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PEACE TRENDS

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Peace Trends

An address delivered by Anna Dill Gamble, Representative of the National Council of Catholic Women on the National Catholic Welfare Conference's Joint Committee on Peace, at the Eleventh Annual Convention of the National Council of Catholic Women.

YOU will pardon me, I hope, if in beginning this address I seem to be a little personal. I speak of my own reactions to world movements because they had such momentous consequences for me—namely my conversion to the Catholic Church, and because they may reveal something of the modern mind swirling in the midst of the mighty impact of forces, trying to find a foot-hold to fight for righteousness and justice, but finding everywhere the net of the enemy spread for its unwary feet.

I had been in the peace movement since before the outbreak of the World War and as I look back I can see how my pacifism prevented me from being carried away by the war-propaganda and the war-hysteria that drove our country into that world catastrophe. The whole organized "preparedness" movement left me cold—and yet I was equally repelled from the organized pacifist groups, who seemed to have become the instruments of pro-German propaganda, or who, in the same breath as they opposed international war, stridently demanded the class war, which was to be the real war that was to end war. For after world revolution and the



drenching of humanity in blood, we at last would have a utopia of peace with no one left but the proletariat.

It was this profound realization of conflicting world forces, struggling for the mastery of mankind, and the inextricable confusion of good and evil that drove me into examining the claims of the Catholic Church.

It seemed to me that the whole world had been caught up into a terrific cosmic storm. Was the war between St. Michael the Archangel and Lucifer at last reaching a climax? But how was I to know St. Michael from Lucifer—when both seem to be wearing the shining armor of Truth—when both are clad in such an effulgence of light as to confuse the very elect themselves?

I was but a lone atom among “the ignorant armies clashing by night”—to use those wistful words of Matthew Arnold. But at last I decided that I would no longer remain among the wistful, and the ignorant. I would learn to recognize, the marks of St. Michael and the marks of Lucifer and I would choose my side and fight strongly and intelligently on the side of Love and of Eternal Justice.

Today the conscience of mankind demands that its statesmen solve the problem of international disputes by some other method than by warfare—if civilization itself is to endure. American women everywhere are eager to participate in the peace movement if only they can be sure of not being misled. It has been my experience among non-Catholic groups that the mere fact of Catholic participation in the Peace movement gives to many women a sense of security. Our responsibility then is great. It is a responsibility not only to our Catholic groups, but to the bewildered world of America. This responsibility involves a thorough understanding of the whole peace movement—and above all, of the Catholic philosophy of Peace, wherein it differs from the philosophy of non-Catholic pacifists.

I take it that every woman present has read the excerpt on Peace from the Holy Father's allocution last Christmas to the College of Cardinals. In this document the importance of promoting Christian peace is pointed out as "a vast and glorious field for all the Catholic laity." But in order to disentangle our minds from what he calls "a sentimental, confused and unwise pacifism," the Holy Father clearly sets forth the indispensable marks of "true peace." He declares that "it is a grave error to believe that true and lasting peace can exist among men and among peoples so long as they turn first and foremost and avidly in search of sensible, material and earthly things." He reminds us also that it is another error to suppose that "true external peace can reign between men and people where there is not internal peace, where the spirit of peace does not possess the intelligence and heart, or better the souls of men," referring us in this connection to the words of Isaias the Prophet (32:17) "And the work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice quietness and security forever."

This brings us, of course, into the whole field of Catholic social action, for, as the Holy Father points out, there can be no peace where there is "industrial injustice," or "selfish nationalism" for these create social unrest, and whatever creates social unrest, creates violence and bloodshed.

But let us examine a little further into this "sentimental, confused and unwise pacifism"; which, as the Holy Father declares, does not, like true peace, "possess the intelligence, so as to recognize and respect the claims of justice." This unwise pacifism, which supposes that by minimizing the religious differences of men, by ignoring principles and stressing policies, by declaring that everybody is right and nobody is wrong and that one can "reconcile every idea in its vast synthesis"—such a pacifism can have only for its end the destruction of Truth and, therefore, of Peace itself.

One cannot have been long in the peace movement without being struck with the singular fact that so many pacifist leaders turn almost instinctively to the East for inspiration. Their ancestors rejected the Catholic Faith. They themselves are now living in a world that knows nothing of the mind of Christ. They have ceased at last to draw any inspiration from Christian sources. So it is to India, to China, and to Judaism that they turn for leadership and for their philosophy of peace. One has only to mention such great names to conjure with as, Einstein, Rabindranath Tagore, and Gandhi to realize how necessary it is for Catholic women to proclaim to the world the Christian way of peace.

But before we go any further, I would like to make it perfectly clear that this is not a plea for Catholics not to cooperate with non-Catholics as to the practical problems of Peace such, for instance, as the substitution of international law for war, or the support of the movement for universal disarmament. What I do wish is to warn Catholics that they are assuming a very grave moral and spiritual responsibility in entering into such collaboration without a thorough and complete knowledge of the subject from the Catholic point of view. We should be quite willing to recognize the drift of our non-Catholic colleague's pacifist philosophy, and be able to counter false assumptions by presenting the Christian position when the occasion demands it. We should be sensitive to the danger of the compromise of Catholic Truth where peace groups either take for granted or insist in one way or another, on the equality of all religions. Now I do not mean to say that all non-Catholic peace groups accept explicitly any such philosophy; but I think it is no exaggeration to say that most non-Catholic peace leaders, even among Protestant missionary groups, are coming more and more to accept implicitly the idea that universal peace can

be attained only when all men accept each other's religious faiths are equally true. Is it that they are being lured into an attempt to attain the unity of mankind under the leadership of some other spirit than the spirit of God? I do not know. I can only say that to me there is something tragic in the sight of so many highminded people longing for peace in this distracted world and yet unconsciously lending themselves to what seems to be the hegemony of evil itself.

World Unity Magazine, a periodical which claims to interpret the spirit of the age on international problems, and to represent the "emergence of new and higher values in philosophy, science, religion, ethics and the arts from the alembic of universal unrest," states four focal points which the spirit of the age regards as destructive of world unity. First, "the nationalistic political structure of the world"; second, "the competitive economic structure of the world"; third, "the present educational structure of the world with its divided authority and responsibility between Church and State"; and fourth, "the present sectarian religious structure" which we are told, "lacks spiritual power to guide humanity according to a universal intelligence and will."

Now the Holy See has repeatedly called upon the world to correct its "hard and selfish nationalism" by true patriotism and to substitute for a cruel competitive economic system, industrial justice. So that these questions are not here in dispute. It is to the third and fourth points that I would call your attention: the questions of education and religion.

Undoubtedly *World Unity* would be right if it declared as one of the forces destructive of peace, the attempt of the modern absolutist state to get complete possession of the child. But it does not so state the issue. It names "the divided authority of church and state" as one of the focal points in the destruction of world unity. The question that any clearminded person would naturally ask is: how would

those peace advocates unite authority in education?— Would they do so under the Church? As the editors do not recognize the Church's authority, we can be certain they cannot mean this. Would they turn education entirely over to the state? But in their first point they have already denounced "the present nationalist state as one of the forces destructive of peace."

The answer will be found at the close of the fourth point: the authority and responsibility to which *World Unity* looks for the solution of "the divided authority of church and state in education", is some unnamed "universal intelligence and will." We are not told through whom and by what authority this "universal intelligence and will" is to manifest itself. We who are Catholics must sadly acknowledge that there is ever more clearly unfolding before our eyes an "intelligence and will" which would have us believe it to be universal and which is disputing with God Himself the possession of mankind.

Reduced then to a few words, where the non-Catholic philosophy of peace differs from the Catholic is in its support of secularism in education and syncretism in religion.

It was no mere accident that all the peace groups of America raised a great clamor of support for Calles in Mexico and for Stalin in Russia on the educational issue, or that the Federal Council of Churches' Friendship Bags and Treasure Chests were sent as a demonstration of approval to the secular educational systems of Mexico, of the Philippines, and this year, of Porto Rico.

As for syncretism in religion, I think it is no exaggeration to say that peace leaders are coming more and more to accept unquestioningly and without examination the assumption of the time Spirit that universal peace can be attained only when all men have accepted each other's religions as equally true; and let me remind you that this word "religion"

today is applied not only to what the modern intellectual is fond of referring to as "the seven great faiths of the world—Hindooism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Taoism, Mohammedanism, Judaism and Christianity"—but to atheism itself. This reference to atheism as a religion or Communism as a religion is heard everywhere today. We are constantly being exhorted to a sympathetic consideration of the idea that there can be a religion without a god, and that there can even be Christianity without Christ. Professor Einstein and Dr. Robert A. Milliken have recently put the stamp of their scientific approval on that kind of thinking, so we are not surprised to find the whole hoard of little intellectuals "who write with ease," falling into line with dull platitudes about the Golden Rule and "living up to the highest that is in us", and so on.

At any rate, we are at last face to face with what M. Jacques Maritain, the great French man of letters, calls the two universalities—the authentic universality of Christ, "the universality of Truth and Faith which excludes error," and the universality of chaos. I do not see how we can evade the issue. We have either to pledge ourselves to the Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ—or we are pledged, whether we will or not, to the attempted "marriage of the yea and nay"—of Heaven and Hell.

The belief that peace consists in the negation of truth and justice is undermining the whole of our western world. It is this propaganda of defeatism towards civilization, this rearing up of chaos against order, this nihilism, that is spreading fear and suspicion, that is destroying credit and undermining governments. It is this fear that drives people away from the peace movement to take refuge in militarism.

My firm belief is that unless Catholics take the lead in peace propaganda, the idea of peace itself in the hands of the enemy of mankind will be made the means of wrecking

our civilization. Wherever Catholics have been slow in facing issues, the enemy has seized the reins and has driven the mob. We have seen the sad truth of this in the religious revolution of the 15th century and in the French Revolution. If Catholics more generally had heeded the *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII forty years ago, Marxism would never have achieved its present driving force. Let me quote from "Essays on Religion and Culture" by M. Jacques Maritain, (in a recent book "Essays in Order" edited by Christopher Dawson). "How many things," cries M. Maritain, "would be different if some sixty years ago it had been a disciple of St. Thomas who had written a book on Capital as decisive as that of Marx, but based on true principles! Our principles, alas! are asleep and error is ever on the watch, active and enterprising. I have referred elsewhere to the terrifying lack of attention shown by the Catholic world to the warnings issued by Leo XIII with reference to social affairs. On the whole, and in spite of the effort of a few, who kept honour safe, the bankruptcy of this world in the last century in face of problems directly involving the dignity of human personality and Christian justice is one of the most distressing phenomena of modern history."

In the October, 1931 issue of *Foreign Affairs* appears an article by Viscount Cecil on the coming Disarmament Conference. He shows with convincing clarity that whatever are the causes for the world economic crisis and the long-continued depression, and making "all allowance" for "the special circumstances that gave rise to it, . . . it would not have occurred if the moral and intellectual conditions of the world had been healthy. A sudden loss of confidence on the scale we have recently witnessed" (he is referring here especially to the German crisis—but it applies equally to the crisis in Great Britain and to the United States as well) "is abnormal. The normal thing is for men to trust one another."

It is this appalling breakdown of credit that is the most disquieting symptom of a world-wide social malady. Is it not that having first lost faith in God, people are now losing faith in each other? Strange systems of ethics are being inculcated at our secular colleges. To know that subversive moral ideas are not only current in some circles, but are being systematically spread among the masses is not conducive to that trust in the honor and fair-dealing of others upon which civilization is built. Are not governments like Russia and Mexico deliberately uprooting the religious and moral foundations upon which their civilization has hitherto been based; and is not this fundamentally destructive position on the part of these governments either approved, condoned, or ignored by the vast majority of pacifists today on the astonishing assumption that destruction of Christian morals has nothing to do with Peace?

In his Christmas allocution, the Holy Father gives the world a very clear warning on this subject when he points out that peoples cannot "possess and enjoy that tranquility in order and freedom which is the essence of peace so long as they are beset at home and abroad by threats and dangers which are not balanced by sufficient measures and provisions of defense. And certainly threats and dangers are inseparable from anti-social and anti-religious propaganda."

Pacifism that is not based on Christian ideals of peace cannot fail but stiffen the military attitude of many groups. What sort of a reaction, for instance, can we expect from such countries as Poland and Roumania, not to mention France, when importuned for peace by a pacifism, whose leaders at the same time are acting as apologists for Communism? As an example of what I mean, I have only to refer to the propaganda on behalf of the Soviet system of Education and for the Soviet anti-God campaign to which Rabindranath Tagore lent himself during his visit to America in 1930.

It is extremely easy to denounce European countries because they insist upon military security; but if they are to be convinced that large armaments only add to the vicious circle that creates war, they must be reassured by a peace propaganda that carries nothing in it of defeatism towards the positive achievements of civilizations.

The point I wish to make is that the motives for the defensive attitude of European governments towards each other are not in themselves entirely without reason. They are based on nationalistic fear and suspicion, the logical result of the breakdown of Christendom in the 15th century, and the subsequent development of an unchristian industrial social order. The fears and suspicions growing out of these causes are still further intensified by the present-day popular uprooting of Christian morals, the almost universal anti-Catholic propaganda, and the teaching of the class-war.

The protagonists of these destructive teachings are today trying to act as peace-makers; but in their "sentimental, confused, and unwise pacifism," they are literally "crying peace, peace, where there is no peace."

It seems to me then that in emphasizing the unity of mankind we should make a more determined effort to clarify for ourselves, as well as for others, the fundamental Catholic teaching that God has made of one blood all nations and races and that Catholics are all members of Christ, whether we are white or black or yellow or red, American, Irish, English, French or German. The attempt to base world unity on tolerance of error rather than on the Christian tolerance of blood is one of the authentic marks of anti-Christ. Let us be tolerant where the Church commands us to be tolerant, and intolerant where she warns us to be intolerant, and we can scarcely be misled by the time spirit.

This whole question of racial understanding has become strewn with misunderstandings; and it is here that many

Catholics sometimes find it difficult to disentangle the thread of truth from the confused and matted mass of modern thought. The part the Church has taken in civilizing the Indian, for instance, is either ignored or misinterpreted. The whole recent trend towards a riot of naturalism in art, literature and philosophy of course explains much in the policy of most peace groups in regard to so-called backward peoples. The cult of the primitive blinds peace groups, as it does other modernists, to the benefits of a Christian culture. The sentimental fallacy that assumes that because subject peoples have been unjustly treated by their conquerors, therefore these peoples must be right in their whole reaction upon life, in their nature worship, in their morals, and in their aesthetics, is intensified by the Rousseauistic theory that man is essentially good and has been corrupted only by his civilization and his institutions. By the sentimental believer in the "goodness" of human nature the Church, with Her doctrine of original sin and man's need for salvation, is regarded as the enslaver of mankind, and the fundamental cause of all social ills. While Rousseauism is no longer accepted with the same unquestioned faith as it was a generation ago, because of the disastrous results of unfettered human nature in the industrial field, the leaders of international peace groups are still influenced by the revolutionary utopian philosophy that assumes that all we have to do is to "free" mankind from religion and moral restraint, to ensure him both peace and happiness and a new start in civilization. It is this philosophy of "freedom" that has created a serious problem not only for the Church, but for the peace of the whole world—in China and Latin-American countries, as well as in industrial Europe and America.

The leading part that Jews as well as Hindoos and theosophists have taken in the peace movement deserves a word. The apocalyptic nature of Jewish tradition with its Mes-

sianic instinct is in part an explanation. Professor Einstein may not have retained much Old Testament mysticism, but we must concede to him plenty of Jewish idealism. Jewish leadership is not surprising, but what is surprising is that so many non-Jews are accepting their pacifism with religious veneration from Professor Einstein when they have refused to accept it from Christ.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc's indictment of the modern mind, I believe to be not too severe. He says it contains "three main ingredients . . . pride, ignorance and intellectual sloth," and he adds that the "unifying principle" of these three characteristics is "a blind acceptance of authority, not based on reason."

Never before have we had such a surrender of the intellect to mere instinct and feeling; and the unquestioned acceptance of dogmas uttered by great pundits like Einstein, Tagore, Count Keyserling, Marx or Lenin, is one of the curious manifestations of the time spirit.

Count Keyserling, "the Baltic philosopher" whose mysticism, optimism and egoism have made him one of America's best sellers, tells us quite frankly that he does not expect us to use our reason in following his transcendentalism. "I am of the opinion," he says, "that there is only one mortal sin against wisdom, viz.: discussion. Discussion is the only thing I do not admit."

I do not wish to be unjust to theosophists. Theosophy is undoubtedly the modern reaction against materialism. In his "Yesterdays of an Artist-Monk," Dom Willibrord Verkade, the Dutch Benedictine convert from Theosophy to the Catholic Church, says, "Theosophy is a halfway station for the better class of pagans, upon whose vision the light of perfect truth has not yet dawned, a temporary dwelling for the spiritually homeless, a fencing-school for religious diletantism. If its devotees would employ only one half of the

time and effort which they use to initiate themselves into the doctrines of Brahma and Buddha in gaining a deeper understanding of the Christian mysteries, what a splendid increase both in quantity and quality the Church would soon be able to rejoice over. For there is no doubt that among theosophists there are some rare spirits."

However, many European interpreters of oriental thought like Romaine Rolland, seem to hate the Catholic Church with an extraordinary bitterness. They would prefer even atheism of the Soviet type to Christianity. In an interview published in "Asia", March, 1931, appears a very significant conversation between Romaine Rolland and Rabindranath Tagore in which they attack all sacrificial religions whether in India or in Europe, and Tagore goes so far as to assert that a vogue of intolerant atheism would be a good thing for India.

In conclusion, I should like you to go back to the first words used by the Holy Father in defining for us true peace. He says, "It is a grave error to believe that true and lasting peace can rule among men and among peoples so long as they turn first and foremost and avidly in search of sensible, material, earthly things." Jacques Maritain in "The Things That Are Not Caesars," shows that exterior activity three centuries ago began to absorb the whole of the life of man. "The world," he said, "turned to conquest and to the practical utilization of matter, away from union with God . . . conversion to perishable goods, the definition of mortal sin, gradually became the general attitude of civilization."

To convert the world to Christ is to convert the world to peace, and thus to save our civilization. This is a commonplace of our religion—but it is so terribly urgent today that it makes us tremble.

October 6, 1931..

