

## FEDERALISM AND WORLD-PEACE

A YEARNING for lasting peace is the common property of all times and of all peoples, and finds expression in all religions. It can be found in the conception underlying the Golden Age and in that of the Garden of Eden, just as in the eschatological idea of heavenly peace.

Christianity, as the sum total of truth, proclaims 'peace on earth' in the Christmas message to 'men of good will.'

We, who are living twenty years after the world conflagration and in the midst of a new one, or rather in the re-kindling of the old, have a special duty to reflect how best wars can be prevented and a durable peace maintained. Our times, in fact, abound in such ideas and projects.

There has probably never been a war in history during which peace and its permanent organization have been so much discussed. Indeed, there has probably never been a time in the world's history when a great turning point has been so clearly recognized and consciously experienced by so many contemporaries.

If we disregard the day-dreams of pacifists which escape from the reality of the problem into misguided asceticism or into the heresy of Gnosticism, we shall see that the ideas and schemes offering lasting peace to the world are concerned with agreements between nations, with the *foedus* among peoples, with federalism. Whether these efforts appear as a reform of the League of Nations or call themselves the 'Federal-Union' or 'Pan-Europe' movement, they all aim, by some form of agreement, at banishing war from the world.

The common denominator of all these movements is called federalism. Under this banner a new Europe and a new world are to arise.

Federalism among states means that these states while surrendering a part of their sovereignty to a higher, supra-

national power—whether it is called League of Nations or anything else—enroll themselves by treaty as members of this higher organization.

The problem is not new, neither is its solution. The problem is perhaps of the same age as the analogous question of individual and community,' which is of course the fundamental problem of all sociological science. The question of personal liberty and the part which the individual is to play in the community are mirrored in an analogous way in the life of peoples. For, even if the peoples do not possess personality, they have their national individuality and the moral right to their own national life and form a natural community among themselves. Thus the questions of the liberty and independence of the nations and of their relationship to one another are as old as the human race; they become more burning and more intense the more the world is divided, the more technical progress brings the goods of the earth within the reach of man and increases his needs; in other words, the more supranational community among nations and their mutual relationship grow plainer and cause friction.

The idea of world-peace won political form in European history when the centre of the ancient world, the thickly populated and highly cultivated Mediterranean lands, demanded regulation of its internal relations. The Romans, who felt that to rule the world was their vocation, made themselves the bearers of this idea and gave it a religious significance. The *Pax Romana* is the fundamental moral idea of ancient Rome. Virgil gives expression to this thought in the *Æneid*:

*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento  
Hæc tibi erunt artes pacis, imponere morem  
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.*

(*Æneid* VI, 851-3.)

The idea of the *Pax Romana* is a universal conception of world peace. It wishes to guarantee peace among the

nations by taking them under the protection of the Roman Empire and of Roman Law.

But this idea of peace and justice gradually yielded to the pressure of imperialistic and nationalistic tendencies. The *ardor habendi et dominandi* led to the break up of the Roman Empire by destroying its moral foundations. St. Augustine bears witness to this decay with the complaint that the Roman Empire was incapable of realizing the *Civitas Dei* on earth. But the great idea of universal peace underlying the *Pax Romana* did not vanish with the disappearance of ancient Rome.

On the contrary, deepened by the religious teaching of Christianity, it became the essential pillar of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Holy Roman Empire aimed at forming theocratically the political organization of mankind united under the sign of the Cross, corresponding to the theocentric world-vision of the Middle Ages. With the Bishop of Rome as spiritual head and the Roman Emperor as temporal guardian, the Holy Roman Empire was to guarantee peace, justice and order among all Christian peoples. Far removed from every kind of internationalism, the individual national life of every race was to be preserved and enabled to develop under the protection of the Holy Roman Empire and its conception of peace.

The time-honoured words of the Liturgy give expression to the pure original idea of the Holy Roman Empire in the *orationes* of Good Friday:

*' Oremus et pro Christianissimo Imperatore nostro, ut Deus et Dominus noster subditas illi faciat omnes barbaras nationes ad nostram perpetuam pacem.—Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, in cujus manu sunt omnium potestates et omnium jura regnorum respice ad Romanum benignum Imperium, ut gentes, quae in sua feritate confidunt, potentiae tuae dextera comprimantur.'*

The Empire united the Christian kingdoms and lands

in the community of Church and Empire, that is to say under a supranational power. But the foe of the Empire and of Christendom was heathenism, barbarism, the insolent nationalistic state, which, despising justice and right, '*confidit in sua feritate.*' The Empire was the first powerful conception of a League of Nations in world-history and the perfect classical expression of federalism.

The idea of universal peace set forth by the Holy Roman Empire is immortal; its realization, on the other hand, died all too soon and achieved only a short period of blossoming. Even before the Middle Ages reached their apex, serious signs of decay were visible. The Empire crumbled bit by bit as its religious nucleus grew hollow. The unity of the Empire became weaker with the gradual process of emancipation from the Church and from religious fundamentals and with increase of secularization.

When, after the crusades, the theocentric world-vision of the Middle Ages began to falter under the influence of Averroistic philosophy and Nominalism, and finally fell to pieces at the Renaissance, the theocratic construction of the Holy Roman Empire was also shattered to the depth. With the destruction of the unity of Christian faith and of the Church the universal idea of the Holy Roman Empire lost its basis and its hold.

As a purely political construction without metaphysical significance, it continued to exist more or less in name only until the nineteenth century and became more and more strange and incomprehensible to the people of modern times.

Modern times, however, have formed the modern state, whose conception is determined by the modern idea of sovereignty. The state feels itself the source of law and acknowledges no higher earthly power. The emancipation of the state from religious ties leads gradually to its emancipation from moral ties. The sovereign state feels itself free not only from higher earthly authority, but from any authority whatsoever.

The state becomes an absolute value and end in itself, and its politics are determined only by self-interest and opportunism. Already in the fifteenth century, the dawn of the modern times, Macchiavelli laid down the first theory of this conception. Nevertheless, the religious and moral sense of men was for centuries too strong to deny that the state must be subordinated to the moral and natural law. To be sure, politics became more and more divorced from justice and from ethical considerations, but it was still considered disgraceful to offend against the law of nations and to break treaties. In the nineteenth century the attempt was made to maintain peace through the system of a European balance of power. This balance of power was such that warlike actions of great dimensions were accompanied by too many risks. This equilibrium, this opposite to a stable peace-organization, was shattered in the year 1914.

The attempts which have been made since then show how weak and insufficient are treaties and pacts between states which acknowledge only themselves as *suprema lex*.

It is unlikely that another epoch can be found in the whole of world history so rich in unfulfilled or broken treaties as are the last twenty years. But even then people at least *spoke* of the sacredness of treaties and of a moral duty in honour to observe them.

It has been reserved for the very last few years to see even this formal acknowledgement vanish. The more poetical phrase of *sacro egoismo* has been followed by the crude and brutal denial of objective law through the blasphemous principle 'whatever is useful to the nation is law.' This cynical admission of naked opportunism, this dismissal of every ethical check is obviously the logical end of the development, which runs in a straight line from Macchiavelli through Hegel to the totalitarian state.

With this a condition of anarchy is reached in the mutual relationship of the different states. Every state formed in such a school is isolated. The bridges to other states

are broken, for every higher common principle is inaccessible to them. Self-interest has taken the place of ethical considerations, force has replaced justice, and the only measure of value which counts is success.

Spiritually this is the present situation and it can only be harmful to deny or to palliate it.

Out of this desperate state of anarchy a cry can now be heard loudly calling for organization, for federalism, for treaties which may form a society of nations able to maintain durable peace.

But treaties between states which look upon themselves as absolute are logically unthinkable. For a treaty which can only be concluded on the condition that its maintenance must be dependent on self-interest is no longer a treaty. At best it means that the parties will perhaps work together only as long as their interests are served, and it will lack any stability and any trust. A treaty has a real significance only when it is considered 'sacred,' in other words when its fulfilment can be expected at the cost of sacrifices, and will be preserved not from motives of interest but of justice and truth. Therefore, mere reason forces the partners of a treaty to recognize a binding standard higher than any of them; its metaphysical foundation is essential.

But the state really possesses no absolute value. It is quite true that the essence of federalism lies in a modification of sovereignty. But any and every treaty implies such a modification.

The teaching which, as Hegel expresses it, makes the state an 'absolute end in itself,' which sees in the state something of 'divinity on earth' and of 'God present below,' means a revolution against the world-order.

This modern conception of the state is a complete reversal of the objective order of values which has led by an inevitable necessity to the catastrophic anarchy of our times.

Undoubtedly treaties between the peoples and a federal

organization of states are a great source of hope for peace. But this juridical way can only be followed when the states concerned have acquired the capacity to conclude real agreements, when, in other words, an objective law, an ethical standard binding on all and superseding individual interest, is really acknowledged in deeds as well as words.

There is not much point in playing 'hide and seek' or in concealing ourselves behind the expression 'right of nature' or the Categorical Imperative of Kant. Behind all these words exists, after all, only the eternal, three-fold, personal Good, Which is God, and the more clearly this is emphasized the clearer grows the problem with which we are concerned. God alone is absolute value and end in Himself. He alone is the one *ens a se* and all other things are subordinated to Him as His creation. States which wish to put themselves in His place must and will be destroyed in blood and fire.

And so 'peace on earth' does really depend on the 'good will' of men; that is to say, on their humble recognition of God and of the world-order which He has founded. Only treaties which have been concluded in His name, and are maintained in humility before Him, will have the power to maintain order among the peoples and to guarantee their peace.

In his Christmas allocution to the College of Cardinals, in 1959, Pope Pius XII pronounced the following words:

'But even the best and most detailed regulations will be imperfect and foredoomed to failure unless the peoples and those who govern them submit willingly to the influence of that spirit which alone can give life, authority, and binding force to the dead letter of international agreements. They must develop that sense of deep and keen responsibility which measures and weighs human statutes according to the sacred and inviolable standards of the law of God.'

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