PEACE-MAKING AFTER WAR*

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I AM to discourse on peace-making, but this does not mean that I am going to formulate what are generally called 'peace terms'. On the contrary, I must begin by a warning against programmes of that kind. Peace-making is a process, not an act. It is a process which has been interrupted by war and must be resumed after the so-called 'treaty of peace' is concluded. For such a treaty can do little more than record the desire of the parties to adjust their interests and their ideals in future by peaceful, rather than by warlike, means. The adjustment itself must occupy years. The peace terms may hinder it, if they inflict serious injury, moral or material, on one party; but they cannot do much to further it. The attempt to take advantage of war-weariness, or of a peace congress representing a number of nations, in order to formulate far-reaching safeguards for future peace, has seldom, if ever, been successful.

It follows that the first condition of successful peace-making is that the statesman who attempts it should be left doubly free. He should be left free by his own people from precise pledges as to the contents of the peace treaty; he should be left free by the peace treaty from hampering commitments as to his future policy. He must have behind him the public opinion of his people; but it must be an opinion about the contribution which his people should make to peace, rather than about the kind of peace they would like to have. In peace, as in war, the 'wishing-well' temper of mind is useless. In war, a will to victory is a determination to keep armies in the field, not the dream of seeing them march into the enemy's capital. Peace-making requires a no less continuous effort, no less readiness both to sacrifice immediate advantages and to forgo ultimate dreams. The only sound purpose of discussions about peace-making in time of war is to form a public opinion of this kind, by indicating what are the real causes of the particular war and what, consequently, are the sacrifices which peace-making may demand.

The historian's first, and most obvious, contribution to such a discussion is to remind men of the facts of yesterday, which are in large measure the facts of to-day and to-morrow. From the historian's point of view, the chief evil of war or revolution is not so much its crude immediate effect in human misery as its tendency to produce

in the human mind an illusion of emancipation from the quite recent past. Of course, war does change facts; it may kill an old institution, for example, and stimulate a new movement. But, broadly speaking, it kills only what is already decayed, and stimulates only what is already alive. There is no release from the past; the facts of 1942 will not be materially different from the facts of 1938.

What may, we hope, be different in 1942 is our power of understanding what the facts really are; and for this we need to be reminded of a remoter past. In this lies the historian's second, and most important, contribution to the discussions of the hour. The point I chiefly want to make, and to illustrate, is the importance of reckoning our present position in the world's history by reference to a past remote enough to dwarf our contemporary assumptions into their true proportions, and to prepare us for the unexpected forms in which history repeats itself over long periods. If there is anything more dangerous than the illusion of emancipation from the *facts* of the immediate past, it is the tendency to attribute eternal validity to the *ideas* of the last century or two—to measure the whole 'march of mankind' by the eighteenth-century standard of 'enlightenment' and the nineteenth-century standard of 'utility'. It is, no doubt, comforting to compare modern knowledge with that of Aristotle or Seneca or Aquinas; it is not so comforting to reflect that an increase in knowledge may mean only an increase in crude power, that it may fit us only to tutor more ambitious conquerors than Alexander, to advise worse tyrants than Nero, and to herald a more complete collapse of civilization than that which overtook Papacy and Empire in the fourteenth century.

Let me then try to suggest another possible view of European history in relation to present problems.

A dweller on the Roman Wall may, perhaps, be forgiven if he takes as his starting-point the death of the Emperor Hadrian in the year 138. The Rhine-Danube frontier of the Roman Empire, as he left it, has become to-day almost the frontier of Christian civilization—pushed back in the west on the middle Rhine and between the Rhine and the Upper Danube, pushed forward a little in the east between the Danube and the Theiss, but only seriously breached at its centre in Austria. It was there that, twenty-three years after Hadrian's death, the Marcomanni first broke through to the Adriatic; it was there that, exactly eighteen hundred years after his death,

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another Germanic invasion carried paganism south from the Danube to the Drave. This threatened frontier is to-day the frontier of the British, as it was of the Roman Empire, as the gathering on it of distant armies has reminded us. It would be fanciful to press the analogy, and tedious to qualify it; but it may serve as a point of departure.

During all these eighteen hundred years, the history of Western civilization has been the history of folk wanderings. For the first nine hundred, down to the establishment, in the second half of the eleventh century, of Norman rule in England and Sicily, of Seljuk rule in Asia Minor, and of Teutonic colonization among the Slavs on the eastern marches of Germany, the sequence of migratory conquest and settlement was almost unbroken. There was an interval of some two hundred and fifty years between the last Teutonic and the first Scandinavian waves of conquest, between the end of the sixth century, when the Lombard Kingdom had been established in Italy, and the middle of the ninth, when the Danes invaded England and the Varangars threatened Constantinople. But midway in that interval the high tide of Arab conquest almost reached the Bosphorus and the Loire, and the age of Charlemagne was but a 'gap between two lightnings'.

The first real interval of consolidation came at the end of the eleventh century. It, too, lasted for about two hundred and fifty years, from the First Crusade to the first Ottoman landing on Gallipoli in 1356. Again, it was broken midway by the Tartar raids; the frontiers of Christian civilization were still hotly contested in Spain, North Africa and Palestine; internally the old Teutonic and Scandinavian tradition of the 'southward thrust' took a new political form in the two great struggles for ascendancy, between Empire and Papacy in Italy and between Plantagenet and Capetian in France. But this troubled interval, especially the thirteenth century, did mark the consolidation of the new peoples of Europe into one society with its own distinctive culture, a single *Kulturgebiet*; it did give freedom of movement, within that society, to the cleric, the merchant, the craftsman and the scholar; it did give opportunity to the rising cities of Italy and Germany to translate old migratory instincts into terms of international commerce. By the end of the period, Genoese ships had attempted the circumnavigation of Africa and a Genoese trading station had been established in South China; population had begun once more to outgrow the resources of medieval agriculture; and, now that the safety valve of the Crusades and the Moorish wars was closed, and Papacy and Empire had fought each other to a standstill, the fighting class was looking for new opportunities of adventure.

The next one hundred and seventy-three years were perhaps the darkest of European history. The resumption of migration was postponed by the Black Death, which nearly halved the population of the Continent. Simultaneously, Europe became the victim, instead of the agent, of a new migratory conquest. Between 1356 and 1529 the Ottoman invasion crept, in successive waves, to its high-water mark beneath the walls of Vienna. The last, and most destructive, decade of its advance was the decade which saw also the first circumnavigation of the globe, the Spanish conquest of Mexico, and the discovery of Peru.

From that moment, for four hundred years, until in 1929 a general economic collapse seemed to have finally closed the New World to European migration, the history of Western civilization has been a history of colonization and trade expansion—of a gradual advance westward to the Pacific, southward over Africa and Australasia, and eastward to India and China. Though that movement reached its culmination with the rapid growth of European population in the nineteenth century, it was already well launched by the middle of the seventeenth. Of the total increase of the English stock between 1600 and 1700, one fifth were probably settled on the Atlantic coast of America by the latter date. What does mark the nineteenth century is that it was then that Europe generally first awoke to what had already been the real trend of Western civilization for two centuries. Is it far from the truth to say that the only lasting effect of all the internal wars of Europe from 1618 to 1815 was to keep down the stock which would otherwise have migrated, to ruin the industries which would otherwise have nourished that migration, and to leave to England and Holland the opportunities of American and Asiatic settlement and trade? Alone among all these wars, the long frontier struggle in the east with the Ottoman Empire was fought for a lasting issue.

If this has been the character of the wars of Europe, what has been the character of its peace-making? If one had to give an answer for the whole eighteen hundred years in one rough formula, one would say, I think, the reconciliation of land hunger with culture. That formula does fit, almost exactly, the first nine hundred years. During most of this period, peace-making was largely in the hands of the Christian Church, as the guardian of a faith and a way of life, and as the successor of the Cæsars. To her, territory was a trifle, as culture was, perhaps, a trifle to the barbarian invader; and her peace-making could therefore be a real bargain—the bargain that Walter Scott put in the mouth of Count Witikind:

"Give me broad lands on the Wear and the Tyne,
My faith I will leave and I'll cleave unto thine".

That was the basis of the bargain between Pope and Emperor, and it broke down only when, eventually, the two sides of the bargain lost their contrast—when faith became institutionalized by Hildebrand into an *imperium in imperio*, and when, under the feudal system, the Emperor's authority over the broad lands of Europe was reduced to an indistinct overlordship. The resulting conflict of like with like—of two non-territorial universals—admitted of no compromise; by the end of the thirteenth century it had destroyed both contestants.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Europe moved slowly towards a new idea: that civilized society is not a single cultural unit within which its members possess territorial rights, but is composed of a number of territorial units, each asserting its own culture. For two centuries the nature of the new territorial units remained in doubt. The Italian city struggled to assert its economic culture against its fellow cities; the French and English monarchies their new conception of territorial sovereignty and 'civil dominion'; the Swiss and the Hussites of Bohemia (with very different fortunes) their ideal of democratic independence. It was not until the new sects of the Reformation were forced to seek protectors powerful enough to save them from both persecution and from disintegration that the territorial sovereigns won. The principle *cujus regio, ejus religio* finally identified culture with large territorial units—but, before that principle was fully established, there had been a last attempt to recreate the wider cultural society of the Middle Ages. The empire of Charles V, combining, in the last two years of his rule, the main bulk of Europe with the new colonies of the Spanish Main, had an unequalled opportunity of uniting the whole civilized world in the enjoyment of unimagined natural resources, unprecedented freedom of movement, and the common heritage of the Renaissance—subject only to the compromise of toleration for differing forms of Christian worship. That opportunity was lost in a blind striving after institutional uniformity, and the tragic waste of that futile struggle left the territorial Culture State in undisputed possession of the field.

Since then, for nearly four hundred years, territorial frontiers have remained the staple issue of both war and peacemaking. The Culture State has long outlasted the assumption which originated it: that one State could accommodate within its frontiers only one form of religion. As toleration has taken the place of religious uniformity, the State has substituted new uniformities of its own. In the last hundred years, the consciousness of nationality, the progress of social reform and the

growth of industry have combined to multiply the points at which the authority of law and the claims of freedom may conflict and can be reconciled only by like-mindedness between Government and people. So universal has become the identification of culture with nationality, and of nationality with territorial sovereignty, that Britain's sanguine attempt, after the War of 1914–18, to establish a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine, which should be a culture and not a sovereignty, has ended, for the moment, in a despairing proposal for territorial partition.

Until the very end of these four hundred years, however, the organization of the Culture State offered little obstacle to the free movement of the European peoples. The European Culture States, with their high birth-rates, their racial minorities and their political controversies, were glad enough to see their potential unemployed and their potential rebels become citizens of the United States, the British Empire or Brazil. These new overseas nations, on their side, still unhardened to their function as Culture States, were glad enough to give these immigrants work and the opportunity of wealth, in return for no more than a formal salute to the Stars and Stripes or the National Anthem. So the Count Witikind formula was revived as a bargain between the receiving State and the individual, and might, with a little more imagination, have been translated, in the post-War distresses of twenty years ago, into bargains between Governments. Instead of this, the bargain began to break down, much as it had broken down in the Middle Ages. Already, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the German Empire had begun to discourage emigration, and the last twenty years have seen a hardening of European cultural nationalism into that kind of cultural imperialism which demands that the national flag shall follow the emigrant, carrying with it both national culture and national territorial sovereignty. At the same time, the States of the New World began to adopt, not only the policy of deliberate 'assimilation', but also the policy of restricted immigration in the interests of their economic culture; and, as their economic culture began increasingly to break down, restriction has hardened into prohibition. Cultural nationalism has frozen the peoples of the civilized world into something approaching immobility.

Let us understand clearly what this means. We live in a world of cultural nationalism; but we have reached a point in the world's history where such nationalism can no longer offer any basis for a lasting European peace, because it can no longer offer freedom of movement to the European peoples. Demands for 'colonies' on the basis of sovereignty can only end, like the irreconcilable

claims of Papacy and Empire in the thirteenth century, in the mutual destruction of the claimants and in a period of chaos which will last until some new Renaissance and Reformation bring us a change of mind. *That* is our position in the world's history. Migration is as necessary to-day to the peoples of Europe as it has been at every stage of European history, save when the European stock has been depleted by pestilence and internecine war. The falling birth- and death-rates of northern and western Europe do not materially affect that need; for, while they diminish the number of those who are too young, and increase the number of those who are too old, to work, they leave almost unaltered the proportion of able-bodied producers to dependent consumers. For example, if the present trend of population in Great Britain continues, the age group 20-59, which now constitutes nearly 57 per cent of the total population, will still constitute 55 per cent in 1985. On the other hand, the need for a constant redistribution of population between industrial and primary-producing countries is greater to-day than ever before, by reason of the over-specialization of these two types of economic units.

But the time is utterly and for ever past when the flag can follow the migrant. If he retains his culture, it must be by virtue of its affinity to the general culture of the country to which he migrates. That truth is obvious to the Briton, but it is so far from obvious to the National Socialist and the Fascist that they have staked their all on a policy of cultural nationalism which can lead nowhere but to blind and fruitless war. Until that mood gives place to a sense of reality, and until the real need for freedom of movement can be met by international agreement, Europe will remain in a state of dangerous unrest, and it will be more important that her future frontiers should be strategically defensible than that they should conform exactly to racial or linguistic boundaries.

Though, for the sake of simplicity, I have spoken of migration, it is important to remember that this is an over-simplification. Over the last six hundred years at least, the rise of international commerce has offered a partial alternative to migration, which did not exist in earlier ages; and when, in the nineteenth century, international commerce took increasingly the form of capital exports from Europe for overseas development, it powerfully nourished migration. The overseas assets thus created were European assets, shared by all European nations, even when they were owned principally by a single nation. English investments in the Argentine promoted the migration to that country of harvest labourers from Italy, and so on. But here, too, our economic culture has been frozen into immobility during the last twenty

years. Interest on English capital assets in primary-producing countries, brought to England and distributed by taxation, has still relieved the distresses of unemployed Englishmen who could not seek employment by emigration; but it has not been transferable to other nations by the old processes of re-lending and circular trade. In these circumstances, the concentration of such assets in the hands of English investors has had much the same effect on Europe as the unequal distribution of her population in relation to her natural resources. It has damaged the agricultural economy of England and has starved the industrial economy of Central Europe. Under such extraordinary conditions, the direct conversion of sterling debt in Canada, South America and Australasia into mark or lira debt would have been a rational policy. Unfortunately, an international capital levy of this kind was too simple an idea for those who still use the political and economic language of the last two centuries, who still assume that territory is the only asset that one nation can cede to another, and who still think of economic relations in terms of the circuitous self-adjustments of nineteenth century trade and banking.

It is easier for the historian to suggest analogies than to draw conclusions, but the conclusion of this survey is surely plain.

Peace can no longer be made by bartering territories or adjusting tariffs. The Culture State has run its course. It has worked itself out through all its phases—religious, political, linguistic, racial and economic—and it is now becoming that worst of all human things: a conservative anarchy. The problem of peace-making is how to destroy it peacefully; for if it is not destroyed by peace it will be destroyed by war, by the exhaustion of drawn battle or by successful conquest. If by conquest, it will be a barbarian conquest; the Culture State has created no Hellenism, even if it were to produce an Alexander. It has created, instead, the international culture of Marxism—a culture civilized in its origins but barbaric in its effects, whether it take the form of communism or of national socialism.

But it has created one other thing. It has created a British Commonwealth of Nations, now intimately allied with a French Empire, closely related by political and religious tradition to the five small nations of Scandinavia and the Low Countries, and occupying an extraordinary position in the Middle East. This great political partnership possesses vast economic resources which in the nineteenth century promoted the prosperity of all nations and can now be placed more deliberately at their service. Its chief partners have acquired a high degree of technical skill in the handling of these resources; above all, in their exercise of

both political and economic power, they acknowledge, dimly no doubt but genuinely, certain standards of moral duty, derived from a common faith and a common way of life. The wheel of history has not turned full-circle—perhaps it never does; but it has brought back to us something like the same opportunity as was offered four hundred years ago to the empire of Charles V, the opportunity of embracing diverse territorial sovereignties and races, diverse religious and political creeds, in a wider community, where all men can, at least, find a growing freedom of access both to spiritual and to material wealth. That opportunity may, all too easily, be lost once more—lost in the particularist selfishness of the Culture State or in a blind striving again after the institutional uniformities of a League of Nations or a Federal Union. But if it is lost, we shall be more guilty than Charles V or Philip II, for now the swing of the wheel is with us. It is moving away from, not towards, the Culture State; it is moving towards, not away from, the greater Culture Society.

Our success or failure will depend mainly on the shrewdness with which we judge what really matters in civilization—what is unimportant enough to be surrendered, and what is valuable enough to be purchased. The civilized man always gets the best of his bargains, not because he has the greater power of compulsion or persuasion, but because he has outgrown his taste for toys and does not mind parting with them—whether he is the trader bartering glass beads for rubber, or the medieval churchman granting land in exchange for repentance. Our danger is that so many trifles have still a superstitious value to one section or other of our democratic electorates: to the nationalist, mere territory; to the capitalist, his overseas investments; to the trade unionist, his control of the labour market by restriction of apprenticeship and prohibition of immigration. After the War such problems cannot, of course, be solved by an abrupt abolition of controls and an unconsidered return to freedom. In many of the most important spheres of economic policy, freedom is, indeed, meaningless; free access to raw materials may mean only freedom to covet them if the purchaser cannot find enough foreign exchange to buy them in sufficient quantities. Nationally, there may be legitimate differences of opinion as to the scope and merits of economic planning; but internationally we have already a misplanned economy, which must be deliberately replanned if it is not to lapse into chaos. The question for us is whether, in approaching this task, labour and capital in all the democracies of the British Commonwealth can so free themselves from old vested superstitions as to give the necessary discretion for replanning, and the

necessary mandate for mutual help and toleration, to international bodies.

That, at least, is one of the two questions that we have to prepare ourselves now to answer—now, above all, when our old toys look so small in the setting of life and death. The other is a greater question still, but I can do no more than mention it. It is the other side of the peace bargain. Having decided what is unimportant enough to be surrendered, what is it that is valuable enough to be purchased at this price? For the sacrifice will be real, even though it will be mainly a sacrifice of prejudices. What are we to ask in exchange?

Simply, I think, the recognition of one fact, which we ourselves have almost ceased consciously to recognize. All European civilization for sixteen hundred years has been based on one fundamental assumption: that State law must conform to moral standards which it cannot itself originate. These standards are the measure both of the powers of government and of the duties of citizenship. They are so absolute that their authority has been most accurately described in terms of revelation. But it is of the essence of this conception of civilization that these absolute standards are primarily standards, not for the State, but for the individual. Absolute as they are, every application of them to organized social action involves some compromise, and this debatable land of compromise has been, throughout European history, the scene of all the conflicts and entanglements of Church and State. On this paradox the whole fabric of our civilization rests. Democracy, in the only real sense of that word, is simply the extreme assertion of it—the claim that any exercise of political power must be measured by the individual citizen's sense of right and wrong, even though that measure must always be, to some extent, incompatible with the most efficient exercise of such power. Every effort to evolve a special political morality on the basis of 'reason of State', 'natural law', the 'rights of man' or the rights of nations, has ended in disaster, as it is ending in disaster to-day.

In other words, every conception of government ever formed by Europeans, but above all the conception of democracy, assumes the social recognition of a personal religion, and is meaningless without that assumption. To convert that assumption into the conscious and deliberate assertion of a faith is the other, and greater, half of peace-making. If we are to make peace by merging the Culture State in a wider union, the only possible name for that union is Christendom, and its success or failure will depend on its convinced acceptance of the essential implications of that name.