

World Declared in Peril of Annihilation Without Law to Curb Violence by Nations

Editor's note: The following article was written by a June graduate of the school of Journalism at the University of Oregon as an "editorial summary" of the conclusions developed in the senior thesis required of each graduate. The opinions are those of the writer.

By PATRICIA TREECE (Eugene, Ore.)

Sleeping well at night? Probably you are. And if you aren't it is more likely mother-in-law trouble than "the state of the world" that is keeping you awake. At least this is our nature: we all worry more about the million little cares of life than we do about the Grand Designs that end up in history books.

And in a world where the role of the common man has rarely been of greatest importance in the historical drama, this has never been particularly harmful.

We live today, however, in an era where each of us has a voice in the direction of public affairs, and depending upon how well and for what

we use it rests more than our individual fate, or even the fate of those we love. Resting upon us today is the very future of Life.

We are in such a crisis because we live in a world where law stops when relationships between people become relationships between states. If one of us murders another, he will be punished by law; but if we as a nation march upon another country and kill millions of its citizens no one is going to be tried for any crime.

In Peril of Annihilation

So what? you may say, this has always been so. True, but today without law to prevent violence between nations we are in peril of annihilation. For we also live in a world where in less than the time it takes you to finish reading this newspaper, nuclear armaments could be well on their way in the task of destroying you, your family, Life, and the world. There is no law

whatsoever, nothing but fear of retaliation and conscience to prevent this from happening.

You don't believe we're in danger of destruction? All a lot of scare talk? Ask your congressman his opinion. Go to the library and read the recent books by statesmen and world leaders. Ask your neighbor who visited Hiroshima after 1945 or the fellow in your lodge who witnessed a hydrogen blast in the Pacific. They believe it.

All of them will tell you that another war in our world means no world. And most of them will add that unless we achieve a rule of law to prevent it, a third world war sooner or later is inevitable. In short, we face a choice between inevitable war with inevitable annihilation and the hard job of achieving permanent peace under law.

Why peace under law—are there no other means to peace?

Other Means Being Tried

Certainly many other means to peace are currently being tried. They are doomed, however, to fail in the long run because they ignore or gloss over the fact that we need, as the old song says, a peace based upon something stable enough to last "not for just a day, not for just a year, but always."

For this kind of a peace there is only one answer. And it is not faster missiles, more planes, or bigger bombs, or anything else that is supposed to assure peace "by mutual terror." Nor does it lie in treaties and alliances pitting one bloc of nations against another in an effort to achieve peace through an ever shifting—often sagging—balance of power. It does not even lie simply in disarmament.

It is a more trustworthy, a more equitable way than these. Permanent peace in the world, as in society, must be achieved through the rule of law, for law is the only mechanism that combines the stability needed to keep the peace with the possibilities for growth and change which are necessary to make peace more than an enforcement of the status quo. It also provides, as nothing else can, for equality of treatment to all.

Must Prohibit Force

International law must prohibit the use of force among nations as it is prohibited among individuals. It also must provide pacific means for the settlement of disputes. It must make the courtroom the battlefield for the inevitable conflicts between states.

Impossible to achieve? On the contrary, more international law already exists than we realize. The International Court of Justice, for example, has sat at The Hague since 1899. And although many states (including our own) have been unwilling to rely on its justice when more forceful means of gaining "right" appeared to promise success, still the Court has a fine record in settling those disputes which have been brought before it.

And the Court is but one of the international agencies functioning today. Since the turn of the century there have been many pioneer attempts (of which today's agencies, including the UN, are the fruits) to establish law among nations. Many of the early efforts, such as the Pact of Paris in 1928 and the earlier League of Nations, did fail it is true. But then the first airplane did not fly either. And events do seem to show that we are moving toward greater legality in international affairs.

Lawyers' Conference Planned

In our own nation some of our Congressmen are vigorously promoting the rule of law, among them Oregon's Representative Charles Porter and Minnesota's Senator Humphrey. And the American Bar Association is planning a world conference of lawyers. Vice President Nixon has proposed that all U.S.S.R.-U.S. treaties include provision for submitting any resultant disputes to the International Court. And legislation has been introduced in Congress toward United States acceptance of complete jurisdiction by the International Court and

for our UN delegation to push for revision of the UN Charter for the purpose of strengthening law in the world.

The developments which are presently taking place must not for an instant result in complacency, however. The undertakings necessary to the establishment of law have but barely begun.

For one thing we have yet to make a real decision as to whether or not peace is our goal. No one talks much any more in terms of "I don't like what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." We appear more interested in bringing the world around to our point of view than in establishing a framework within which there will be room for us all—or where we can at least compete without violence.

Perhaps in actuality world peace is not our goal. Perhaps defeating Communism is. If this is so we will get further by stopping all our proclama-

tions about peace and justice for all and simply concentrating on this end. Let us be prepared, however, to accept without whimpering the deduction of our own civilization as the price of either defeat or victory.

Can Be Sure of Chance

If, however, we should want peace and are willing to sometimes forego our own advantage to attain the long run advantage of Mankind; then we can be sure of at least a fighting chance of achieving peace before "the next war."

Foremost is the necessity to state clearly that law with its equality for all is our goal and then to test all our actions against this end. We must also further and encourage all those groups and individuals who are working toward peace through law; and we should inform ourselves as individuals by reading some of the excellent recent books on the subject such as the monumental World Peace Through World Law of lawyers Louis Sohn and Grenville Clark; finally, we can make our opinion felt by our friends, our neighbors, our community and our leaders. If world law does save the world from annihilation—and nothing else short of divine intervention can—it depends upon you and me, all of us, working zealously together to create the right climate for its establishment. If we hurry, it is still not too late.

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