analysis of the psychological defects responsible for war a little farther. It is because men find life boring or are frustrated that they turn to the excitement of war. It is an antidote to our inferiority complexes. Nationalism is psychologically satisfying to thwarted personalities. War releases men from their inhibitions

"because it is in the great tradition; because it is exciting and gives them certain personal or vicarious satisfactions; because their education has left them militaristically minded; because they live in a society where success, however achieved, is worshipped and where competition seems more 'natural' (because under the present dispensation it is more habitual) than co-operation."

Others have stressed racial and cultural differences and the prejudices they give rise to as the causes of war. It has for many years been the aim of those who attribute war to race hatred to remove misunderstandings by foreign travel, intervisitation, and school text-books designed to arouse sympathy rather than contempt for foreigners. Internationalists took a leading part in such efforts after the War and a great deal of friendship for and sympathy with the German people was the result. As a method of promoting peace, however, this kind of internationalism breaks down disappointingly. Is this due to the strength of national feeling? Should we therefore redouble our efforts? Or, once again, is it some deeper religious agency that is needed to cope with prejudices of so deep a character?

It is doubtful, however, in the first place, whether racial and cultural differences are the main causes of war. Sir Norman Angell has pointed out that in Spain war has been

raging between people who have been subject to the same culture and speak the same language. This is not a solitary instance. Every Spanish-American republic duplicates the phenomenon. Parties in such States fight ferociously generation after generation. On the other hand, peace between radically different cultures like that of French and English in Canada, or between the States of India, or between the diverse races of the United States and of the Soviet Union, is perfectly possible. We must therefore turn to the psychological explanation of war, and to the view which finds the cause of strife in human sinfulness. An important point at once emerges. So far from innate quarrelsomeness being a reason for abandoning the collective restraint of aggression, I should have thought it was an added reason for it. Hobbes argued that since the state of nature is a war of all against all, some central authority to which we surrender control is absolutely necessary. On the most selfish motives we gain more than we lose by surrendering our freedom to murder and rob, because we are thereby protected from the onslaughts of others. This, according to Hobbes, is the origin of the State and of Law. There is much truth in his contention. It applies even more strongly to nations. If nations are incapable of existing in the same world without attacking one another, we cannot wait until they are regenerated, even though this may eventually take place; we must organize for mutual protection against aggression, or perish in universal anarchy and war. I am not dealing for the moment with the actual League and the question of State sovereignty, but simply with the necessity for some such law as is necessary among individuals to restrain the lawbreaker. However true it may be that lawlessness springs from a corruption of the heart that only religion can cure, we do not on that account abandon the protection afforded by the police. Rather do we establish the apparatus of justice all the more firmly and efficiently. This necessity for mutual protection exists whatever the ultimate causes of lawlessness, whether psychological or economic, though this does not, of course, imply that fundamental causes should

not be sought out and eradicated, or that the apparatus of law will always be strong enough to restrain violence.

War, then, is attributed at bottom to the defects of human nature, to "such passions as are dealt with by morbid psychology; hate, rage, envy, sadism and masochism."¹ Man is a tangle of urges. War is therefore a personal vice, like alcoholism. Man is prone to the insane habit of inflicting wounds upon himself. He thus becomes the object of mental technique. War is to be abolished by some elaborate and far-reaching system of mental treatment.

But, in the words of Kenneth Ingram:

"The passions which man portrays when he embarks on war are not primary causes: they are provoked by hunger, exploitation, tyranny, or other material conditions. If Gerald Heard's psychological revolution took place and created a society which was determined never to fight, all that would have happened is that men would have been trained either to imagine that they were not hungry or oppressed, or that it was better for them to endure hunger and oppression rather than to overthrow the rule of those who were imposing these evils upon them."²

The corruption of human nature must not be accepted without further enquiry, more especially because it has been a constant source of error to explain the behaviour or characteristics of anything by attributing these to its "nature" without enquiring more precisely under exactly what conditions such behaviour occurs. This is not explanation at all, any more than you explain magnetism by saying that it is the "nature" of a magnet to attract iron, or gravity by attributing it to the "tendency" of all things to fall. The rule of all scientific enquiry is to prefer any explanation which makes use of known factors before invoking the unknown—in other words, to proceed with the fewest assumptions possible. It is neither desirable nor legitimate

¹ Bertrand Russell, *Which Way to Peace?*

² Kenneth Ingram, *The Defeat of War.*

to account for any phenomenon by assuming the existence of an unknown cause if we can get along without such an assumption.

There are, of course, abnormal mental states connected with war, but they are not its cause: they are epiphenomenal. The little thief may be a kleptomaniac, but not the big thief. Petty quarrelsomeness may be psychopathic, but war is a conflict of wills due to the fact that the interests of large and influential bodies of people are not capable of adjustment. Such a conflict does not spring from any abnormality in the members of such communities. Even if as individuals they are just and kindly in their dealings, their generosity will not extend to the point of yielding their own vital interests to others. In such a conflict of wills an ideological development to justify and rationalize extreme measures is likely; this may take the form of a fanatical racialism. In the case of Fascism the situation is complicated by the combination of two entirely separate struggles—the internal struggle between reaction and democracy, and the external struggle with rival nations. In the internal victory of Fascism the class antagonisms of a disintegrating social order are momentarily resolved, partly by nationalist hysteria, and partly by the use of force against Liberal and proletarian groups. The ideology which develops as the result of a simultaneous class and international struggle takes the form of some Fascist philosophy (not all Fascist philosophies are identical). Were it not for the inevitability of conflict in these circumstances, the soil would not be fertile and such rank growths would not be possible; as it is, they feed the growing temper of hate and aggressiveness, and come at length to have an independence and force of their own which can lay hold of even normal minds and utterly corrupt them.

The struggle which results will be more than a clash of economic interests, therefore, although without the economic basis the war of philosophies would not have arisen. Provided it is clear that the conflict with Fascism is not only economic but involves this war of ideologies, we can now

proceed to discuss the economic causes which bring nations to the point of war.

Modern manufacture, with its extensive and growing use of machinery, expands its output of consumption goods faster than it expands the purchasing power of consumers. To put it in another way, while the total income of the working class expands with the increase of production, the *relative share* of the workers decreases. This might be unjust, but it would not in itself produce economic dislocation if the classes who obtained the larger share knew what to do with it. In the past surplus profits could be and were invested in fresh capital goods. In the long period during which almost the entire world was equipped with machinery, any quantity of profits or savings could be absorbed in this way. But there comes a point at which the combined capacity of the world's plant is in excess of world requirements, measured by purchasing power, unless that purchasing power can be enormously increased—and in this connection it must be remembered that the ultimate aim of capital goods is the production of consumption goods. The real problem, therefore, is to find a market for the ultimate flow of consumption goods resulting from many years of expanding production. Purchasing power could be increased by ceasing to save so much, since, the world being adequately equipped, further investment on the same scale as hitherto is unnecessary. If, instead of accumulating profits for fresh investment (on the previous scale), higher wages were paid, general purchasing power would rise to the level of supply, and production could expand to the limit of all available resources. As it is, while overheads and capital charges mount, the wages bill falls, owing to the great increase in machinery. In consequence the workers' share in the output tends to fall, *leaving a larger surplus each year*. It is useless to go on investing in fresh plant with a static or only slightly rising market if output is going to rise faster than the market expands. Furthermore, the flood of exports now meets a great tide of foreign manufactured

goods flowing back from the very factories erected by previous investments abroad.

Under these circumstances foreign trade ceases to be what it should normally be—the exchange of those of our own goods and services which are essential to another country for different goods and services which are essential to ourselves. However it is effected—by bills of exchange—by triangular deals, by circuitous and complex paths—normal foreign trade is in fact an exchange of commodities—a true act of barter. To-day all countries have, in addition to goods which are exchanged for imports, a *surplus* product which they must sell abroad without receiving any goods in exchange,¹ for each country only has that surplus product in its own borders because it cannot buy it, therefore it can never buy the other nation's surplus in exchange. Foreign trade has ceased to be the equal exchange of goods, and has become the chief safety-valve and outlet for goods unpurchasable at home. Hence we find the President of the Board of Trade saying, "Unless we can sell in foreign markets we are on the straight road to national suicide. The vital problem is the problem of markets, the restoration of old markets, but still more, the development of new markets."

Business men and economists are agreed that the proportion of our total production which is for export is so great that without foreign markets sufficient to absorb it, economic decline is inevitable. Neither shipbuilding, building construction, munitions, nor agriculture can (normally) keep the unemployed below the two million mark if the export trade remains crippled. Nor is this a state of affairs which results from the over-industrialization of this country, our lack of foodstuffs and raw materials, and our consequent dependence upon foreign trade. The same situation is found in every country, including those, like the United States, which could be self-supporting.

¹ If we do not receive payment in goods for this exported surplus we must, of course, *lend* its equivalent value to foreign countries. We have exported £4,000,000,000 in this way.

This being the case, there are only two alternatives within our present business system. Either production must be restricted to the capacity of the market, even though this reduces the national income and creates unemployment, or the exclusive right to sell export goods in certain extensive world markets must be secured for our country at the expense of others, if necessary by war. There is a peaceful way out, but it is not within the present business system. It is the raising of popular purchasing power by transferring profits to wages, followed by the steady expansion of production, leading to still further expansion of purchasing power. But this can only be carried out where the owners of the business concerned are themselves the workers, and where the workers are the owners, since only in that case is the net product at the disposal of *one* body of people to divide up into wages and reserves as it thinks best. If the net product belongs to the owners who hand to the workers their wages and claim the balance for themselves, it is unlikely that they will increase the workers' share at their own expense. The only country in which owners and workers are identical is, of course, Soviet Russia, and here the State Planning Commission sees to it that total wages are steadily increased to absorb the increasing output.

This is a deliberate simplification of the economic situation, but the necessary qualifications will not be found to lessen the force of the argument.

In the first place, it is not, of course, simply markets for consumption goods that are desired, but opportunities for investment. It becomes more profitable, in view of growing competition at home, to build factories or railways abroad or to lend money to foreign governments (perhaps with the condition that it is to be expended in purchasing goods or capital from Great Britain), than to put the money into British manufactures. There is wider scope for capital abroad, there is considerable demand for capital, labour is cheap and plentiful, and profits are very much higher. It may also be possible to arrange for concessions in backward countries, such as the right to exploit the oil or

mineral rights. But when the capital is thus invested, it becomes necessary to protect it from the Government of the country in which it is situated, or from social and political disturbances there, otherwise this capital might be confiscated, might depreciate in value, or cease to pay interest. This was the main reason for our occupation of Egypt, to give but one example.

Another complication is the growth of monopoly accompanied by the fusion of huge banking resources with combined industrial concerns. The answer to increasing competition (itself largely due to the relative limitation of the market) is the aggregation of businesses into larger and more powerful units, in which rationalization can be effected and which have great reserves of strength. Such monopolies reduce wage costs, and in so far as they eliminate competition, raise prices. Usually, however, the great monopolies confront one another like mammoth battleships, to wage economic war with immensely enhanced resources. These resources now come to include the assistance of the State, which supports them against their rivals by tariffs, quotas, subsidies, and direct political assistance.

The situation is rendered particularly difficult by the completion of the economic occupation of the colonial world. Each great Power has staked out claims, until no fresh territory is available for imperialist expansion. Under these conditions further expansion is possible only at the expense of others. But the relative industrial strength of the various countries is always changing. A settlement, which roughly corresponds with the relative economic development of the Powers at any given time, no longer represents the true position if one of those Powers considerably increases its economic strength relative to the rest. This is what actually occurred as far as Germany was concerned between 1870 and 1914.

There are two possibilities in particular which offer themselves to an industrial country compelled to expand. It can extend the boundaries around which it throws its tariff walls, thus securing markets which its rivals are handicapped

from entering (*e.g.* Ottawa). Secondly, there are special opportunities in a colonial dependency for compelling it to supply the dominant Power with raw materials at a low price while accepting in exchange manufactured goods at a high price. This is the economic plan for the German exploitation of the Balkan countries. It is plain that an economic stranglehold through capital investment on which interest is due, through trade agreements whereby the colony agrees to purchase armaments or manufactured goods, and through special advantages which the exporters of the dominant Power may have in that country, gives that Power means to secure for itself the raw materials of that country which are denied to other Powers, even though the market is open.

The advantages of colonial possessions are thus a complex of a large number of factors, but it is clear they depend upon political control covering the area in question, and this in its turn rests upon force.

If we put together the growing need of industrial Powers for an economic empire, the rapid coming to the fore of nations for which a humbler position once sufficed, and the fact that the world has already been divided up, we see why it is that no round-table conference can adjust matters to the satisfaction of all parties. Within our present business system, if Great Britain keeps an area sufficient for her economic needs, Germany, and other countries too, must go short. If Germany obtains a share proportionate to her increased economic power, Great Britain or some other country must suffer shrinkage of markets and income and an increase in unemployment, for *as it is* Great Britain has not enough empire to satisfy its hunger for markets, put all its unemployed to work, and utilize all its spare capital. Things may not be very justly ordered at present, but it would be even more unjust if a great Power, simply by reason of its strength, were allowed to create increased economic difficulties for other Powers in order to alleviate its own immediate problems. The problems of imperialism are not solved by destroying the stronger imperialism by

making another its master, but by ending imperialism altogether.

If one great economic Power obtained such exclusive imperial rights as would satisfy its economic needs, it could only be by creating economic crises in other Powers of so serious a character as to precipitate their complete breakdown. This is why a peaceful re-division of the world is impossible and why "the actual line of development is in the opposite direction, towards the increasing sharpness of the economic-political conflicts, trade wars, tariff wars, currency wars, as well as diplomatic and armed struggles, of the vital finance-capitalist blocs."

To consider another suggested solution, however much enlightened opinion, Utopian rather than realistic in outlook, thinks in terms of the open door as far as trade and colonies are concerned, the business interests which ultimately determine policy demand the reverse: open access for us, closed access for others—and each capitalist empire wants the same. Whenever any agreement is attempted, "the centrifugal force of these interests will continually pull to pieces the essential content of any comprehensive plan." It is never possible to arrive at more than an unstable compromise between the competing designs of units seeking their own welfare, not because of exceptional greed or stupidity, but because it is to the economic advantage of each unit that the policy it is able to pursue is the reverse of the policy pursued by all the others.

We now come to the German claims. If the above analysis of the world economic situation is correct, is not Germany entitled to a rearrangement in her favour, even though it would seriously damage the interests of those countries at whose expense the re-division of economic spheres was carried out?

This is an utterly wrong conclusion. It is like saying of an Arab slave-raider who complains that his rivals are able to capture more negroes because they have access to more populated territory: Let this man have access to more villages so that he may capture enough slaves to make a

better living, otherwise he has a just grievance and might cause trouble. The economic empire desired by Germany is *for exploitation*, at the expense of the inhabitants of the territories concerned. Germany cannot exist without expansion, not because it is an absolute economic necessity, not because of "natural disabilities, lack of space, land resources and raw materials resulting in 'over-population' and 'semi-starvation' of the inhabitants of the country in question, and leading them 'to burst out somewhere,'" but solely because she is in the position of every capitalist country at her particular stage of development. Furthermore, Fascism, by reducing the standard of living of the masses, still further contracts the home market, and this aggravates the situation. We may put it thus: Every country which fails to raise the standard of its working classes in proportion to productive capacity, at the expense of profits and unearned incomes if necessary, is compelled to exist by raiding. The way out is not to legitimize or share out the raiding, as racketeers or gangsters work by agreement in districts allocated to them, but to raise the standard of living and obviate the necessity of raiding. The "inevitable drive to expansion" is relative to the existing social order in the State in question; its foreign policy is a function of its economic system.

But in demonstrating that the economic forces behind Fascism and other imperialist Powers are the root cause of modern war, have we not proved too much? Is not the only conclusion that we must expect Fascism to go to war and we must expect the older imperialisms to defend their privileges? Certain Socialists draw these conclusions, and as a result decide that it is useless to try to prevent war so long as Capitalism continues; that there is only one thing to be done—overthrow Capitalism and let us have Socialism; that there can be no peace before the social revolution.

There is no doubt that international Socialism would provide the solid foundation for permanent peace. But it was possible to prevent the Fascist offensive even though

we had not attained Socialism. The failure to do so was partly due to Socialist defeatism. Under the guise of extreme "Leftism" it really bade us give up the struggle. But in spite of the fact that Capitalism means war, it was still possible to postpone the war for some time, thus giving us a breathing space in which to build up democratic resistance to Fascism, and at the same time giving Fascism more time to create internal difficulties for itself. Every war prevented or postponed is a tactical defeat of Fascism and an advantage to the cause of progress, but only, of course, if the objectives of aggression are not conceded. Peace which is maintained without allowing Fascism to expand means the defeat and the ultimate collapse of Fascism. Peace which simply yields to Fascism is exactly the same in the end as a military defeat.

The economic analysis of the causes of war reveals the forces for making for war, but does not attempt to prove that any particular war is certain. It shows a powerful motive, but it may still be possible to find a stronger motive preventing war.

I may discover that the reason for the increase of accidents in factories is speeding up; having done so, I can still, by safety devices and other means, prevent many accidents, even though the ultimate task is to eliminate the causes. If a building is known to be inflammable, we can take special precautions against an outbreak of fire. If the economic structure and the social forces which correspond to it make the world a powder-magazine, we can still do something to prevent an explosion.

What means were available to hold up Fascist territorial expansion? The means suggested were alliances for the mutual defence of those Powers which were opposed to the Fascist domination of the world. Such alliances do not even begin to solve the economic problems which are at the root of war, but they do prevent their *being solved in the wrong way*, which would provide a remedy worse than the disease. They can prevent, or at any rate postpone, an expansion and worsening of imperialist brigandage, and leave the

way open for serious economic reform to be conducted by other means.

It was not impossible for governments to have come together to check Fascism in this way. If the working class and democratic movements had insisted, if the masses had been aroused, the onward march of Fascism could long ago have been prevented. Great Britain and France, however, did not offer any resistance until a direct threat to their own interests appeared imminent. By then almost everything had been lost.

But would not the success of such a course have compelled the economic ruin of Germany? No, it would have compelled only her *political* ruin. If the German people cannot get out of their economic difficulties by subjugating and exploiting other nations, they have the strongest possible inducement to abandon the economic system which requires them to do so. That would mean, of course, the overthrow of Fascism. If Capitalism *must* make war, the prevention of war is the end of Capitalism. That is the reason for the intense reluctance of Capitalist governments like our own to check Fascist aggression.

This deeper analysis of the causes of war renders unnecessary the theory of man's corruption advanced by Aldous Huxley. But this chapter may well be concluded by referring once again to these psychological or theological hypotheses. It will be remembered that Sir George Paish asked the Bishop to do something about eradicating the "feeling of suspicion and hatred" that he held to be responsible for war. Thus one of the spokesmen for the continuance of the very system which is causing all the trouble, and which carries the germ of war perpetually in its veins, calls upon the Church to blame the ordinary citizen for it all. Against whom does the normal hardworking, tax-paying individual harbour feelings of "suspicion and hatred"? Against no one. Nor would his opposite number in Germany but for propaganda which persuades him to see the cause of his economic distress in the alien enemy.

People do not go to war because they like it, or because

they feel pugnacious, or because they are crazy; nor do they refrain from it when they are told that giving way to such evil impulses "does no good." Always there is the clash of fundamental interests which are a matter of life and death. These interests have been supposed to be national, but they are not really so. National interests only conflict so long as nations are governed in the interests of a business world, which can only maintain itself by ruining its competitors. But it is difficult for the mass of men not to feel that their livelihood depends on the preservation and success of the industrial system through which they get their bread and butter, hence they will feel an overwhelming necessity to fight for its existence when it is threatened by the business interests of a rival nation.

On this basis are built the war ideologies and the propaganda. Out of these feelings arise the fears, rivalries, and passions of war, which, as we have pointed out, then take on a being and independence of their own, becoming the great destructive mental forces behind war. But without such a basis these forces would not arise and would find nothing on which to feed.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRICE OF PEACE

THE PACIFIST believes that there are no differences between nations which are not susceptible to reasonable solution. The resort to force, it is argued, implies the rejection of an honest and friendly attempt to meet legitimate grievances. Those who threaten war, says Miss Vera Brittain, *"are not primarily criminals, but men with real grievances even though they are replying to our injustice to them by violent injustices of their own. Instead of allowing this merely to arouse our anger and drive us into war we ought to set to work to discover and remove the motives of their crimes."* Miss Rose Macaulay says, *"Pacifists have got to the point where, whatever technique they advocate for the settling of quarrels, this coarse, unintelligent and barbaric technique of war is absolutely ruled out."* War is regarded as a psychopathic process, the most foolish and cruel of mental aberrations. Sanity would find a peaceful way out of every situation. Pacifists have therefore given their fullest support to proposals for arbitration. They have urged the granting of maximum concessions to the disgruntled Powers. They have deprecated threats and balance of power politics. Since 1935 they have opposed with vigour every proposal to restrain Fascist aggression by the collective force of the League. They have strongly supported concessions to Hitler, and they have been sympathetic to the complaints of the Fascist Powers as to lack of living room. They found themselves, therefore, supporting the appeasement policy of the National Government. The Government, indeed, could not have carried its policy through without their help. The results have not been those intended by the pacifist movement. For pacifism split the progressive forces from top to bottom. Millions who were opposed to Fascism and reaction were persuaded to give their support to the Government, with the result that it

continued to hold power, and to give every assistance to the anti-democratic forces of the world, with the appalling results we now see before us.

The aim of this policy, as stated by Government spokesmen, was "to keep Britain out of war," but the results were unexpected. The Government, of course, was never fundamentally pacifist, and Chamberlain said on more than one occasion that he would fight the moment British interests were threatened. He was "pacifist" in relation to what Japan wanted to do in China, to what Italy wanted in Abyssinia, to what the Axis wanted in Spain, and to what Hitler wanted in Eastern Europe.

This policy was an encouragement to Hitler to encroach on the territory of his Eastern neighbours. Pacifists would require them to give in to his demands but in point of fact resistance would be inevitable, especially should Hitler advance on the Ukraine. Thus the ultimate effect of this "peace" policy is war.

(1) It is important for us to examine the arguments which proved so effective. The first of these was based on Germany's grievances under the Versailles Treaty. Pacifists contended that "*At least two great Powers in Europe see themselves confronted by a choice between wars of conquest and economic collapse. People who resort to violence to escape from injustice cannot be won to peace by any other means than the removal of injustice.*"

In many respects the Versailles Treaty was indeed monstrously unjust and unworkable. But by 1934 its worst features had been remedied. In point of fact there were far fewer minorities under foreign domination after Versailles than before it. As far as reparations were concerned Germany has had more of the Allies' money in loans than they have had of hers. With regard to colonies and raw materials, Germany's economic difficulties were due to the same causes as the economic difficulties of Great Britain and the United States, who in spite of their immense territorial resources were nevertheless deeply involved in unemployment and economic crises, and also to the fact that

she was short of currency, not because the world would not trade with her, but because she was spending it all on war material instead of on articles for popular consumption. As to expanding population the density per square mile in Japan is 437, in Germany is 366, in Italy 358. In Belgium it is 762, in Holland 627, in Great Britain 468, in England alone 742. The colonies these countries are asking for are not necessary for surplus populations or for raw materials, which an overstocked world is only too anxious to sell, and which Germany could have in abundance if she were not arming. A colonial empire is necessary only to maintain the profits of an expanding capitalism which is for ever lowering the purchasing power of its working population. Such an empire can indeed be enormously profitable. Colonial investments show a higher rate of profit than any others. At times 40 per cent of our new capital issues have been to our colonies. Such territories need to be kept under political control. It would be dangerous if some other country dominated the areas in which such remunerative investments lie. Colonial expansion is necessary as long as capitalism continues because it solves the economic problems, at any rate for a time, of the Powers which obtain the lion's share of the colonies. But it does so only at the expense of the other Powers. There is not enough colonial territory for them all. The world was long ago divided up. Therefore if Germany secures enough to solve *her* problems, similar problems are created, shall we say, for Great Britain and France. China and Russia still offer territory not pre-empted by existing capitalist Powers. To accept the imperative demand of Germany and Japan for colonies as categorical is therefore, if that demand is not to be at our expense, to give them *carte blanche* to take what they want in China and Russia.

Sympathy with Fascist pleas for *lebensraum* resolves itself therefore either into accepting the necessity for the Japanese invasion of China and the German invasion of the Ukraine, or surrendering our colonial empire, and ourselves facing the same economic disaster that confronts Germany. Hitler's

colonial claims were, as a matter of fact, mainly a bargaining counter, to be readily surrendered for the more satisfactory concession of Russian territory.

"If I had the Ural Mountains with their incalculable stores of raw materials; Siberia with its vast forests; and the Ukraine with its tremendous wheat fields, Germany under National Socialism would be swimming in plenty."

But why present the situation as a dilemma in which either Germany or the West must surrender colonies? There is an alternative. It is only a capitalist Germany which needs colonies. If Socialism replaced Fascism there would be no need for war at all. Is it possible that a Socialist Germany was regarded as more to be feared than a second World War?

The pacifist goes to amazing lengths in excusing aggression. Dr. Salter says, "How long do you think active, virile, energetic, enterprising people like the Germans, Italians, and Japanese will put up with the economic conditions under which they live? Certainly not indefinitely." The pacifist has forgotten his own argument that "war achieves nothing." Apparently that argument is only addressed to Spanish Republicans, Abyssinians, and Chinese to induce them to lay down their arms when faced with invasion. When it is the invader Dr. Salter is thinking about, he believes that war can achieve a very great deal. It can solve the economic difficulties of Fascism! Pacifists do not condemn Fascist war. Their arguments are reserved exclusively for dissuading the victims of Fascism from resisting.

(2) The second pacifist argument for appeasement is a criticism of the League as an organ of collective security. *Joad*, while he believes that aggression ought to be restrained by collective force, believes that this is impossible unless all the nations both surrender State sovereignty and join a comprehensive League including the Fascist Powers. *Russell* holds that the League was not strong enough to coerce recalcitrant States, and that under these circumstances surrender is better than a desperate and perhaps unsuccessful war. Many opponents of collective security believe that it is better to localize war. To go to the help of Abyssinia or China,

to allow arms for Spain, to guarantee Czechoslovakia would at once widen the area of conflict.

This policy of localizing war was supported not only by pacifists but also by Hitler, who proceeded by a series of bilateral pacts to make sure that no other nation would attack him if he attacked anybody else. This policy was nevertheless believed by very many people to make for peace.

Bertrand Russell formulates his pacifist alternative to collective security in the following programme:

1. Opposition to any alliance with Soviet Russia.
2. America to withhold munitions and financial aid from the democratic Powers in the event of war.
3. The avoidance of a crusading spirit against Fascism on the grounds that even the best cause is not worth a war.
4. Freedom from alliances on the lines of collective security. This, he argues, will appeal specially to conservatives, who do not want to quarrel with Germany, and who dislike Russia. Pacifists can therefore enlist conservative support for their policy.

It did not occur to Russell that the pacifists were in this way rendering the maximum of support to the friends of Fascism and the foes of Russia, or that his policy in general was identical with that of the reactionaries of both hemispheres, who supported it, not in order to check Fascism, of course, but in order to allow it to expand and live. It was also the policy desired by Hitler and Mussolini themselves as most likely to further their aims. This whole policy indeed received, as we shall see, the strongest support from those reactionary elements which pacifists might have recognized as furthest removed from their own principles. It should have been clearer to them that it was not a case of conservatives supporting a real peace policy, but of pacifists being hoodwinked into supporting a pro-Fascist and therefore a war policy.

The objections to collective action in restraint of aggression have been answered by two distinguished pacifists

themselves! Joad is not prepared to "withhold his sanction from the force that is mobilized behind the law." He welcomed the League, on principle, because it proposed to supersede the amoral pretensions of the Sovereign States "by the same method as the amoral pretensions of sovereign individuals had been superseded—namely by subordinating them to a common authority which was strong enough to command respect." Joad, in spite of his pacifism, regards the establishing of social order by military force as necessary and successful. He believes that the use of force in such a manner does not vitiate the aims in view, but accomplishes good ends. It is successful, says Joad, where the force used is overwhelming. An effective reply to those who argue that the more force you use the less satisfactory the result.

Many Quakers are prepared to concur. Donnington says:

"In this stage of society to which the human story has come, force in the form of coercive restraint cannot be dispensed with, and does bring good and lessen evil, since it is the only weapon within the present reach of mankind for dealing with the wrecker, the gangster, the enemy of society. We cannot employ the purer weapons of the spirit, because mankind so far still rejects and despises them. The alternative is not peace and goodwill, but anarchy and barbarism beyond belief, and an end to such opportunities as now exist for the slow enlightening of the hearts of men."

Force so used is not, of course, the positive agent for the building of good, but it is none the less the necessary condition without which reconstruction cannot proceed. In so far as pacifism reminds us that the forcible restraint of evil is negative, that violence cannot of itself be creative, it is rendering a useful service. But in so far as pacifism holds that positive methods do not require the restraint of evil as the condition of their being free to operate, it stultifies those very methods.

If the pacifist argues that the use of violence incapacitates us for creative work because it is based on hate, we

reply that everything depends on the intention. Violence that does not see beyond itself, that merely seeks to destroy evil, as if that were the only task, is indeed incapable of creation. But it is possible to have as one's aim the building of right human relations, based on goodwill and reason, and to engage in the destruction of evil solely with the purpose of clearing the way for positive methods. In that case the violence used takes on a different character and is no barrier to subsequent activity on other lines.

Bertrand Russell admits that force used in defence of law is legitimate. "The maintenance of respect for law, by war if necessary, is therefore a matter of the highest social importance."

Bertrand Russell also admits that the day may come when an international armed force will be able permanently to prevent aggressive war. "It would be a real preventive," he says.

"The political condition for permanent peace is the existence of a single supreme world government, possessed of irresistible force, and able to impose its will upon any national state or combination of states . . . a merely legal restriction will not suffice; it must be possible to compel obedience to international law." Russell also admits that "There have been wars that have done good—for example, the American War of Independence, and, to take a case where no legal pretext existed, Caesar's conquest of Gaul."

Russell is no isolationist, and sees clearly that if self-defence is justifiable, then so is the defence of another who is unwarrantably attacked. He argues that if each country merely looks after itself, it is obvious that each can easily be conquered separately; and furthermore, that if any country, such as our own, needs allies if it is to be successfully defended, we cannot hope to secure this for nothing and we cannot undertake reciprocal obligations.

During the last war Bertrand Russell argued that it was important not to condemn political methods of achieving

peace which fell short of pacifism, but "even to welcome such as seemed a real advance along the road, however distant they might still be from the goal which we hope to see attained ultimately. It is fairly clear that the efforts of Governments after universal peace, when such efforts come to be made, will proceed by attempting to achieve security through international agreements, and through such schemes as the League of Nations or the League to Enforce Peace, rather than by the complete disarmament of first one nation and then another, which is the method that would carry out the principles of the 'C.O.' But those who are not prepared even to consider political methods of aiming at the prevention of war other than complete non-resistance will cut themselves off in the years to come, from much useful work for peace."

Some pacifists accept these arguments in so far as they support the use of force within the community, but repudiate the "police analogy" when applied to international affairs. The analogy, however, is not with the highly developed police system of our times but with those earlier stages of society in which violence was put down by self-constituted representatives of the needs of the community. Procedure at this stage has its drawbacks, and is less efficient than a developed legal system, but it is the first step away from anarchy. Our problem is how to make a system of collective security *more* analogous to a national system of justice backed by a police system. Lord Ponsonby argues that police act under an impartial authority, whereas the League is an association of individuals arrogating to themselves the right to judge and punish in their own cause. We reply that the League can quite well be nothing more than that, but on the other hand it is equally possible for nations to associate themselves for mutual protection against international gangsterdom. Such an association is analogous to the beginnings of law and police because its function is the same, *i.e.* the prevention of crime and the settlement of disputes by justice and not violence.

It must not be assumed that the recognition of this general

principle implies that the League of Nations necessarily fulfils this police function. But in the course of its history for five years it offered the opportunity of mobilizing the democratic elements in Europe for the defence of freedom. It failed because the democratic ranks were divided, and this was due, in no small measure, to the influence of pacifism. Thus reaction was able to maintain itself in power, and could refuse to use the League for anti-Fascist ends.

The League was in the first ten years of its existence little more than a pro-Ally bloc. But if collective security had been made effective this would not have been an alliance of the old pattern, for its aim would not have been to further the interests of one group at the expense of another, but to guarantee all interests against lawlessness. It was open to any Power to join such a system of mutual guarantees. It was only directed against those Powers which decided to live by the violent destruction of their neighbours. If there were no such Powers it was against no one.

Pacifists like Joad and Russell while prepared to admit the principle of collective security prefer submission to resistance to-day because the League is not strong enough to be effective. Joad says :

“The theory of collective security may have been sound ; it may even be that there was a time when its practice would have been effective, but it is folly to continue to demand its application when the essential condition of its success, the command by a substantially inclusive League of overwhelming force, is lacking.”¹

As a matter of fact at any time up to 1938 Germany was still unprepared and strategically at a disadvantage. Even in 1938 there was still overwhelming force on the side of the democracies. They had a population three times greater than the bloc of the aggressors, they produced more than 50 per cent more steel, they generated twice as much electric power, they had fifty-five times as much oil, nine times as much raw materials for textiles, four times as much food-

¹ Joad, *Why War?*

stuffs; they could meet their own requirements in raw materials completely, while even in peace time the bloc of the aggressors had a deficit of 50 per cent; finally the gold reserves of the democracies were forty-nine times greater than the gold reserves of the Fascist States. Their potential production of aircraft and mechanical traction was far greater than Fascism can count on. The naval forces of France, Britain, and the U.S.A. were twice as strong as the naval forces of Germany, Italy, and Japan.¹

Joad himself admitted (after the event) that sanctions would have been effective against Italy. He says: "A policy of sanctions rigorously pursued would in all probability have brought Italy's Abyssinian venture to an untimely close. The refusal to enable Japan to import certain necessary elements in the manufacture of munitions—tungsten and nickel, for example—would have made the Japanese invasion of China impossible."

The habit is to admit our strength on the last occasion, but to lament that this time we are really not strong enough. Actually we were far less ready to fight in 1939 even after a year's frantic rearmament than we were in 1938, for we had lost more by the disbanding of the Czech Army than we could make up in many years' rearmament. We handed over to Hitler the greatest fortification system in Europe, forty divisions of highly trained men, 1,500 aeroplanes and vast masses of war material, in this way, for the first time, making war on Britain and France possible. This is pacifism! It has been said, with perhaps pardonable exaggeration, that Chamberlain at Munich succeeded in performing the political miracle of at one stroke finally losing the last war and the next.

The League failed for none of the reasons given by the pacifists, but as a leading pacifist, Captain Mumford, himself admits, because the British Government disliked the idea of fighting a Fascist State with the possible result of its going Socialist if defeated. Sanctions were abandoned

¹ The whole subject is fully discussed by Max Werner in *The Military Strength of the Great Powers*.

not because they were failing, but because it was only too clear that they were succeeding. The League has not been tried and failed. It has been found dangerous (to Fascism) and not tried at all.

The full results of this policy of "pacifism" were not apparent until Munich. This was at one and the same time the inevitable end of the whole process, its culmination, and its final breakdown. Munich was pacifism's completest victory. It was achieved solely because of the success of the Prime Minister's tremendous appeal to pacifist sentiment. And yet, as almost everyone quickly realized, it definitely precipitated the war.

The significance of the pacifist support for Munich is well brought out in Joad's recent book *Why War?* Joad is convinced that Munich was a master-stroke for peace. "Chamberlain, I believe, saved us from war at the last moment, and I am duly grateful. His prolonged and strenuous efforts to avert war were, in my view, wholly admirable; in this emergency he acted as a wise and courageous man."

Joad's case is worth examining. It consists of three arguments.

1. Why all this fuss about the Czechs? They had no claim to the Sudeten areas which were unfairly ceded to Czechoslovakia at Versailles. The great majority wished to become part of Germany. Well, why not? If State sovereignty is infringed and national integrity violated by the cession of these districts to Germany, Joad as a good internationalist is unconcerned and exclaims, "A good job too."

2. There was real danger of war. Attempts to make out that Chamberlain was hoaxing us are unfair and untrue. Germany would have gone to war if she had been thwarted.

3. The consequences have not been a worsening of the situation and war is now less likely than before. The policy of accommodation, of concessions, of giving way here and compromising there diminishes the risk of war. Germany, if treated in the Munich manner, "will become a sated

Power, and with satiety, may once again be prepared to show symptoms of humanity and settle down into moderately decent behaviour. After all, hunger and humiliation were the causes that produced Hitler. When both causes have disappeared, their effects may disappear too." If we can by means such as these "stave off war for the next twenty years, we may find ourselves faced with a situation from which the present urgencies and stresses have totally disappeared."

We are not concerned with Mr. Chamberlain's sincerity, which Joad spends several pages in defending. Neither the case for pacifism nor the case against it rests upon the character of the former Prime Minister. The truth of the matter seems to be that "when suddenly he discovered that it was a top-dog, not an under-dog, with which he had to deal, he was credulous enough to hope by successive bones to reduce its hunger." Joad virtually agrees, and I make no more serious charge. Joad himself says, however, with the curious inconsistency that marks his book, "I cannot avoid the suspicion that one of the motives for the Munich settlement was the desire to erect a common bulwark with other capitalist Powers against the dreaded flood of Socialism." Referring to Mr. Chamberlain's avowed belief in the good faith of Hitler, Joad says:

"Does he *really* believe this or does he not? If he does, why disarmament? If he does not, why the cold-shouldering of Russia who, if war with Germany is to be feared, would be our most potent ally? It is difficult to avoid concluding that Mr. Chamberlain believes Hitler or disbelieves him according to whether belief or disbelief is the more convenient at the moment; disbelieves when he wishes to convince us of the necessity of intensifying the speed of rearmament, believes, when he wishes to find reasons for the continued cold-shouldering of Russia."

This is a curious line to take after defending the sincerity of the Prime Minister at some considerable length, but I

will leave these doubts to Joad and his pacifist friends. I am concerned not with Mr. Chamberlain's motives, but with the objective results of his policy. There would be just one real test of Mr. Chamberlain's sincere desire for peace at almost any cost. How far would he be prepared to sacrifice in the cause of peace the British financial and economic interests which he considers vital? Would he impose on British interests the same demands which he imposed on Czechoslovakia? We have now had the answer to that question.

But what about the Czechs? Here Joad fails completely to give us the true facts. The Sudeten districts have never belonged to the German Reich, as many pacifists believe. Czechoslovakia, along with Hungary and several other nations, was a part of the huge polyglot Austrian empire which fell to pieces in 1918. The Sudeten territory lies within frontiers which have stood for nine hundred years. They are the best-defined frontiers in Europe, constituted as they are, like the Pyrenees, by mountain ranges. Inside them Czechs and Germans have lived together since the thirteenth century. In spite of ceaseless propaganda by Hitler agents, there is no evidence that the Sudetens wanted to belong to Germany. They never asked for more than autonomy within the Czechoslovakian State. It has recently been pointed out that every German minority within striking distance of Hitler is in a very difficult situation to-day. If any of them are openly anti-Nazi, they know the fate in store for them if Hitler eventually marches in. It is therefore dangerous for them to take an anti-Nazi line even though they are not within the German State. The arrest and trial of Dr. Sekanina of Prague for opposition to Germany *before* the occupation of Czechoslovakia shows what is likely to be the fate of anyone opposing Nazi policy even outside Germany. There is now a law making it high treason actively to oppose the Nazi régime even outside Germany and rendering all who do so liable to arrest if the German police can get hold of them. The Sudetens therefore had no alternative, whatever their views,

but to be enthusiastically pro-Hitler. The Sudetens, although they had grievances, had their own language, schools, religious and cultural institutions, and also their own deputies in Parliament. They were infinitely better off than the German minorities in Poland and under Mussolini in the Tyrol, or the Polish and Serbian minorities in Germany.

The cession of this territory to Hitler did not only concern the Sudetens. It vitally concerned the Czechs; not because it was an affront to their prestige (the only objection that Joad can imagine the Czechs' feeling), or even because it was an economic loss, but because it actually decided their political fate. Those of us who opposed the occupation of the Sudetan territory also based our objections not so much on the actual loss of these districts to Czechoslovakia, as on the effect of the loss of the frontiers on the fate of Europe. For Hitler's occupation wiped out the impregnable fortifications which kept Germany from overrunning Eastern Europe; placed at his disposal vast economic resources available for military purposes; immobilized Czechoslovakia as a possible ally of France, Russia, and Poland; destroyed the confidence of all the smaller States in the pledged word of France and Britain; isolated France externally and weakened her internally; and, finally, immensely strengthened Hitler's belief in his invincibility, driving him forward with ruthless and reckless audacity to further aggression. This *pacifist* move was in essence a gift of vast new armaments to Germany coupled with a corresponding weakening of the other Powers, and was therefore calculated to put Hitler for the first time in the position to challenge Great Britain and France. Moreover, contrary to pacifist expectations, this in no way satisfied his demands, but, on the contrary, only goaded him to even greater ambitions. What appeared to Chamberlain and his pacifist friends like a victory for peace was really the loss of the first major engagement of the present war. Frantic rearmament in the respite thus gained was, of course, the Government's policy, but they have forgotten that weapons are in vain if you are beaten strategically. It is a case of allies, of communi-

cations, of strategic position. If you are manœuvred out of all these, you are beaten before the war starts. There is little doubt that Chamberlain had other motives than the simple desire for peace. What was really aimed at was a four-power bloc of Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain allowing Germany to expand in Eastern Europe and at the expense of Russia. The effect would have been to threaten Russian Socialism and at the same time to use Russia to weaken Germany for a considerable time.

Let us take Joad's point about State sovereignty. Because one desires its disappearance, one does not necessarily approve of the forcible overthrow of the rights of one State by another. Because a Socialist disapproves of the private ownership of capital, he does not approve of every swindler and thief who gains possession of it by unscrupulous means. When a great State destroys a smaller State, the net result is not a lessened regard for State sovereignty, but an immense strengthening of the idea of State sovereignty for big Powers and for Fascist Powers. Moreover, as we have shown, the supreme evil was not the absorption of a small State by a large one, bad though that may be, but the successful advance of German Fascism on its path of world conquest. It is curious that Joad, who spends one third of his book *Why War?* defending the rights of the individual against the State, should see nothing deplorable in the rights of a free people being at one stroke swept away by a totalitarian Power, for that, and nothing else, is what loss of State sovereignty means when a Fascist State conquers a democracy. This he views "with the greatest equanimity—a good job too." The gradual absorption of all the free States of the world in the Great Fascist State in which, to use his own words, "the individual has neither the right nor the liberty to pursue ends of his own which are inconsistent with those of the State, for the individual being only a particular expression of the State's personality can have no ends save such as the State proposes to him," is in his view in every way desirable (the more it happens "the

better I am pleased"), being a step in the direction of internationalism!

Whether there was real danger of war or not does not affect the argument. If there were not, so much the better. If there were, it would have been a war in which Hitler would have been at the maximum disadvantage and would certainly have been defeated. He would have had against him not only this country, France, and Czechoslovakia, but the whole might of Russia. At any rate it was a better time to fight than *after* Munich.

Joad believed, however, that this surrender of Sudeten territory would make Germany a sated Power which would settle down to decent behaviour. What actually happened? First the annexation of the whole of Czechoslovakia, then the occupation of Memel, the economic subjection of Roumania, the threat to Jugo-Slavia, and finally the invasion of Poland. Worse still, a wave of panic fear throughout Europe and despairing scepticism among the nations, including Russia, as to whether Britain and France would honour any further obligations into which they might enter.

The invasion of Poland and the Second World War was the immediate consequence not of the Russo-German pact, not even of Hitler's move on Danzig, but of Munich. From the moment that Hitler's flank was secure and the Czechoslovak Army was immobilized, Hitler was free to take his next step. Moreover would he not be confident that Britain and France would be even less likely to interfere with him seeing that they were now in a hopelessly difficult strategic position should they desire to do so? And why should they desire to do so?

(3) A further objection to united resistance to Fascism was that it was provocative.

In pursuance of a policy of reasonableness and appeasement we were implored not to level violent attacks on Hitler and Mussolini, to refrain from denunciations of their aggressive acts, and from broadcasting the plain fact about their intervention in Spain. The Press was asked to moderate its tone. The Cinema was required to cut out anything likely

to offend. *The Bishop of Gloucester urged us not to protest against the persecution of Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Liberals, and Socialists in Germany.* Criticism, we were told, does not come well from us, since we ourselves are not guiltless. Moreover, protest only increases warlike feeling. Those Germans who are being persecuted, says the Bishop, should suffer in silence and Christian resignation, for this would be the nobler as well as the wiser course. The more we champion their cause, the more Hitler is likely to regard them as dangerous enemies allied to the anti-Fascist forces outside Germany. On all counts, therefore, silence and sympathy are called for rather than noisy criticism and abuse. It was our hostility, our threats of collective action, our rearmament, which goaded Fascism to extremes. If we had been non-aggressive, if we had offered no resistance, Fascism would have been disarmed by our pacific attitude. No invasion and no interference can take place if we make no provocation.

But there is no provocation in security pacts. They are not a mutual threat but mutual insurance. A pacific attitude to aggression does not disarm it. Even Joad has pointed this out:

“There have been only too many occasions in history in which the meeting of violence by non-violence has led not to the taming of the violent, but to the extinction of the non-violent.” After instancing the Incas of Peru, the natives of the South Seas Islands, the religious sect of Doukhobors in Russia, he continues: “Defencelessness did not save the victims of the Inquisition from the rack and the stake; it did not save the Jews of the Middle Ages, and it does not save the Jews of Germany to-day.”

The Fascist reaction to submission is not, as the pacifist asserts, to withdraw because provocation has ceased, but on the contrary to increase its demands. The pacifist argues that if resistance is withdrawn aggression collapses. If the victim does not fight back nothing happens to him. “A pacifist country cannot be invaded, whatever you may lose

by non-resistance it will be infinitely less than by a successful war of defence."

But in the first place a country never confronts the invader with an example of pure pacifism, which might be thought to have a considerable moral effect. Long before the lofty moral standard and discipline required for this has been attained a position is reached at which the numbers converted to pacifism are enough to make it helpless before the demands of another Power, while the numbers remaining unconverted make a purely pacifist reaction impossible. The country, split from top to bottom, fights back, but ineffectually, and is defeated. This is to make the worst of both worlds. The actual effect of an increase of pacifism is thus to invite aggression. Mr. Joad once said that if he had to choose a country in which to live it would be Denmark because its pacifist policy would make it safe from aggression. To-day it is under German occupation.

It is assumed that pacifism is bound to shame an invading army. This is not so. The Jews did not resist the Nazis, but their fate has been a horrible one. When we are reminded that William Penn did not resort to arms in his relations with the Indians, we reply with Norman Angell that the real question is whether the pacific attitude of the natives saved them from white exploitation? White adventurers and settlers have been well received in America, in Africa, in the South Seas, and elsewhere, with what result? "Are young Germans really Huns?" asks one pacifist. "Would they attack unless told that we were armed to destroy them? It is fear which makes brave men behave so abominably." Really! Was it fear that drove young Italian airmen to spray defenceless Abyssinian villagers with burning mustard gas? Was it fear that led the Japanese to massacre tens of thousands of helpless Chinese women and children? Did Japan really anticipate a Chinese invasion? Was it fear lest Republican Spain should sack Berlin that led the German airmen to destroy Guernica? This is outrageous nonsense.

Bertrand Russell imagines an invading army allowed to occupy England and then met by universal sabotage as

soon as the German administration of the country begins. In the first place, it is inconceivable that you would get that complete unanimity, high moral purpose, and perfect discipline which Russell himself admits would be necessary for such a non-violent strike to work. It is not reasoning, but dreaming to say: *If* everyone were perfect, *if* everyone were like Jesus Christ, *if* everyone were perfectly loyal, self-sacrificing, disciplined, we would do thus and thus. We know perfectly well that actually we have got to work with imperfect material, that at the best we shall have a minority of stalwarts, that many people who support the first stage of a pacifist plan like this, its non-resistance, won't be able to go on with the far more difficult second stage of a universal strike. We have seen in this country and in France how a ruthless Government deals with a general strike. Resolution, strong action, coupled with propaganda assuring every district that the strike has broken down everywhere else, quickly demoralizes the masses. A German occupation would be far more ruthless. People are very timid. Even in England during the past ten or fifteen years people of advanced views very frequently concealed them for fear of losing their jobs. In Germany people do not resist by non-violent means even when they are against the régime. They hold their tongues and give in. Non-resistance, whatever the real aims of thorough-going pacifism, would really mean surrender of our liberty of speech and writing and action to Fascism. It would simply break the dikes and let in the barbarian flood. Once in pacifism could do nothing against it.

The German Social Democrats were pacific enough. Where are they now? Was the unarmed condition of Abyssinia enough to prevent Italy arming? Did China threaten Japan? Did Spain threaten to encircle the Axis? On the contrary in every case it was retreat and submission, the *failure* to stand together and present an effective and resolute threat of war, which provoked Fascist aggression. A clear certainty by all concerned that action will at once be taken in the event of aggression is the best assurance

that it may never be necessary to take it. The refusal to engage in a definite commitment to fight becomes a direct incitement to war. But such a precommitment to fight must be clear and unequivocal if it is to be effective.

It cannot be too often insisted that it was the pacifist guarantee that nothing would be done to stop Fascism which provoked war, and that the opposite policy was not a war policy but a peace policy since the intention was to prevent aggression by confronting the aggressor with overwhelming and determined force. A strong stand over submarine activity in the Mediterranean brought Italy at once to heel. The instant repulse of aggression in Manchukuo and Mongolia cooled the ardour of the Japanese and they withdrew. Mussolini was ready to withdraw from Abyssinia and Germany would have abandoned the Rhineland had the League stood firm.

The issue is, however, not merely one of invasion. A rapid growth of pacifism would have interesting internal effects. The moment pacifism was sufficiently powerful to render military resistance unlikely, our own Fascists would seize the government. An unarmed government is at the mercy of even a minority of determined fanatics. A peaceful community can be exploited and terrorized by lawless individuals and groups if it has not the will and power to protect itself. Both Hitler and Mussolini assumed power in the teeth of a majority of public opinion against them¹ simply because the will to prevent Fascist domination was lacking. It is difficult to organize strikes unless you are militant. Successful strikes are led by men who are prepared for violence under other circumstances. Even Gandhi's great movement led again and again to violence, until Gandhi at last said that he himself was the only man in

¹ In the last election in Germany before Hitler became Chancellor, in November 1932, the Nazis polled 11,737,391 votes out of a total of 35,000,000 votes cast at that election. Social Democrats and Communists together polled over 13,000,000. Even after Hitler became Chancellor he failed to obtain an absolute majority in the elections held under his own auspices in March 1933. Out of 39,000,000 votes cast the Nazis polled only 17,000,000.

India sufficiently imbued with the true spirit of pacifism to be capable of using the method of the non-violent strike. Hence he called the movement off. The same thing would happen here. A strike would either be broken by prompt and vigorous measures—the arrest of all its leaders, the dispersal of crowds, starvation, propaganda, betrayal, all of which would be more likely to succeed under pacifist leadership; or the crowd would get out of hand and, egged on by provocative agents, give way to violence and invite savage reprisals; it must either do that or finally, under strong leadership, become a method of warfare with no pacifist nonsense about it at all.¹

The third difficulty about non-resistance is that the object of the aggressor Power may not be the invasion of a country at all, but some economic aim to which military opposition would normally be expected. War is an instrument of policy. It is the final resort in the struggle to secure certain objects. It is not an end in itself. If a nation is allowed to get what it wants without war it will be only too glad to do so. It is in that sense, and in that sense alone, that Hitler is a perfectly sincere pacifist. If the country at whose expense the desired aim is to be secured does not fight, no war will take place, but that is not to say that nothing will happen. A great deal will happen. Of course it will not be necessary for armies to march or for a military occupation to take place, but the economic and political advantages which, nominally, people are prepared to die for, so much do they value them, will be appropriated.

I detect here, as in so much of the pacifist argument, a curious separation of war from everything else, as though it originated in bad temper, pugnacity, a sheer love of combat, as though one country simply said, "Let us conquer our neighbour," and marched in, after trumping up some cause. If this were all, pacifism might be a very good way to try, and I imagine that is why it appeals so strongly to those who only think of war in these terms. But suppose

¹ For a further discussion of the strike as a method of non-violent resistance, see Chap. VI, *Gandhi and Non-Resistance*.

Germany says: If we make Roumania a protectorate we can establish special trade relations whereby we get her oil and agricultural produce cheaply and sell our manufactures to her at a high price. To make this possible we must suppress all Roumanian self-government and democratic institutions, or they would lead to protests against our intended exploitation. Now, the pacifist simply sees this as a "dispute," a "squabble," like that of two drunken men outside a public-house. It is to be settled by "reason," by conference, by a little good temper. It must not lead to war. If Roumania is offered no alternative and Germany marches in, the pacifist says: Don't resist and nothing will happen. No, the army won't march in, but the Nazi agents will. Roumania will be reduced to economic serfdom and the standard of living of its people considerably reduced.

It appears, then, that the consequences of not fighting are less simple and reassuring than might be supposed. Misled by the conceivability of *complete* non-resistance, followed by *complete* and *perfect* non-violent resistance, the pacifist forgets that what is conceivable may be here and now absolutely and unquestionably impossible. The struggle for a long-range goal is perfectly right if it guides us along the path to it and helps us to surmount the obstacles before us one by one, but it is all wrong if it takes us down the wrong path and leads us into defeats which weaken us and postpone ultimate victory. To ask for all or nothing instead of for the partial victory which will put us in the way of still greater victories, and so ultimately in the way of getting all we want, is to ask for permanent and total defeat. Joad says: "It can never be right to abandon the advocacy of a long-run method of salvation merely because circumstances are unfavourable to its short-run application." This is like saying when the house is on fire: Don't let us abandon the long-term policy of making all buildings fire-proof because circumstances are unfavourable at the moment to its short-run application, therefore under no circumstances use the fire escape or send for the fire brigade. Go on advocating fire-proof buildings while you burn to death.

Pacifism is not only an ideal, but an ideal without a short-term policy at all, and that means that though it indicates what is ultimately desirable, it cannot tell us what to do next in order to attain it. Thus in every concrete situation the pacifist says two equally foolish things: firstly, that if everyone were perfect this would not have happened; secondly, that the thing to do is simply to persuade people of your ultimate ideal to the discouragement of all more imperfect plans, even though the successful accomplishment of this imperfect plan will put you on the way to your ideal and preserve far more than it loses, while the Utopian course has the immediate effect of precipitating disaster. Thus pacifists say about Spain that pacifist resistance to Franco would have been better worth trying. Suppose so; was there any chance of its happening? Were there any pacifists in Spain? did the Peace Army hurry out and start up a pacifist campaign? No. This is an armchair reflection, and is intended to be taken in a purely Pickwickian sense. It was an absolutely impossible alternative, things being what they were. At heart the pacifist is really quite unconcerned with "things as they are," that is why he really puts himself out of court. What was possible was a straight fight between Government and Rebels with no intervention from anyone. The Government would have won in a month, bloodshed would have ceased, and the Republic could have got down to the job of remaking Spain. That was the only practicable alternative to what actually happened.

The Bournemouth P.P.U. writes to me: "Supposing for a moment that, say, China was pacifist"; but what a ridiculous supposition! China was not pacifist, nor likely to be. One might just as well say: "Supposing for a moment that Japan was pacifist." It is just as probable. Bournemouth therefore is all against the Chinese resistance to Japan, and believes that they would do better to give in and hope ultimately to absorb their conquerors. Then "the China of the future would be enriched by Japanese culture," and that is all that would happen! Whereas now the Chinese "die fighting for the world's most potent idol—Nationality."

Not, of course, for genuine self-government, not for freedom from economic subjection, from the regimentation which will do all in its power to stamp out "dangerous thoughts," not for the possibility of building Socialism, not for all the rest of the world, which will otherwise be faced by a great Oriental imperialism threatening India, Russia, Australia, and China with complete economic and political subjection. All these details have escaped the Bournemouth P.P.U. The Chinese are to them only foolish jingoes.

Of course if China gave in it would "*stop the war.*" Of course if Russia disarmed no war between her and the capitalist Powers could take place, and Socialism would be overthrown and the permanent exploitation of the Russian people could be organized without difficulty. Shall we start a pacifist movement in Russia until we get enough people to join to break down effective resistance? What would be the instantaneous result of a greatly weakened Soviet Army? War! There is the short-run application that Joad speaks about; but we must not on that account, he says, abandon the advocacy of pacifism as a long-run policy.

The simple fact is that pacifism is not expected or intended to work to-day. The actual and unexpected effect is that it encourages and increases violence. Lawlessness and bullying, if they are not suppressed, increase, even though in the long run the slow dropping of water wears away the hardest stone and pacifist preaching will a million years hence convert the last criminal.

Joad is perfectly frank about it. "It is of course admitted that as a method of preventing war pure pacifism is at present negligible. . . . Pure pacifism is impracticable in the sense that the country will not conceivably adopt it. Hence it is not a policy but the negation of a policy." To which Rose Macaulay replies that "it would prevent war if everybody believed it," but goes on to admit "that countries are unlikely to adopt it for some time."

(4) Many pacifists consider that to use the League to restrain aggression is to abandon negotiation for force. Aldous Huxley believes that the aim of the League should

be "*to develop existing machinery for the peaceable settlement of international disputes,*" not to *plan forcible restraint of aggressors.* Lord Ponsonby argues that if the primary object of the League is to prevent war, it is perverse that it should contemplate the use of the very force it was intended to supersede.

Government spokesmen have supported this position. Lord Londonderry said in 1935, "In the Government's view the League is no war federation or confederation of states for the purpose of imposing its will upon any single nation or group of nations by the exercise of physical force. It exists for the pacific settlement of international disputes, not for the abolition of war by means of war."

But what is wanted to secure peace is not only arbitration but the power to compel it, and to compel acceptance of arbitrated judgment.

"A board of arbitrators who, for the general welfare of the race, are to be deprived of the power of putting their decisions into execution, will not be of much avail. There is only one thing worse than Injustice, and that is Justice without her sword in her hand. When Right is not Might, it is Evil."¹

To make the League merely a round table for discussion without the power to enforce decisions is to give *carte blanche* to the violence that refuses arbitration and makes its own might the sole authority.

Lord Londonderry by a subtle twist makes it appear that mutual defence is imposing our will upon another nation. As though preventing a dishonest neighbour from stealing were reprehensible because it would be imposing my will upon him, my will that I should not be robbed! The argument lasts as long as Lord Londonderry thinks that Germany can be relied upon to march Eastwards. When he threatens British interests he and his friends are unanimous for the rule of law upheld by force. But in the critical years when Fascism was spreading through Europe it was the pacifist argument which was used, and with devastating effect. With it was closely associated the policy of "isola-

¹ Oscar Wilde, *The Critic as Artist*.

tionism," the idea that Britain should mind her own business, and with the accusations of the National Government that supporters of League action were warmongers. In this connection Baldwin said:

"On many occasions they have urged the Government to take steps which would almost certainly have involved this country in war";

while the National Government candidate in the Willesden by-election said:

"A Socialist policy would involve us in wars in the Far East, in the Mediterranean, and the Continent of Europe—all apparently to be waged simultaneously and in the name of collective security; Peace is not to be won by this method, but by the restrained, practical policy of appeasement. I place the issue of peace or war as the issue of vital importance to every person in East Willesden. The National Government want peace; they are working for peace; they are keeping us at peace."

Truly a most pacifist speech!

Mr. Chamberlain said over Czechoslovakia that we were being asked to plunge all Britain into war for a distant country of which we know nothing. Pacifists warmly supported these arguments. The truth was that we were systematically breaking down all restraint on Fascist expansion. Every succeeding crisis made it clearer to Fascism that it was not going to be interfered with. The ultimate issue was bound to be world war the moment Fascism had secured its strategic frontiers and prepared itself for a final reckoning with its major rivals by disposing one by one of the smaller Powers. These smaller Powers fell into the pacifist trap of proclaiming their neutrality, and contracting out of all obligations for mutual defence. Great Britain could easily have held them together under her protection. However that was not her policy, and her encouragement of Fascism and pseudo-pacifist policy spread complete

demoralization in the face of Fascist advance throughout Europe.

“Rabbits nibbling in a field of clover display no concern when a weasel slips in among them. Seemingly their minds are developed no further than sufficient to feel brief personal alarm. Individually anxious, the rabbits hastily hop aside from the path the weasel is pursuing towards his selected victim. Crouched in hiding, they are still heedless to the piteous death-cry of their fellow. When the weasel has gone, the remaining rabbits soon present a tableau of contentment on the meadow, a pretty pastel in fawn and green.”¹

The rabbit is the perfect pacifist.

It was also urged that the threat of collective resistance was the substitution of violence for negotiation. But what is to be done when one side refuses negotiation and resorts to force? Surely this attempt to settle a dispute lawlessly must be resisted with the object of compelling a return to arbitration, not of settling the dispute by force. There are always individuals and nations who, being physically strong and doubting the justice of their cause, would prefer to get their own way by violence, refusing to submit their case to arbitration. They will do so *unless prevented*. To compel the strong to lay his case before a court and abide by the decision is not, as pacifists often claim, to substitute force for negotiation, but to insist on negotiation. It is the only way to satisfy Miss Macaulay's just desire to settle differences by reason and justice rather than by force. The legitimacy of a complaint cannot even be considered until such threats cease, otherwise concession is bound to be regarded as a surrender to such threats rather than to justice.

The litigant who presumes the award of justice in his favour forfeits all sympathy even from those who would have backed his case. For pacifists to excuse violence on the grounds that if the case had come into court they think Germany would have won, is really a most immoral pro-

¹ Nora Waln, *Reaching for the Stars*.

ceeding. It sweeps away all law and puts a premium on *lex talionis*, the law of the strongest. It is itself exactly what the pacifists are complaining about—the substitution of violence for negotiation. The consequence of such surrender to intimidation is not, as the pacifist supposes, an assuaging of aggression, but an exacerbation, almost certain to lead to war in the long run. Every concession to mere force results in increased contempt for those who should have interfered but have given in, and in greater rapacity and ruthlessness. The appetite grows by what it feeds on. The pacifist sometimes replies that this course does not necessarily lead to violence because the side against which the claims are made need not resist the threats of the aggrieved party. Appeasement, in other words, means conceding at once, without investigation and arbitration, the demands of the Fascist Powers. Pacifism thus renders a negotiated settlement of grievances impossible, for war is obviously a quicker and more certain way for a stronger Power at variance with a weaker.

If communities were living side by side with no mutually exclusive interests, there would be no reason why ordinary differences could not be adjusted. All that would be necessary in order to secure satisfactory arbitration would be a reduction of the psychological and racial causes of conflict, a willingness to give and take, a decline of truculence, an increase in goodwill. But what if the disease of racialism takes a firm hold on one community? What if the controversy cannot be settled by arbitration because one party will not submit? War is not mere fighting for its own sake. It is secondary and arises from divergent wills and interests. The field of negotiation must of course be extended, and it has been extended, by statesmen who were not pacifists. The prevention of war should always be our aim; but although prevention is better than cure, it cannot wholly supersede cure. We may fight to prevent typhoid by keeping the water pure, but we do not refuse to treat people if they get it. What happens if our machinery for settling disputes breaks down owing to the aggressive will to power of one

party? At this point it is no good lamenting the conflict and reaffirming one's preference for peaceful arbitration. The dispute will be settled one way or the other on this new and more painful level, and it is still our duty to see that injustice does not prevail, even though adjudication is no longer the method at our disposal. Nor does it become a more difficult problem to adjudicate upon when one side resorts to violence, so that we can with some justice decline to imbrue our hands in war on a dubious issue. On the contrary, however complex the original dispute, it now becomes crystal clear. The wrong is wholly on the side that has resorted to violence, whether on the original issue they were right or wrong. There is a clear and overwhelming obligation to bring that violence to naught and return the case to the bar of reason. Miss Macaulay expresses horror at a dispute being settled by murder, cruelty, bombing, and poison gas. I entirely agree. That is the method chosen by the law-breaker. What is Miss Macaulay going to do about it? Is she going to let him settle it by these cruel and irrational methods, or is she going to prevent him? If you do not prevent him—and only force can prevent him—then you allow him, and if you state in advance that you do not intend to prevent him, then you definitely encourage him—and both these things are what Miss Macaulay has chosen to do.

Max Plowman says :

*“War is an outrage upon the principles of social morality which every human being has an absolute duty to uphold. The pacifist simply says he will not willingly be a party to outrage upon those principles; he will not destroy man for the sake of society. When the family brawl turns to violence he walks out of the house.”*¹

But surely the way to deal with such an outrage is not to sacrifice society (i.e. all men) by refusing to destroy the homicidal criminal, not to walk out of the house the moment one member starts in on the rest with a hatchet, but to

¹ Max Plowman, *The Faith Called Pacifism*.

assist society to deal effectively with the criminal, to protect the innocent victims of assault. Note here again no *attempt* even to distinguish between the right and wrong of the dispute. According to Plowman it is just the violence that is wrong, whatever its motive, and whoever is using it. Both attacker and defender are equally condemned. Oblivious to injustice, regardless of the crime that it is within his power to prevent, deaf to the cries of the victim for help, the pacifist "walks out of the house."

Mr. Chamberlain's policy has been considered in some detail in the discussion of the Munich and post-Munich policy of the National Government. At the moment we are dealing with the question of appeasement in its more general aspects. Fascist aggression has not arisen out of any previous hostility and malicious attack coming from the victims, or any reason for anger with these victims, but from coldly conceived purposes and policies.

It is interesting to turn back and read the pre-war speeches of Government spokesmen in defence of isolation and against League action.

Sir John Simon says :

"In nothing has Mr. Chamberlain's leadership been more marked than in the resolute and positive efforts that he has made to reduce tension and to promote peace. The way of peace is to be found by seeking out causes of quarrel and misunderstanding and trying to remove them, and that is the course which the Prime Minister has been taking. By conducting our policy in this spirit Britain has the best opportunity of being a peacemaker. You can see an example of it in the influence we have been trying to exert without partisanship in Central Europe. You can see it in our determination to maintain our non-intervention in Spain."

Garvin said of those who urged the League to save China, "The moment Japan offended against their code they became as abusive of Japan as pre-war Cheltenham colonels were said to have been of Imperial Germany. Later the Fascist and Nazi regimes came in for the same torrent of un-

reasoned and provocative calumny. New internationalist was but old jingo writ large . . . the ill-feeling against Italy, deliberately engendered and maintained by the pacifists of this country, may yet produce another and entirely needless world war."

(I need hardly say that Mr. Garvin does not mean pacifists in the sense of those who hold the views criticized in this book; the latter, having caused no embarrassment to their Fascist dictators, receiving the full approval of Mr. Garvin.)

As late as April 4, 1938, Chamberlain describes the Peace Alliance then suggested by Soviet Russia in the following terms:

"This constitutes nothing less than a proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance between France, Russia and ourselves against some other Power or group of Powers. Is that what is called Collective Security? The party opposite never bother to look inside the bottle as long as the label outside is right. . . . I am amazed at their being able to bamboozle themselves into thinking that, if they take a pre-war alliance and mumble these words over it, they can change its character and the consequences which are bound to flow from it. . . . So far from making a contribution to peace, I say it would plunge us into war."

Earlier he had said, "We must not try to delude small, weak nations into thinking that they will be protected by the League against aggression."

Mr. Chamberlain has issued a whole volume of speeches in which he systematically argues the case against the League, and for appeasement along these lines.

On March 15, 1939, Sir John Simon argued against Mr. Eden's proposal to collect the nations into a peace bloc in the same terms. We could not, he said, enter into any general, undefined commitments. On such a principle any country might involve us in a great military excursion which our democracy might not support. We could not add to cases where interest and duty required us to act, a whole

list of cases the circumstances of which could not be judged. "That would mean handing over our foreign policy to the wisdom or unwisdom of other people."

All these statements played strongly on pacifist sentiment and secured a policy of non-intervention for Fascism. That the aims of British statesmen were, however, not in the least pacific is suggested by another parallel series of statements directed to Germany and encouraging her to take advantage of our refusal to interfere by moving Eastwards. This policy has also received considerable pacifist support on the grounds that Germany had been badly treated at Versailles and was suffering from overcrowding and economic strangulation.

Halifax strikes the keynote when he says: "No settlement by negotiations could be worse than a settlement achieved by war." That is to say he is prepared to concede *anything* in face of Germany's threat to fight. Anything, that is to say, as long as it is at someone else's expense, and that someone, finally, Russia. Mr. Chamberlain makes this perfectly clear in replying to Germany's claim for a free hand in Eastern Europe. He says, "We do not claim a special position for ourselves in Eastern Europe. We do not think of asking Germany to sacrifice her natural interests." Halifax again says, "We are willing to explore the whole problem of economic living space for Germany. *Any of her claims* are open to consideration round a table." (Our italics.) This was even to go so far as "adjustments" of frontiers. In other words they were prepared to "Munich" Hitler Eastwards bit by bit into Soviet Russia. This policy was abruptly reversed when Russia's pact with Germany slammed the door on further expansion in that direction. From that moment every argument on which they had based their policy of concessions is torn to shreds and contemptuously cast aside.

Chamberlain now says that mutual defence is *not* war-mongering. "It is not an act of menace to prepare to help friends to defend themselves against force." It is no longer meddling with countries of which we know nothing. "We

shall not be fighting for the political future of a far away city in a foreign land; we shall be fighting for the preservation of those principles of which I have spoken, the destruction of which would involve the destruction of all possibility of peace and security for the peoples of the world. We have tried to make it clear by word and deed that we are prepared to assist those countries which feel their independence immediately threatened and are ready to defend their freedom. In failing to uphold the liberties of others we run great risks of betraying the principle of liberty itself, and with it our own freedom and independence.”¹

Lord Halifax now says: “This country has stood for the maintenance of the independence of those States who both valued their liberties and were ready to defend them, and have endeavoured to uphold the principle that changes which must inevitably take place in the relations between nations can and should be effected peacefully and by free negotiation between those concerned. His Majesty’s Government accordingly entered into consultation with the countries who felt themselves to be more immediately threatened, *for the sole purpose of concerting resistance to further aggression if such should be attempted.*”² (Our italics.)

Five years ago at the time of the Abyssinian invasion, the Prime Minister, Mr. Baldwin, professed to be filled with apprehension over the prospect of fighting Italy alone, with fifty nations co-operating on our side in order to uphold these very principles, yet to-day (April 1940), a distinguished diplomatic correspondent expresses astonishment “at the calmness with which the prospect of seeing Italy in our list of enemies is regarded in official circles, both in London and Paris.” He continues:

“Soon after the concentration of the British fleet in the Mediterranean I happened to be in Berlin. Every German official with whom I discussed the matter said

¹ Speech in House of Commons, August 24, 1939.

² Speech in House of Lords, August 24, 1939.

this was the end of Mussolini and the beginning of an era of effective League control. 'It means,' they said, 'that Germany will have to return to Geneva.' Instead, as we all know, Hitler was able to march unopposed into the Rhineland."

The judgment of history will surely be that it was this policy begun by Baldwin, and carried on by Chamberlain, that laid the train of events which made the present war inevitable.

Norman Angell says:

"One recalls those arguments: undertakings to defend victims of aggression in various parts of the world make every local quarrel a world quarrel; it is a false principle to hope to 'secure peace by threatening war,' for then peace reposes upon coercion instead of conciliation, the coercion of the stronger party to the dispute. The very men who thus argued for so long are the very men whose task it now is to persuade the world that we stand to the death for the contrary principle of refusing to acquiesce in aggression and of defending its victim wherever we can."

Thus pacifist sentiment was exploited for a policy which every pacifist must abhor, and which led inevitably and directly to the second World War. This was only possible because the Government based its case on the false conclusions of the pacifist argument against collective security.

CHAPTER X

RUSSIA¹

“IN THE realm of international relations the Soviet Union has always had before it two perspectives which, according to its lights, are as one. The Soviet Union wants peace throughout the world, because its firmest desire is that all peoples remain free to march toward democracy and to its fullest extension, socialism. It wants peace in order that it may itself be free to devote its energies to the development of its own economic and cultural life. The Soviet Union needs neither war nor imperialism.

“But the Soviet Union has never been pacifist, nor has it ever been tolerant of aggression. It has faced a dozen world situations, and it has reserved the right to examine each as it arises, each as it bears upon the others. In so doing the Soviet Union has never failed to analyse every combination of international forces, every war and every rumour of war, with a perspicacity which came to the peoples of the world sooner or later. Before, during, and immediately after the last war, the Bolsheviki saw it for what the rest of the world, *ex post facto*, admitted it to be.” (*New Masses*.)

Corresponding to the fundamental transformation of the international situation since the last war there have been three main phases of Soviet foreign policy, directed in turn by the three Commissars for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, Litvinov, and Molotov.

¹ This is not the place to bring forward all the evidence for the achievements of the Soviet Union and its essentially democratic methods of government. This will be found in such books as the Webbs' *Soviet Communism*, the Dean of Canterbury's *Socialist Sixth of the World*, Pat Sloan's *Russia Without Illusions*, and, an older book, Sir Bernard Pares' *Moscow Admits a Critic*.

The first phase was the period of imperialist war, including the post-war period, during which the League was merely a Franco-British bloc still pursuing imperialist aims.

The second phase corresponds to the rise of Fascism as a two-edged movement threatening social democracy on the one hand and Franco-British imperialism on the other. During this period there is a partial identity of interests between the weaker, threatened colonial countries, Abyssinia, China, Spain, the working classes of the capitalist democracies, and even certain capitalist elements in these countries. All were for peace, for non-aggression, for the restraint of expanding Fascism. Under these conditions two things become possible—firstly, a “popular front” or temporary union of all anti-Fascist forces, pursuing a home policy for the preservation of democracy and a foreign policy for the preservation of peace by a united stand against aggression; secondly, a revival of the League as a genuine instrument of collective security. At this point it becomes not only possible but inevitable for Russia to join forces with all those who sincerely desired these objects, hence her entry into the League.

But, as we have shown, British capitalism was divided. It was alarmed at the Fascist threat to its imperial interests, but at the same time approved its anti-democratic policy, its hostility to Socialism and the Soviet Union. As a bulwark against Bolshevism it must be supported, as a menace to Britain it must be checked. If during that period the anti-Fascist forces could really have presented a united front—if, that is to say, there had been an internal victory for the Left, as there was (for a moment) in France, followed by a genuine line-up against Fascism in the League, with the full Soviet support that was available—both peace and democracy could have been preserved. The struggle for this solution continued from 1934 to 1938, and was finally and signally defeated by Chamberlain at Munich. We were slow to see that this marked the end of an epoch and that the former policy must now be abandoned. Chamberlain's success was the immediate occasion of a tremendous Fascist

advance in Spain, in France, and in South-East Europe. Moreover, it isolated Russia and turned against her the full threat of Fascist aggression. It was full time for a drastic Soviet move. Hence the third phase of Soviet Foreign Policy. This corresponds to the defeat of the Popular Front movements in France and Great Britain (Southport, 1939), the final disintegration of the League, and the culmination of the German war preparations in a final onslaught. It depended now entirely on the Soviet Union whether that onslaught fell on Russia or the Western Powers. Let us make no mistake. It need not have fallen on either. If the policy supported by Russia had succeeded there would have been no aggression at all; Germany could have been checked. Chamberlain and Daladier saw to it that this policy was wrecked, that Fascism was encouraged to make its assault, and the failure of the liberal and democratic movements of Britain and France is in turn responsible for their success. Presumably Britain and France did not intend aggression to be directed against them. Against whom, then, if not Russia, did they expect it to be directed? The abrupt turn of Soviet policy did not start the second world war, it merely saw to it that it recoiled on those who were wholly responsible for starting it, and not on the one Power that had done more than anyone else to prevent it.

Russia's role in international affairs has for more than twenty years been consistently pacific without being unrealistic. Her claims have been recognized by her worst enemies. Lord Cranborne said (1935):

“The conclusion to which I personally came, and it is the conclusion to which I believe most independent observers come, is that the German idea of a military Russian peril is an absolute myth, and I find the greatest difficulty in believing that the German General Staff really believe it themselves.”

Yet the fact that Russia is at the same time very heavily armed gives occasion to the enemy to blaspheme and to

pacifist reproaches. A short account of Russia's peace policy will provide an illustration of the arguments we have advanced so far and will introduce the question, the place of physical force in building Socialism.

Not only the pacifists but Conservatives frequently criticize the Soviet Union for its armaments. It is argued that she has become as much a military Power as Germany; that huge armaments are necessarily aggressive and have now been used to stab Poland in the back; that recently there has been a great change of tone in Russia, internationalism giving place to a nationalism as fervid as that under the Czar. Pacifists say that to advocate a war of defence and to prepare for it is in no way different from the policy of Germany and Italy, who also declare that their armaments are solely for defence. Russia is as much dedicated to war as the Fascist Powers, for, like them, she is armed to the teeth and prepared to fight. There is only one way in which Russia could persuade us of the sincerity of her pacific professions, and that is by disarming. The Socialists are reproached by their opponents for supporting the rearmament of Russia while criticizing the rearmament proposals of the Government.

A great deal of this argument is sheer sophistry, and the Conservative knows it, if the pacifist does not. Ask the Conservative critic whether our own rearmament was a sign of aggression. He will reply at once that it was for defence alone, and he has plenty of arguments to back up his contention. But if Great Britain has reason to rearm the reasons of Russia are tenfold. *The Times* says: "If any country has reason to fear invasion it is Russia." Hitler never threatened Great Britain. On the contrary, both in his writings and speeches he went out of his way to establish friendship with this country—even though his real aim was then, on the basis of peace with us, to attack elsewhere. Russia on the other hand has been continually threatened.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler says:

"The right to the soil becomes a duty, if without

expansion of territory a great people seems destined to destruction. But when we speak to-day of new soil in Europe we can in the first instance only think of Russia and the border states subordinate to her. . . . The giant empire in the East is ripe for collapse. And the end of the Jewish rule in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a state."

Hitler at Nuremberg points to the conquest of Russia as the only cure for Germany's economic depression:

If we had the Urals, and Siberia, and the wheatfields, of the Ukraine, we would be swimming in plenty instead of having to fight for our existence.

As we have shown, the whole policy not only of Hitler, but of his friends in England and France, has been to guarantee peace in the West if Hitler can only be persuaded to explode to the East.

Lenin saw the peril of Russia from the very first when he said, "Remember that we are surrounded by people, classes, governments, that openly express the most profound hatred for us. It must be remembered that we are always a hair's breadth removed from invasion."

Russia has held off Japan simply by reason of her preparedness and her clearly and forcibly expressed determination to fight if invaded. Russia therefore has every reason for arming and every reason is a defensive one.

Russia remembers how, after the revolution, one Government after another came to the help of the Czarist Generals, until, as in Spain yesterday, a counter-revolution became a great invasion. Ten foreign armies operated on Soviet soil between 1918 and 1921. Yet it was Soviet Russia which towards the end of the War proposed a peace based on no annexations and no indemnities, a proposal ignored by both sides.

Russia desires peace for two main reasons: because she needs no territory or raw materials on the one hand and no foreign market for surplus production on the other. She

already has an enormous domestic demand, and she has an economic system that makes it ever expanding. In a Socialist system consumption can always keep pace with production, for as fast as goods are made, the money goes into the pockets of the people for purchasing them. Secondly, they want peace in order to get on with their colossal task of building Socialism. War is now the only serious obstacle likely to stand in the way of increasingly rapid progress, hence Russia is most desperately anxious to maintain peace. For Fascism, on the contrary, war is an economic and political necessity.

It is sometimes said that the aim of Communism is world revolution, and that when Russia has breathing space she will use her armies to impose her system on the rest of the world. This, however, was the heresy of Trotsky, for which he was eventually expelled from the Soviet Union. It was the question over which he differed fundamentally from Stalin, who believed in the possibility of "building Socialism in one country." Of course every Socialist believes that eventually every other country will adopt Socialism, but it will do so when its own people decide and not before. Stalin said to Roy Howard:

"If you think that the people of the Soviet Union have any desire themselves, and moreover, by force, to alter the face of surrounding states, you are badly mistaken. Naturally they desire that the face of surrounding states should change, but this is the business of those states themselves."

Revolution cannot be carried abroad in suit-cases! Unrest is not due to Bolshevik "agitators," but to the existence of misery, oppression, and discontent which governments either cannot or will not remedy.

There has been a considerable growth of Russian national consciousness and patriotic feeling in the past few years. Have we anything to fear from it? There is nothing menacing in true patriotism. It is only its perversion and abuse, especially under the pressure of monopoly Capitalism, that

leads to imperialism. There is very great love for their country and pride in her achievements in Russia to-day, but there is no desire either to absorb other countries for the sake of exploitation or to increase the area of the Soviet Union, therefore Russia is not imperialist. The necessity for controlling such danger points as the strategic positions in the Baltic which actually threaten Leningrad does not in the least compare with the imperialist policy of drawing tribute from subject races. Further, as far as the Soviet Union is concerned, we have two parallel patriotisms: love for the Soviet Union and love for the separate nations making up that union. Local or national patriotism has been encouraged. The independent republics speak their native languages and develop their own cultural heritage. There are great differences between the Uzbeks and the Russians, the Khirgiz and the Ukrainians. There are many different races in the Union and as fresh countries become Socialist there will be many more, but the patriotism of the Georgian or Armenian does not lessen his pride in being a Soviet citizen or make him strive for Georgian advance at the expense of neighbouring Armenia. Nor does the greater size and importance of Russia proper (the largest of the Union Republics) mean that she uses her greater strength to the disadvantage of her smaller neighbours. In the Soviet Constitution the Second Chamber, called the Council of Nationalities, consists of equal numbers of representatives from the smallest and the largest republics, and no law can be passed without its consent. In the Council of Nationalities the representatives of Russia could be quite outvoted by the Ukrainians, the Georgians, the Armenians and the Uzbeks. In the Treaty of Union, signed in 1922, are these words: "Only in the camp of the Soviets has it been found possible to root out national persecution, to create conditions of mutual trust, and to lay the foundations of fraternal co-operation." In his great speech on the new Constitution, Stalin seeks to explain how this peaceful federation of States has been made possible. It is to be explained:

“By the absence of exploiting classes, which are the principal organizers of strife between nations; the absence of exploitation, which cultivates mutual distrust and kindles nationalist passions; the fact that power is in the hands of the working class, which is an enemy of all enslavement and the true vehicle of the ideas of internationalism; the actual practice of mutual aid among the peoples in all spheres of economic and social life; and, finally, the flourishing national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., culture which is national in form and Socialist in content—all these and similar factors have brought about a radical change in the aspect of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.; their feeling of mutual distrust has disappeared, a feeling of mutual friendship has developed among them, and thus real fraternal co-operation between the peoples has been established within the system of a single federated State.”

The pacifist should consider in the case of Russia what a strong inducement there is to defend the country against invasion, how real that threat of invasion is, and how genuinely defensive a war to preserve Socialism against invasion and intervention would be. The pacifist has learnt the Socialist lesson that the exploited worker has no fatherland, so that in a capitalist war, while he will be told that he is fighting for “*his* country,” he may really be fighting for the shareholders in a great oil monopoly. But in a Socialist society, defending its achievements against the attempt of encircling Fascist and capitalist nations to restore Capitalism, the worker is really defending *his* country and *his* interests. It was on my first visit to Russia in 1931 that I finally abandoned my own pacifist position. I saw there so much of value laboriously built up by the workers themselves in the face of tremendous odds—new schools, a great public health service, great trade unions, new industries owned by the workers themselves—I saw all the eagerness and hope of a new civilization free from the obstruction of privilege. I saw, on the other hand, a growing hostility

and contempt in capitalist Europe, and I felt with the Russians the frightful peril of all that they had won being ruthlessly torn from them, as Franco has torn from Spain the social institutions of the young Republic. I saw the possibility of schools being closed, workers dismissed from universities, the public-health system abandoned, exploitation, unemployment, and harsh oppression re-established, and I felt, for the first time in my life, that here was something which had got to be defended, and that I would myself without a moment's hesitation take my place alongside my Russian comrades if, perchance, the need should arise even while I was in Russia. Perhaps the popularity of pacifism in this country is because we have no similar achievements of our own to fight for.

Russia is certainly prepared, and well prepared. Everywhere one sees evidences of a mass determination to fight for Socialism should Russia be invaded. There is, of course, conscription, but conscientious objectors are allowed to serve by draining swamps, fighting forest fires and epidemics, and in similar work of national importance. Under the Czar conscription was hated. To-day men are not unwilling to serve. Of the 1,800,000 young men called up each year, 600,000 enter the Regular Army; the others are either drafted into the "Territorials" or exempted for health reasons or on special grounds such as being the sole support of their families. The Army is a school of culture and citizenship, not merely a military force. The greatest care is taken to prevent an officer caste growing up which regards itself as separate from or in any way superior to other people or the rank and file. Red Army men (the word soldier is never used, because of its associations with the Czarist army) retain their full rights as citizens and take part in all elections. The educational system is exceptionally thorough, and in every military centre there are club-houses, school-rooms, lecture courses, libraries, theatres, and cinemas. Every recruit is put through an educational course lasting throughout his period of service, in which he is taught geography, history, economics, and social service. All the

men are taught to sing, and all who want to can learn to play a musical instrument. The Red Army oath is significant:

“I, son of the working people, a citizen of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, take upon myself the proud calling of warrior in the Red Army. I promise before the working-class of the Soviets and of the whole world to carry this title with honour, to master conscientiously the science of war, and to protect as the apple of my eye the property of the people from theft and destruction. I promise to observe the revolutionary discipline, to obey strictly all orders of the commanders. I promise to refrain and to restrain my comrades from every act unworthy of a Soviet citizen, to direct all my actions and thoughts to the great goal of the liberation of all toilers. I promise at the first call to spring to the defence of the nation, and, in the fight for the Soviet Union, the cause of Socialism, and the brotherhood of all people, to spare neither my strength nor my life. If through evil intent I violate this solemn oath let universal contempt be my lot, and may the stern hand of revolutionary law punish me.”

There is something to reflect on here.

This army is not developing a Fascist spirit, but a democratic spirit; nor did its early achievements, the victory over counter-revolution, turn the Russians into Chauvinists or counter-revolutionaries. Conscription here does not mean the end of liberty. Liberty grows alongside it, and also within the army. Once again we are compelled to distinguish between force used for ignoble ends and the force necessary to restrain criminal violence. There is no evidence whatever of degradation in the Red Army, or of “militarism” fastening itself on the nation and pulling it backwards to a condition of regimentation and love of aggression. There is no hard-and-fast line between this army and the people. The soldier is now a civilian, the civilian now a soldier. It is a nation of equals under arms. The Red

Army is simply the first-line defence, the part specially trained and ready for action.

Martha Dodd says of the Red Army:

“They were all so simple, so inconspicuously dressed, so modest and even careless in appearance, I could hardly believe they were part of the formidable Soviet Red Army. There was no provocative or insolent behaviour, no militaristic propaganda and fanfare; there was a complete lack of arrogance and exhibitionism which I had come to believe, after my German residence, necessary adjuncts to a military machine. Where was this terrible regimentation I had heard so much about? How could it be so prevalent if even the highest expression of regimentation—the army—was conspicuously without it?”¹

If we allow ourselves to be put out of countenance by the sophistry that the defence of Socialism is “the same thing as” Fascist aggression, we shall find that we are simply being persuaded not to defend ourselves. “The Russian worker is a vicious animal. He defends himself when attacked.” But if the British worker is fooled by this sort of argument, it will not be in the interests of pacifism, but in order that, confused and morally intimidated, he may be rendered helpless before his masters. I am reminded of an old German fable.

“A hungry fox met a hedgehog, which is a timid, harmless creature living on grubs. Seeing that his prickles made him safe from attack the fox challenged him thus: ‘I thought you were supposed to be a peaceful animal and intended no harm. How is it then that you are all covered over with these horrible prickles?’ ‘They are only to protect me,’ said the hedgehog. ‘Bah!’ replied the fox, ‘I have heard that story before. The snake, no doubt, says that his poison-fangs are only for “self-defence.” The tiger’s claws and teeth are merely for protection, I sup-

¹ Martha Dodd, *My Years in Germany*.

pose.' At this the hedgehog felt very much ashamed and meekly divested himself of his prickles. Whereupon the fox devoured him."

The Russian worker, however, is tough and is merely amused at capitalist taunts. Pacifism in Russia is not argued and is not a movement. It is held, where it is found, purely as a religious and ascetic creed, without any relation to actual results or political aims.

When Lord Baldwin reproached the Socialist worker with objecting to British rearmament while supporting Russia's defence measures, the answer was simple. If we had been sure that our rearmament had the same intention as Russia's, we would have supported it; but in view of the encouragement to Fascist aggression which the Government, calling for rearmament, afforded, how could we believe that they were intending to lead us against it? No doubt it would have pleased Baldwin to see the Russian workers disarmed and the British workers conscripted for the unknown purposes of the National Government, but our views were different.

The history of Russia's foreign policy since the Revolution shows how consistently Communist principles of international morality have been put into practice. They began by renouncing all the concessions and privileges which their predecessors had enjoyed in foreign countries.

In 1920 treaties were signed with Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, formerly parts of Czarist Russia, recognizing their independence "by virtue of the principle proclaimed by the Federal Socialist Republic of the Russian Soviets, which establishes the right to self-determination for all nations, even to total separation from the States with which they have been incorporated." Poland, after an attempt to conquer the Ukraine in 1920 which nearly lost her Warsaw, held large areas of what had formerly been Czarist territory, but Russia concluded a pact of non-aggression with her in 1932. Bessarabia (seized by Roumania), although it belonged to Russia, was not made a bone of con-

tion. The unequal treaties concluded between Czarist Russia and Eastern countries were all scrapped. Persia was set entirely free from her crippling engagements to Czarist Russia and all her debts were cancelled. Outer Mongolia is not, as is often supposed, a protectorate of Russia. It is an independent Republic with its territorial integrity guaranteed by Russia. With regard to China, Soviet Russia returned all territory seized by the Czar, renounced the Boxer indemnity and all extra-territorial rights.¹

Up to this point Russia had been definitely hostile to the League, regarding it as the Continuation Committee of the Allies to consolidate their gains and stave off world revolution. The further aim, to prevent future wars, was at this time definitely in the background. Chicherin's famous Note to President Wilson on the League of Nations, a masterpiece of irony, sets forth Soviet policy up to her entry into the League. This change was not due to a change of mind, but to the rapid and unexpected development of events. The Japanese aggression in Manchuria, the rise of Fascism in Germany, the alarm felt by the League Powers when Japan and Germany both left the League obviously to untie their hands for rearmament and aggression, created a sudden awareness of the League's potential powers as a preventive of European war, now for the first time since 1918 definitely on the horizon.

The stages by which Russia approached full membership of the League are of considerable interest. In 1927 Russia entered the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference and at once proposed "the dissolution of all land, sea and air forces." This was rejected. As one delegate pointed out, if armies were dissolved, "an extremely serious danger of internal disorder, insurrection, risings, and revolutions" would arise. Russia alone was prepared to take this risk. Disappointed in this proposal, Litvinov suggested an all-round cut of 50 per cent, which was perfectly prac-

¹ For a detailed account including the relations of Soviet Russia with the Baltic States, Turkey, Afghanistan and Roumania see C. M. Lloyd's essay in *The Intelligent Man's Way to Prevent War*.

licable in view of the fact that there was no aggressor nation at that time anywhere in sight. This was rejected too. In 1932 Russia again proposed partial disarmament, including the abolition of all aggressive weapons such as tanks, long-range artillery, ships over 10,000 tons, naval guns over 12 inches, aircraft carriers, heavy bombing-planes, and chemical warfare. Neither this nor any other proposal, from whatever source, was accepted by the Conference, largely owing to the obstinacy of the British representatives, who blocked every move.

In 1934 the League was for the first time since the War definitely moving in the direction of protecting non-aggressors against the rising menace of the Fascist States, two of which had withdrawn from the League, and Russia joined "to test it as an instrument of peace." From then until 1938 she played a full part in every attempt to make the League effective. The ultimate failure of the League was no reflection on the thoroughness and sincerity of the Russian participation.

In 1933 Litvinov had welcomed treaty revision, but "only if this revision can be brought about by peaceful means on the basis of voluntary agreements, and only if having removed the injustices in the existing treaties no new and perhaps even greater injustices are perpetuated in the new agreements." In the same speech he pointed out that Germany had threatened not only to recover the territory lost by the Versailles Treaty, not only to conquer lands where there were German minorities, "but by fire and sword she had to carve a way for herself for expansion in the East without stopping at the frontiers of the U.S.S.R." Although Hitler had laid down this policy before assuming power, he had never repudiated these aims. Germany had asked Russia what was necessary in order that there might be good relations between them. Litvinov had replied, "We have declared that we don't want German territory and that we shall not assist others if they attack Germany. We should be glad if Germany could say the same to us." Germany, at that time, refused.

When Germany was demanding equality of armaments, Litvinov pointed out that arms were not being demanded for defensive purposes, but by a nation proclaiming its intention of aggressive war and refusing guarantees of security to neighbouring States.

When it became apparent that complete international solidarity would not be secured in time to prevent war, Litvinov proposed that groups of nations occupying positions of special danger should unite to defend those regions, so that a would-be aggressor could be met by combined resistance. It was to be anticipated that the expectation of almost certain defeat would lessen the danger of the violation of peace. Such local pacts, however, were to function within the framework of the League. The first pact of this kind was the Franco-Soviet Pact of May 2, 1935, and it was hoped by the Russians that others would follow. Russia has been careful to add to her bilateral pacts a clause to the effect that should either party be guilty of aggression, the second party is not bound by the pact, but is free to fulfil its commitments under any system of collective security to which it may belong. Litvinov severely criticized the very different bilateral pacts proposed by Hitler (as an alternative to collective security), the intended effect of which was to guarantee the neutrality of one Power while he was attacking another. Russia was careful to point out that the regional mutual-assistance pacts which she proposed were not military alliances, because they were no cases directed against any country, but only against an unprovoked violation of peace. The Franco-Soviet Pact actually invited other countries, including Germany, to join it.

In 1935 Litvinov coined the famous phrase "the indivisibility of peace." The occasion was the debate at Geneva on Abyssinia. He pointed out that if the League repeated in this case its failure to apply the relevant articles of the Covenant against the aggressor, as it had once before failed in the case of Japan, this would "encourage the outbreak of new conflicts more directly involving the whole

of Europe. The principle of the indivisibility of peace is fortunately receiving more and more recognition." You cannot, as he put it, set a light to one side of a haystack. Potemkin added two months later: "There is no difference between a conflict in Africa and one in Europe, and if we want to prevent a world catastrophe we must adopt a collective front against war wherever it breaks out."

Russia has never considered it inconsistent with a thorough-going peace policy, but an essential part of it, to make it abundantly clear that she was prepared to offer instant and determined resistance to any aggression against her.

Following Hitler's threatening speech at Nuremberg in 1936, Voroshilov, after reminding his hearers that Russia was still ready for complete disarmament, said, "We have one intention, one firm will, that if the enemy attacks the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet White Russia, or any other part of the Soviet Union, we shall, far from allowing the enemy to enter our fatherland, strike him on the territory whence he came."

Litvinov has pointed out that when the Japanese attack on Manchuria started in 1931, one real threat of sanctions by the League, or one conference between England, America, and the Soviet Union, would have been enough for Japan to have retreated at once and dropped her prey. Germany would have retreated when she occupied the Rhineland in 1936. Italy has declared that she was in mortal fear of a serious attempt to keep her out of Abyssinia, and would have desisted under naval pressure. It would have been sufficient for France and Great Britain to encircle the Spanish coast for intervention to have ceased without a single shot, without the slightest risk of war.

"Decisive actions or even decisive words at one of these moments would have sufficed for the remaining and subsequent moments never to have arrived at all."

Litvinov replying to Hitler at Geneva, said:

"The aggressor, who is basing all his policy on superiority in brute material force, with only threatening

demands, bluff, menaces and the tactics of *faits accomplis* in the arsenal of his diplomacy, is accessible only to the voice of a policy no less firm than his own, and to a cold calculation of the relative strength of forces. Any exhortations and entreaties, and still more concessions to his illegal and senseless demands, any economic bribes offered to him, merely produce on him an impression of weakness, confirm his consciousness of his own power, and encourage him to further intransigence and illegalities."

The Soviet attitude to Japan has been conciliatory to the last degree. Provocations which would long ago have led to war in Western Europe have been stoically endured. The Chinese Eastern Railway was sold to Japan for next to nothing. Japan has threatened, bullied, intrigued, occupied Manchuria, and invaded Mongolia, fomented frontier incidents, and loudly proclaimed the necessity for war with Russia, the conquest of the Far Eastern (Soviet) Republic, and the ending thereby of the Bolshevist menace to the East. With endless patience Russia has refrained from retaliation. But, on the other hand, she has shown no weakness. She has made it perfectly clear that her far Eastern frontiers will remain inviolate. When Japan laid claim to the hill of Changkufeng, near Lake Hassan and Vladivostok, which was clearly shown as Russian territory on all the official maps, her invading army met with instant and powerful resistance and was flung back. Japan instantly capitulated. Japanese aggression in Mongolia was met by similar resistance. It was doubtless a trial of strength to see whether Russia would and could at any point really fight. The moment this was put beyond the bounds of doubt, instead of a major war developing from this local incident, the whole idea of war against Russia was dropped. The foreign Press reactions were instructive, and revealed a new and wholesome respect for the Soviet Union. Vorshilov followed up this success with a stern warning to Japan that what they had got was only a slight foretaste

of what was to come if they attempted a large-scale attack in Soviet territory.

“We do not know, however, how good is the memory of these gentlemen (the Japanese Generals), how well they learn their lessons. But if the object-lesson at Lake Hassan is insufficient, if the enemy is capable of forgetting the crushing force of Soviet arms and the heroism of the Red Fighters and their commanders, we must tell them: Gentlemen, what you have received at Hassan are only the ‘blossoms,’ but the ‘fruits,’ the red ‘fruits,’ are still ahead. Let those whom it behoves not to forget, remember that we are not at all obliged always to limit the actions of our troops to the district which the enemy stealthily and impudently attacks. On the contrary, it is more handy and easier for us to smash the enemy on his own territory. And so it will be—we shall answer any attack and blow by triple blows of the entire might of our valiant Red Army.”¹

With the refusal of Great Britain to allow sanctions to be pressed against Italy, the question of League revision came to the fore. It was proposed to make the League acceptable to the Fascist Powers by eliminating Article 10, guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the constituent nations, and Article 16, which provided for sanctions and military measures against aggression. The object of the League, it was argued, should be simply conference and arbitration, not concerted action involving war. In the course of the debate, references to the “bankruptcy” of the League had been made. Litvinov replied:

“If we speak of bankruptcy, there can be talk only about the bankruptcy of the policy of those States which, in words, accepted the Soviet proposals, made declaration after declaration regarding collective security, about the indivisibility of peace, about the inviolable principles of

¹ Voroshilov, speaking at the November 7th celebrations in Moscow, 1938.

the League of Nations, about regional pacts, but which, in actual practice, sabotaged these ideas; we can but talk about bankruptcy of the policy of those Governments that presume that preparation for a rebuff to openly planned aggression can be made only with the consent and participation of the deliberate instigators of that aggression; of the Governments that ignored the violation of international agreements and indisputable acts of aggression, that humoured those guilty of these acts, and flattered them in the hope that they would be satiated with their successes and would say: 'We will sin no more.'

"But history teaches that aggression and expansion are insatiable. *Every success, every concession that he gets, is used by the aggressor for further attack. The policy of weakness and compliance has, regarding the aggressors, merely led to more impudence.*"

To the criticism that Germany and Italy did not like the League as at present constituted and would not rejoin unless the offending Articles were removed, Litvinov replied in the words we have already quoted in part:

"Of course, a State which openly exalts the power of the sword as against international obligations, for which it does not conceal its contempt; a power which cynically calls on the other States to adopt the same contemptuous attitude to their signature at the foot of treaties, with the object of finally destroying international confidence—*such a power cannot feel comfortable in a League of Nations which proclaims one of its principal aims to be 'the maintenance of justice and the scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another.'*

"A State which is governed by men who have incorporated into the programme of their foreign policy the conquest of other nations' territory, who at their festivities, before their people and the representatives of other States, enumerate the vast territories which they intend violently to separate from other countries, cannot sincerely accept

Article 10, which ensures to all member States their territorial integrity and political independence.

"A State which preaches the legality of so-called 'localized' wars cannot make its peace with Article 16, which proclaims that resort to war against one member of the League is deemed to be an act of war against all other members of the League, and which prescribes a graduated system of sanctions against the aggressor.

"I would ask the supporters of 'universality at any price': must we sacrifice all the fundamental principles of the League in order to adapt it to the theory and practice of such a State, or must we invite the latter itself to adapt its principles to the present ideology of the League?

"My reply, at any rate, is: *better a League without universality than universality without League principles.*"

Critics are already saying *à propos* Russia's action in Finland, "Physician, heal thyself." Russia has been compelled to take single-handed action precisely because the system of pooled security long advocated by her in the League has been so emphatically rejected. The alternative to collective security is not to sit shivering behind one's frontiers while one's opponents prepare to march in but to take prompt action to counter any probable move. In a world war Russia might well anticipate a repetition of the attack on Leningrad which the Allies supported in 1918. In the face of what the Military Correspondent of an important paper calls "The natural and not altogether unjustifiable fears" of the Russian Government the determination to see the removal of the Finnish fortifications, which might be used by any invading army, is surely understandable when we remember that they are within artillery range of Leningrad. Russia only demanded control of strategic points which in the eyes of every military expert were a serious menace to Russia.

Russia has pointed out again and again that the entire diplomacy of the Western Powers resolved itself into an

avoidance of every serious opposition to Germany's aggressive intentions, and into compliance with her demands, fearing to arouse her dissatisfaction and disapproval even in the slightest degree. This naturally encouraged Germany to push her claims to the utmost. But once again it must be made clear, as indeed events subsequent to Litvinov's just warning in 1935 have shown conclusively, that when States with unlimited aggressive ambitions are acting on the world arena, openly talking of their striving to dominate whole continents, to enslave and even exterminate whole peoples and races, and are never seriously opposed, not a single State, however strong and remote it may be, can be guaranteed against being overwhelmed by the floods of frenzied aggression.

Why, then, was action never taken, never even threatened? Why the sabotage of the League, the persistent policy of retreat? Pacifists frequently suppose that it was simply the profound desire for peace on the part of Mr. Chamberlain and the National Government. This is not the case, though Mr. Chamberlain was only able to carry his policy through by means of genuine pacifist support. The real reasons were: firstly, the conviction that Fascism is the last barrier between Western Europe and Socialism; if it is resisted it may collapse and we shall have a Socialist Germany; secondly, Conservatives are wholly averse to co-operation with the Soviet Union, and yet this was essential if collective security was to succeed; thirdly, if war did break out it was hoped that it would be between Germany and the Soviet Union, and that it would have the desirable results of destroying Bolshevism and at the same time weakening Germany.

Litvinov was contemptuous of a "neutrality" that really meant war. Certain States, such as Belgium, contracted out of their League obligations and declared for neutrality. They meant, of course, that they no longer expected to be required to play any part in restraining German aggression, though it is not so clear that they no longer expected to be saved from such aggression should they fall victims to it.

They failed to realize they had really rejected the assistance of the League, and had virtually invited aggression.

It is sometimes supposed that the main purpose of the collective security desired by Russia was her own protection, so that the only result of the policy which refused any sort of Peace Alliance would be that she was isolated and unassisted. That is not quite the case. It is not a matter of isolating the Soviet Union, but of isolating the other countries of Europe so as to make them defenceless and submissive to the aggressor. Other nations can therefore weigh the advantages which can be derived from close co-operation with Russia, and if they are wise, they will understand that Russia can give more than she will receive.

On September 21, 1938, Litvinov delivered his last great speech at the Assembly of the League of Nations. It was to be his swan-song. In it he stressed the enormous responsibility which rested on those who were prepared finally to abandon the League. He said:

“At a moment when the mines are being laid to blow up the organization on which were fixed the great hopes of our generation, and which stamped a definite character on the international relations of our epoch; at a moment when, by no accidental coincidence, decisions are being taken outside the League which recall to us the international transactions of pre-war days, and which are bound to overrun all present conceptions of international morality and treaty obligations; at a moment when there is being drawn up a further list of sacrifices to the god of aggression, and a line is being drawn under the annals of all post-war international history, with the sole conclusion that nothing succeeds like aggression—at such a moment, every State must define its role and its responsibility before its contemporaries and before history. That is why I must plainly declare here that the Soviet Government bears no responsibility whatsoever for the events now taking place, and for the fatal consequences which may inexorably ensue.”

His last warning was that in seeking to avoid a problematic war to-day at the price of assuaging the appetites of insatiable aggressors by surrendering to them the weaker nations of Europe, we were making certain a large public-scale war to-morrow. Events have proved him to be right.

It is a mistake to imagine that the Soviet Union stands or falls by the League of Nations. We should remember the careful words which explained her entry. Stalin said in 1933:

“. . . the League may become something of a brake to retard the outbreak of military action or to hinder them. If this is so and if the League could prove to be somewhat of an obstruction that could, even to a certain extent, hinder the business of war, and help in any degree to further the cause of peace, then we are not against the League. Yes, if historical events follow such a course then it is not impossible that we should support the League of Nations in spite of its colossal defects.”

Three days later Molotov said:

“Even the League of Nations has, to a certain extent, stood in the way of the ‘liberty’ of the interventionists. It must be recognized that the League of Nations has exerted a certain restraining influence upon those forces which are preparing for war.”

Hence Russia joined “to test it as an instrument of peace.”

As we have shown, no nation could have tried more earnestly and persistently to make effective the League system of collective security, but when this was as persistently and thoroughly destroyed by France and Great Britain, the result was not only a threat to world peace, but to the Soviet Union itself. It became clear that Munich had made a world war almost inevitable. Public alarm compelled certain moves on the part of the British Government in the direction of local guarantees, the most important being that to Poland. It is probable that Britain had

anticipated a move on Roumania and the Russian Ukraine, instead of on Poland, as the result. Mr. Kennedy, the United States Ambassador in London, assured Mr. Roosevelt that there would be no general European war because Hitler would be busy attacking Russia. All the newspapers anticipated it. Great Britain contemplated a four-Power pact which would guarantee peace in the West while helping to find an outlet in the East for Germany's "legitimate aspirations." On March 10, 1939, however, Stalin warned the Powers that things would not necessarily work out quite as they had planned. His words must be quoted:

"Far be it from me," said Stalin, "to moralize on the policy of non-intervention, to talk of treason, treachery and so on. It would be naïve to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics is politics, as the old, case-hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them.

"The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and explicit:—

"(1) We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of our country.

"(2) We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighbouring countries which have common frontiers with the U.S.S.R. That is our position and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass, directly or indirectly, on the integrity and inviolability of the frontiers of the Soviet State.

"(3) We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country.

“(4) We are not afraid of the threats of aggressors, and are ready to deal two blows for every blow delivered by instigators of war, who attempt to violate the Soviet borders.

“Such is the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

“In its foreign policy the Soviet Union relies upon:—

“(1) Its growing economic, political and cultural might.

“(2) The moral and political unity of our Soviet society.

“(3) The mutual friendship of the nations of our country;

“(4) Its Red Army and Navy;

“(5) Its policy of peace;

“(6) The moral support of the working people of all countries, who are vitally concerned in the preservation of peace.

“(7) The good sense of the countries which, for one reason or another, have no interest in the violation of peace . . .”

“The tasks of the Party in the sphere of foreign policy are:—

“(1) To continue the policy of peace and of strengthening business relations with all countries;

“(2) To be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflict by war-mongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them;

“(3) To strengthen the might of our Red Army and Red Navy to the utmost;

“(4) To strengthen the international bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries, who are interested in peace and friendship among nations.”

Nevertheless, with exemplary patience, Russia continued to offer her full assistance in staving off further aggression.

On March 18th Russia asked for a Conference, but Lord Halifax declared that it was premature. On April 16th Russia suggested a triple pact. On May 27th the British

Government agreed to discuss this proposal. There followed the long abortive negotiations in Moscow. Meanwhile Britain had herself guaranteed Poland, but by her failure to take the necessary steps to give effective aid to Poland she showed clearly enough that this was not a serious move.

Voroshilov reported on the military conversations in Moscow that: "Just as the British and American troops in the past world war would have been unable to fight in collaboration with the French armed forces if there had been no possibility of operating in French territory, the Soviet armed forces could not participate in military collaboration with the armed forces of France and Great Britain, if they were not allowed on Polish territory. Despite the perfectly obvious correctness of this position, the French and British military missions disagreed with the position of the Soviet mission, while the Polish Government openly declared that it did not and would not accept the military assistance of the U.S.S.R. Here the negotiations were broken off."

It was not until this decision had made the situation absolutely clear that the non-Aggression Pact was signed with Germany. In the words of Molotov: "As the negotiations had shown that the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance could not be expected, we could not but explore other possibilities of ensuring peace and eliminating the danger of war between Germany and the U.S.S.R. If the British and French Governments refused to reckon with this, that is their affair."

Russia could only conclude that while the British guarantee would encourage the Poles to resist, it was not intended to be effective. In other words, it would involve Germany and Poland in a war in which Poland was bound to be beaten. The result would be to bring Hitler up to the Russian border and give him the Polish Ukraine and White Russia, from which it would be easy for him to satisfy his long-expressed ambition to conquer Western Russia.

The suspicious British proposals during the negotiations for the Anglo-Russian Pact bear this out. Russia was re-

peatedly asked to give the kind of guarantees which might easily have embroiled her in war with Germany while we sat tight behind the Maginot line and did nothing. While the flood-waters rose against the slender dam of such pacts and guarantees as existed, Britain was still actively encouraging Germany. She was given the Czech gold from London and the royalties on the stolen patents of the Bren gun. Negotiations were reopened between the Federation of British Industries and the Nazi industrialists. Mr. Hudson suggested a gigantic loan to Germany. Mr. Bevin suggested sharing economic spheres of interest. It looked increasingly like peace in the West and war in the East.

There were three possibilities :

1. A water-tight pact against aggression—this was refused by Great Britain.
2. War in the East in which Russia would be involved but not Great Britain and France.
3. The safeguarding of Russian peace by a non-aggression pact with Germany.

That the last course was adopted was the result not of Soviet duplicity, but of the obvious peril in which the alternative chosen by Britain was placing Russia.

The results were certainly startling. Germany would have struck in any case, even if Russia had agreed to the British plan, since that would not have brought Russian troops to Poland's aid. Britain herself, and not Russia, is therefore responsible for the German invasion.

That the invasion would meet with little effective resistance was a foregone conclusion. *The Times* military correspondent described the military incompetence, the lack of resources, the demoralization of the higher command, the flight of the Government, which led to complete military collapse *before* Russia crossed the frontier. Russia acted not a moment too soon. Her action forestalled the complete absorption of Poland, established a barrier between the Nazi army and the oil-fields of Roumania which nothing that Chamberlain could have done would have achieved.

Thus Russia flung across Southern Poland the greatest single obstacle to the Nazi threat not only to another small European State, but to the gateway to the Black Sea and Baghdad. But the secondary consequence became at once a threat to Great Britain and France instead of to Russia. If Germany must expand or explode, and it can no longer explode in the East, it must explode in the West. Chamberlain started the war, but now he cannot easily get out of it. His sole hope is in a change of the German front which would bring her once again into a four-Power pact against Russia, but this is now impossible without a change of Government in Germany. Britain is therefore now involved in an imperialist war because her own interests are seriously threatened by an all-powerful Germany with peace pacts along her eastern frontiers.

Once Poland had collapsed, it became imperative for Russia to reabsorb the former Russian territories of White Russia and the Polish Ukraine, firstly to prevent their Nazification, but also to counter by a westward advance of the Red Flag any suggestion of an eastward advance of Fascism. The advance carried with it the new protectorate over the Baltic and the effective domination of the Black Sea, Roumania, and Bulgaria; at the same time it consolidated the alliance with Turkey and drew Jugo-Slavia and Hungary into friendly overtures for the first time since the last war.

There has been a tendency to regard the Soviet non-aggression pact with Germany as the final surrender of Socialist principles, as well as a stab in the back for Poland. But ever since 1917 Russia has been prepared for any kind of relations with capitalist Powers that benefited the Russian people or helped to maintain peace. We flatter ourselves that there is a very great difference between a pact with Britain and a pact with Germany, forgetting that the Russian regards capitalist Britain as every bit as bad as Fascist Germany. Russia has always declared it to be her intention to establish trade relations with any Power—shall we say even with England! She has also offered non-

aggression pacts to such reactionary and militarist Powers as Japan and Poland. The entry of Russia into the League was also denounced as treachery to her former principles. Critics shuddered at the thought of Stalin shaking the hand of Laval, of Socialist Russia forming an alliance with capitalist France. They predicted the collapse of Socialism in the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Communist parties of the world. They imagined that collaboration for limited ends implied a *rapprochement in principle* between Socialism and Capitalism. When the anti-aggression front collapsed and the diplomacy of France and Great Britain persisted, despite pious protestations, in conniving with aggression to the growing peril of Russia, further negotiations with them became useless, and indeed dangerous, dangerous not only to Russia, but also to every country in the path of Fascist expansion. It is a first principle of sound tactics to divide the enemy bloc if it is not possible to organize a bloc of superior strength; hence, when the non-aggression bloc failed, Russia, by signing the non-aggression pact, split Germany from Japan, immobilized Italy and Spain, and attracted the Baltic and South-eastern Europe into her orbit. At this point a non-aggression pact was still possible including Great Britain and France, but it would have involved clearing out the accomplices of Hitler in the British and French Governments. Unfortunately the democratic movement in these countries was not strong enough, and events had to take their course.

Liberal and Labour critics of the Soviet Union are compelled to acknowledge the beneficial effects of the pact and of the advance of the Socialist and peace frontier towards the West. They are reduced to complaining that these admirable ends have been secured by evil means. But, as we have argued, this is nonsense. What determines whether a means is evil is surely the quality of the end it achieves. Is it better to achieve good or bad ends? The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

There were others who miscalculated the actions of Russia. No doubt the last thing that Chamberlain allowed

for was any sort of pact between Russia and Germany. His whole plan was based on that particular move being ruled out as impossible. That it was made brought down his whole policy in ruins.

But the democratic movement in this country made a very similar mistake, hence their horror at what they called Russia's treachery—the "treachery" of refusing to allow herself to be used as a catspaw of British imperialism, of saving eleven millions of their fellow-countrymen from Fascism.

Manuilsky criticizes the Left in this country for the failure to foresee events, to anticipate the manoeuvres of the enemy, and thus to be able to thwart his plans. "They are not," he says, "sufficiently prepared for abrupt turns of events, and have not yet mastered the forms of struggle dictated by the tense international situation."

Liberal and Socialist critics can only judge these events by their consequences, not by referring them to abstract moral principles. What, then, has been the result of the Soviet advance? The result has been that over a huge area, covering the whole of Eastern Europe, Turkey, and the Baltic, peace is now practically certain. The Fascist tide has been rolled back, leaving Hitler confronting Britain across the Channel. It finally thwarts all endeavours to turn Fascist aggression against the Soviet Union.

The Russian move leaves nothing to be fought for by Great Britain except imperialist interests. The excuse of the restoration of Poland is out of the question. Russian Poland is, and will remain an integral part of Russia. Germany would no doubt consent to restore a puppet State in Warsaw, but over this issue why should a European war be fought any more than it was fought over Czechoslovakia? Czechoslovakia was a well-governed democracy, Poland was a badly governed autocracy that is certainly not worth a war. It had and would have as little real independence under a restored despotism as it had under Pilsudski's Beck. The only war for the independence of Poland that matters would be a war to establish

a Polish Republic, and Great Britain is as unlikely to fight for that as for the Spanish Republic.

The breakdown of the League has shown how little protection was afforded to the weaker nations within it and its complete failure to preserve peace. Are we now seeing in the Soviet Union and the nations now being gathered within its sphere of influence a new League in which peace will be secured and aggression will be impossible owing to the might of Russia? It may be that whereas the League under the control of British imperialism sacrificed nation after nation and allowed war after war until anarchy returned to Europe, the Russian system of security will guarantee the peace of the nations which it embraces, and finally halt the onward march of Fascist aggression.

CHAPTER XI

SWORD AND TROWEL

IT is one of the main contentions of pacifism that the resort to violence implies an attempt to use purely destructive forces for the creative tasks of civilization. It is argued that out of the slaughter and hate of war there cannot come that goodwill, respect for personality, and spirit of co-operation which are indispensable for the building of a just and stable social order.

This is true, but nevertheless these constructive forces cannot come into play unless freedom for them to operate is guaranteed in the face of anti-social efforts to prevent social advance.

In a recent manifesto The Society of Friends rightly says :

“Any and every physical ‘sanction,’ however politically desirable it may be, is an admission that the goal has not been reached. . . . We realize that the machine, however perfect, is only a means towards the ultimate goal—a world ruled by justice and love.”

But it admits that coercive restraint is necessary and must not be condemned, provided that its purpose is not punishment but “the preservation of the necessary conditions under which peace and co-operation may continue and the necessary re-adjustments may be made.” With this we should wholly agree. No positive civilization, no just social order or stable peace, can flow from mere violence, war, and repression. Who supposes that it can? A true social order must be based upon persuasion, conviction, and a positive will to co-operation and fellowship among men. These are the only bonds which can hold society together with any permanence and to any real advantage.

Every statesman knows that while the restraint of lawlessness is essential, it must be accompanied and ultimately

replaced by the constraint of self-discipline and willing acceptance of social duty. If pacifists would make it their task to preach this, to keep alive this fundamental truth, to foster and encourage all such reformatory and educational influences, at first alongside the sterner measures necessary, but ultimately to take their place, they would be rendering an invaluable service.

But they must remember that love comes not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. It does this by teaching us to will rightly, and so to be free to serve, and no longer under compulsion. Only by rising above law and being a law unto ourselves, by accepting as the guide to all our relations the law of love, can we escape the discipline of law. We cannot be absolved from it *before* we have learned to discipline ourselves.

Provided they do not rule out the necessity of force, it may well be the duty of some people to give themselves wholly to the task of personal reformation and education. This no doubt should be one of the main functions of the Church. But this work goes on within the framework of defence, law, and the restraint of lawlessness, and can never be a substitute for it. Niebuhr says that such forces can tame life only if it is fairly tame to begin with. It can soften prejudices and animosities and enhance mutual accord. It can and must exert its influence to soften the harshness of coercion, which so easily continues its operations beyond the point of necessity. In arguing that force is unfortunately the only resort in many cases, we must be careful never to give grounds for supposing that it is welcomed. It is always regrettable and always open to abuse. These influences are felt less in the rough and tumble of transition than in the subsequent period of social reconstruction, where they will help to reconcile men to the new order, to establish new standards of conduct, to develop in the victorious class the social qualities which were starved and stultified under the old regime. There are certain moral forces which, although powerless to establish a new order of society, can be effective in reducing its frictions when it has arrived, for the attain-

ment of the basic conditions of justice will not automatically guarantee harmonious human relations.

“Human happiness must therefore always depend to a large degree upon the ability of men to adjust rights to rights and harmonize interests to interests with a minimum degree of tyranny, injustice and flagrant egoism.”¹

We need an influence which makes for human sympathy, for tolerance and good will. Religion, too, with its ascetic principles and concern for purifying individual motives, can undoubtedly check egoistic impulses and reduce the inordinate self-assertion of the average man, and thus reduce the strains of a new system of social relationships; what it seems unable to do in the present crisis is to change one set of relationships for another.

The moral task, in this sense, must never be allowed to displace the political one. As an alternative to the grim fighting out of the class struggle on the political field, pure disinterestedness, pure pacifism, becomes a morbid perfectionism the effect of which is wholly reactionary. The moralist must learn that he is not in the position of being able to choose a perfectly “right” course of action. He can only choose between two courses, both of which involve force, coercion, and cruelty. To keep “above the battlefield” and by word and example advocate non-resistance is, as we have seen, to live parasitically upon a system which exercises coercion and cruelty continuously merely by perpetuating the *status quo*; moreover, not to render support to the only forces which can supplant that system is to render effective aid to the forces which defend it: “He that is not for us is against us.”

The constructive function of moral idealism can only operate in a society made safe for it. It is always dependent upon its antithesis, the force of the Law. If peace were the supreme good, moral idealism would stand no chance at all in the face of evil. The law exists to enable good men to live among bad; in the hands of evil governments it

¹ Niebuhr, *Reflections on the End of an Era*.

enables bad men to live upon good. To believe that idealism unarmed can subdue evil is to tread the path that leads to sentimental dreaming or complete despair.

If peace is the supreme good, we must, of course, subordinate equality and freedom and justice to it, and if necessary abandon them in order to prevent conflict. *This is the price of peace*, and we must be prepared to pay it if we value it as the highest good. The pacifist does not stop here. He goes on to argue that he gains more than he loses by peace. We, who oppose pacifism, think the opposite. But when he argues thus, does not even the pacifist put something higher than peace? How otherwise could he judge it by *its price*? In what terms is he weighing *price*? If it is in terms of human welfare, then it is human welfare that is the supreme good, and peace is good only in so far as it ministers to human welfare. But if peace is not the supreme good we cannot without further question subordinate equality and freedom and justice to it. We can only do that if it can be *proved* that we lose more of these by resorting to force than we should preserve. The guiding values of social existence are security, order, freedom, civilization, and freedom, not *concord* or the *preservation values of social existence are security or the freedom of life*. To preserve them or achieve them *may* require war. If pacifism is going to talk about "the price of peace," it cannot rule out war *a priori*. It can only decide each case on its merits by balancing gain and loss.

Where this is done by no means every war is justified, but *some* wars are justified. The pacifist fails to agree only because he does not really judge the issue by weighing the consequences. He really once more assumes, in spite of talking about the "price of peace" (in terms of human welfare), that peace is the supreme good. He will have peace whatever goes. "None of the evils which we would avoid by war is an evil greater than war itself." Thus pacifism is really based upon an indefensible assumption, for we have just shown that not even the pacifist can really believe that peace is the supreme good.

Abandon that indefensible assumption and resolutely face each issue on its merits, and occasions will most certainly be found when war achieves far more than it loses.

When the Jews returned from the First Captivity to rebuild Jerusalem they were set upon by hostile tribesmen who hated to see a city standing for ordered law arising in the midst of the land they terrorized, and who mocked their efforts and threatened them "and conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion therein." Nehemiah therefore resorted to arms "and set a watch against them day and night." It is a simple and moving story as it is told in the matchless prose of the Old Testament.

"Therefore set I in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in the open places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I said (to the people) Be ye not afraid of them : remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses. And it came to pass from that time forth that half of my servants wrought in the work, and half of them held the spears, the shields and the bows. They that builded the wall everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work and with the other held his weapon. And the builders everyone had his sword girded by his side and so builded. So we wrought in the work."

It is so clear and simple a story that pacifists would do well to consider it and ask themselves the following question :

Would the city and its civilization have been established if the tribesmen had not been resisted? Did that resistance, in itself, corrupt the people of Jerusalem and drag them down to the level of the bandit tribes? Was there anything fundamentally unsound or vicious in the building of the city and its institutions because its citizens had defended themselves? Was the morale of the city weakened or streng-

thened by resistance? Would it have been weakened or strengthened by non-resistance?

We, too, are rebuilding a city. Are we likely to be corrupted, and is our work likely to be spoiled, if we labour both with sword and trowel? Are we more likely to build our city if we are unarmed in the midst of our foes, or if everyone has his sword girded by his side and so builds?

We might well heed the words of William Blake:

“I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till I have built Jerusalem
In England’s green and pleasant land.”

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