

# The Quest for Peace yesterday and today [Continuation]

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## THE QUEST FOR PEACE YESTERDAY AND TODAY.

*Memorial Lecture given by Professor William E. Rappard, of the University of Geneva, Director, Graduate Institute of International Studies, at the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, April, 1954.*

(Continuation)

### CONCLUSION

#### WHAT NOW?

Our rapid review of the two major enterprises which our generation has undertaken in order to combat war has led us to very negative results. The League of Nations has undoubtedly failed. The United Nations have undoubtedly not succeeded.

Have we then forgotten that this lecture is given under the auspices of the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, in grateful remembrance of that generous crusader, whose zeal for sounder international relations was unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries?

Are we unfaithful to his memory in denouncing the frailty of the present dispensation? Are we betraying the permanent trust which he has laid upon all his friends by the example of his life and efforts devoted to the cause of peace?

If I had any doubts on this score, indeed, if I had any reason to believe that the opinions to which an analysis of the past and the present had driven me would have been repudiated by him were he still amongst us, I should certainly not have spoken on this occasion.

When the invitation which has led me to do so reached me, some three months ago, I was I admit, troubled by some doubts. A thorough perusal of the writings of Lord Davies undertaken since has entirely dissipated them.

What was the essence of his thought?

It would be impossible, nor would it be necessary, to recall to his friends all the aspects, all the developments and all the technical products of his conception of organized peace. But from the early days, when in 1920 he first advanced the idea of an international police force, through the thirties, when he threw himself into the New Commonwealth movement, until after his death, when his posthumous *The Seven Pillars of Peace* appeared in 1945, we find him first and foremost a champion of justice. That was, for the complete British gentleman and perfect sportsman that he was to the core, the only foundation upon which it was for him possible, conceivable, or even desirable to erect the temple of peace.

No reader of his writings can have any doubts whatever on that basic fact.

It is not by accident that his principal work, *The Problem of the Twentieth Century*, is adorned on its very first page by a reproduction of Raphael's Vatican fresco of Justice. With sword in one hand and scales in the other, the female figure depicted is in herself the personified summary of his doctrine of peace. Davies defined it at the very outset of his discussion. He writes in his first chapter:

"What is the problem? Briefly stated, it resolves itself into the question of how to prevent war; but the

prevention of war is, after all, only a negative aspect of our enquiry. The real problem goes deeper; it is the eternal quest for justice."

This idea runs through all his works like a red ribbon. A few further quotations may serve to show this:

"... war cannot be eliminated unless it is possible to secure international justice or what President Roosevelt described as 'the peace of righteousness'. A peace founded on injustice cannot be permanent."

"Peace at any price usually means war in the long run. Those people whose vision is circumscribed by a desire to stave off trouble, to patch up a settlement, to secure peace for their own day and generation, regardless as to whether the grievance has been removed, are living in a fool's paradise..."

"... A peace established on injustice can never be stable; it will never stand the test of time. The treaties of peace negotiated at the conclusion of a great war which has aroused the worst passions of the combatants cannot be concluded on grounds of strict equity and impartiality. They invariably contain the seeds of injustice which give rise to disputes in the future."

"What does the conception of justice involve? To the ordinary man it signifies fair play and impartiality; the settlement of disputes on grounds of equity and not of interests; the application of reason instead of force. Most men possess an abstract idea of justice, and this belief has helped to knit them together into communities and, after many centuries, to secure their allegiance to the reign of law. 'Law



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is the bond of human society.' It may well be asked why it is that the same ideas have not permeated their minds in regard to the relationships of nations. Why is it that hitherto they have been content to slaughter each other in the name of justice, without taking the trouble to discover the means of securing it by an appeal to reason? Many explanations can no doubt be adduced for this state of mentality. The fetish of ultra-sovereignty, bolstered up by a false patriotism and supported by legal subtleties, has played its part. National pride and prejudice, exalting the characteristics of one nation at the expense of others, deprecating confidence in 'the foreigner' and ridiculing attempts at co-operation, are also responsible."

"It is clear, therefore, that the prevention of war and the ensuring of justice are not necessarily synonymous. It does not follow that because the former has been achieved, the claims of justice have been satisfied. If, however, an effective sanction could be applied, then it might be possible to secure both these results."

"... The problem of peace may be most realistically interpreted as the establishment of an international regime which can bring about in a peaceful manner the adjustments vital to the world's growth."

"... in the evolution of world consciousness, justice come before friendship. Real friendship cannot flourish if it is based on injustice. Two individuals cannot be friends if they are constantly being reminded that one or other is behaving in an unjust or, it may be, in a treacherous manner. If neither of them believes in the sanctity of contracts or in keeping good faith, how can they possibly be friends? If they share the belief that when their interests clash they possess the right of murdering each other, real friendship under these conditions is difficult to imagine.

"So it is between nations, and until justice becomes effective the second stage of development, friendship, will never become truly operative. It will never become a substitute for justice."

The same idea is expressed again and again throughout all the writings of Lord Davies. The following are a few extracts from his posthumous *The Seven Pillars of Peace*:

*"Justice, the Foundation of Peace"*

The second pillar of the Temple of Peace is Justice. Next to Morality it is the most important of all the pillars. It is indispensable, because war cannot be eliminated unless it is possible to secure international justice or what President Theodore Roosevelt once described as 'the peace of righteousness'.

It is a truism that a peace founded on injustice cannot be durable... Peace at any price means war in the long run."

*"Concept of Justice"*

Is it, then, surprising that up till now all attempts to erect this pillar in the Temple of Peace have met with failure? There is no reason, however, to suppose that the task is insuperable, but if it is to be accomplished, it means that the peoples and individuals who engage in this enterprise must be animated by zeal and enthusiasm for the ideal and concept of justice. They must regard it as an essential part of the higher purpose of life, something that is worth striving and dying for. Fortified by this conviction

the peoples will be able to save themselves from themselves, by themselves for themselves, by combining to extricate themselves from the shackles of national sovereignty which hitherto have prevented them from following the paths of sanity, justice and peace, and have caused them to stumble into the abyss of madness, anarchy and war."

*"Definition of Justice"*

Nevertheless the realists and reactionaries will persist, no doubt, in reiterating the question, "What is Justice?" Justinian defined it as 'the constant and perpetual wish to render everyone his due'. This wish is expressed in the injunction 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them'. To most of us it implies a just, fair and equitable settlement of all quarrels and disputes which, in default of mutual agreement, must be reached by an appeal to impartial and disinterested third party judgment."

In the face of these repeated, unqualified and never questioned statements, it must be obvious to all that for Lord Davies there could and there should be no assured peace without a generally applied state of justice. This in his view implied a universal recognition not only of the theoretical necessity of the enforcement of just solutions to all problems of international relations, but also of the practical triumph of generally admitted standards of fairness and equity between men and between nations. In his opinion all the rest — international police force, equity tribunals, national disarmament, surrender of national sovereignty to the international community — were to follow upon the recognition of the underlying

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necessity and of the overriding importance of justice. To be sure, in his view all these institutions were not only consequences, but also necessary conditions of the triumph of justice. It is on this road that Lord Davies was to pursue until the end a course, itself, alas, to become more and more solitary as he went. Even in the relatively civilised international régime of the Treaty of Versailles and of the League of Nations, many of his friends found it impossible to follow in the footsteps of Lord Davies, to share all his hopes and to advocate all the reforms which his generous idealism suggested to his untiring militant love of peace.

But today? Is it not obvious that these reforms would find neither moral basis nor therefore any prospect of immediate realization in a world of which a large part repudiated all his fundamental premises? When justice, to strong and to weak alike, is dismissed as an empty outgrown bourgeois prejudice, when the rights and fundamental freedoms of man are derided because his dignity is ignored, when love of peace is no longer pursued for its own sake, but set as a trap for the sincerely pacific by those who deem war inevitable and absolute national sovereignty infrangible, who consequently, condemning to impotence all international organizations not subservient to their own will, maintain preponderant military forces as a threat to would-be recalcitrants, what proximate hope can there be for such institutions of human progress as those which Lord Davies so nobly sought to set up?

I have no scruples in speaking thus because I am sure that our departed friend would not resent it. What he would resent, I have no doubt, would be idle dismay and abject surrender of our common love of justice and peace to powers of evil which he would denounce with no less conviction. Rather than warp his ideals to adapt them to a situation he had not foreseen — Lord Davies was anything but an appeaser — he would ask himself, as we have all to ask ourselves, what now?

When, looking over the world scene today, we compare it with that of Lord Davies' last years, we discover, lighting up the dismal plains of the contemporary international events, at least four new beacons of hope. They stand on German, Italian, Japanese and, especially, on American soil.

Before the second World War, Hitlerite Germany appeared as the main threat to peace and civilization. To be sure, Hitler and some of his immediate colleagues struck the outside world as madmen in a

sense and to a degree in which the past and present leaders of the Soviet Union do not. That may have been somewhat reassuring. History shows that madmen such as Nero, for instance, can do very appreciable damage to their immediate surroundings, but their achievements have never been known to be durably and generally destructive.

On the other hand, however, the geographical position of Germany in the heart of Europe and especially the technical and economic efficiency of her people made her for a time loom more threatening to civilization even than the Soviet Union does now.

Hitlerite Germany, completely defeated by the United Nations after a terrible struggle, is today, as a result of it, divided into three parts. The largest, the politically most powerful, and the most centrally situated in Europe, seems to have thrown in its lot with free Western civilization. The second, the so-called German popular democracy, is an enslaved Soviet satellite. The third part, further to the East still, has been very unequally divided between the new Poland and the U.S.S.R. Disquieting and unstable as is the situation thus created, it is certainly less ominous for the West than was the Reich of Hitler in 1939 and perhaps even than that of William II in 1914. A curious proof of the fact that this was held to be so by all the chief Allies as late as 1943 was their unanimous will, as expressed at the Teheran Conference in December of that year. Germany was to be broken up and to be disarmed as it is today.

*(To be continued.)*

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