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Japan Attacks Us

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IN reflecting upon the savage Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Philippine Islands which catapulted the United States into full participation in total war, my mind travels back to two interviews which I had with Secretary Hull on September 1, 1937 and again on January 30, 1940. They suggest something of the presuppositions and spirit in the minds of those responsible for our Government's policy in the last four years regarding Japan. The first interview occurred less than two months after the "incident" which flared into shooting war between China and Japan. This fighting was, I believed, real war and something which should have led the United States to put its neutrality legislation into action at once and to withdraw American Marines from China as soon as reasonable opportunity had been given American citizens to get out of belligerent territory. Above all, the situation seemed to me to offer a challenge and opportunity for the United States, as a Good Neighbor, to find a helpful way of mediation that would possibly have restored and safeguarded peace in the Pacific. But in Mr. Hull's mind and words Japan was an "international bandit" and, instead of thinking about any withdrawal of Marines, he justified the recent dispatch of 1,200 more of them from San Diego to Shanghai by saying in a State Department release, "If we wanted to be insulted fifty times a week, we only needed to let the impression be gained that we did not protect our nationals and that in no circumstances would we be disposed to protect them."

In January 1940, I laid before Secretary Hull an appeal from the National Peace Conference urging that attempts be made to initiate immediate and continuing mediation between Europe's belligerents — mediation by the United States in cooperation with the Pope, with the heads of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Italy and other neutrals and urging that all the belligerents be requested to "state once more their peace terms". Although this referred primarily to the war in Europe, the Sino-Japanese war was also in much of our discussion. Mr. Hull took a full half hour to interpret the broad lines of U. S. policy as it related to the wars going on in Europe and Asia. Mr. Hull undoubtedly sincerely wanted peace but it was equally clear that he meant to defend what he considered were America's commercial rights in China. And again, the Japanese, Germans, etc.

were "bandits" in his thinking and in his words. I remember, vividly, the way he looked when he said, in referring to Japanese diplomats, "I used to think when I talked to these fellows that they were looking at me. Now I know they were not. They were looking over my shoulder. They were looking to see how big was the navy behind me!" One wonders whether we had ever given the Japanese any reason for ignoring our navy or whether our diplomacy ever proceeded on the assumption that this navy was non-existent. If so, why did we go to the expense of keeping it? If not, why be surprised at Japanese diplomats for including it in their calculations?

I believe that Secretary Hull has been high-minded, devoted and tenacious in holding to the pattern on which he is sure world peace must be built. At the same time his reliance on threats of force in negotiations and actual force at the end of the road, seems to me to have been as tragically mistaken as was Woodrow Wilson's attempt to end war by entering war. The United States had its part in the chain of things which exploded at Pearl Harbor.

Back of the Japanese onslaught there, I see the picture of an injured, angry, cornered, frightened animal. For nearly a century Japan, in common with other Orientals, has borne the insults and stings of white men's domineering enforced by the white men's naval vessels and soldiers in territory belonging to the yellow peoples. The United States rubbed this irritation deeper by the passage of the Oriental Exclusion Act in 1924—something which President Roosevelt conspicuously failed to mention in his review of 88 years of Japanese-American relations laid before Congress on December 15th and an injury for which there was no hint of apology or reparation in any of the notes published by Secretary Hull. Although the United States has talked much about the "Open Door" in China, it has more and more closed both the doors of immigration and of economic opportunity for Japan in the territory that is our own.

Japan supports a dense population on islands which are only in part tillable. If our country were as densely settled, the United States would have a population of one and a half billion, nearly equal to the total present population of the whole globe. Suppose we were trying to maintain that many people and were as short of many key resources as

Japan is and that then a much more powerful nation instituted an economic blockade against us! Yet this was exactly the weapon with which America loaded the guns of her negotiations. On one occasion, Senator Key Pittman who was then the Chairman of our Senate Committee on Foreign Relations remarked, in a diatribe against Japan, "Why shoot a man if you can starve him to death?" Then, in addition to numerous inflammatory and fear-provoking articles in our magazines and press, like General William Mitchell's *Liberty* article describing how an American air force would be able to fly from Alaska and set fire to Tokyo, Osaka and Japan's inflammable cities constructed of wood and paper, successive Presidents from Theodore Roosevelt on, have insisted on staging powerful naval demonstrations on the Japanese side of the Pacific. By such measures we proposed to frighten Japan into being good to China or accepting our peace pattern. They frightened Japan all right but the fear exploded into war. The fact that Japan herself has been brutally aggressive to China and that she lined up with Hitler's "gang" and has for years lived under a nightmare of fear of communism and of Russia only added to her fears of the United States. So the bursting point came when the Emperor and his military advisers found themselves in a desperate corner and saw the economic and military ring of the ABCD Powers closing in upon them.

Japan's Sunday morning attack on Hawaii was sprung by her military group while peace negotiations were in progress and in advance of a declaration of war. But, from the Japanese point of view, the United States was already waging undeclared naval war against Japan's ally, Germany, and actively assisting China, and exulting in the arrival of battleships and planes in Singapore and Manila, signifying the near-completion by the United States, Great Britain and Dutch imperialist forces of military measures to enforce the virtual ultimatum which the U. S., on November 26th, had handed to Japan. All this does not excuse the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines but surely, under the circumstances, neither our navy at Hawaii nor the American people should have been surprised that Japan made an unannounced lunge to cripple us.

None of the foregoing arguments is intended to whitewash or justify Japan. Like the woman taken in adultery, Japan has done horrible evil things. The measure of her crime is full. But that does not make the United States so righteous and blameless as the "White Papers" of Secretary Hull and President Roosevelt would have us appear. We are no Sir Galahad with heart so pure that we can cast the first stone or carry war into Japanese homes and cities in any such fashion as will be acceptable to God.

If it is conceivable that the United States might have dealt with Japan with more regard for the teachings of Jesus, our State Department would have seen that Japan, possessed by the devils of pride, fear and militarism, could not be reformed by our adding to the fears which drove her berserk. Instead, we should have tried to build defense for America, China and Japan by substituting for armaments and "measures short of war," policies and deeds of peace—like imaginative sympathy, trust, more eagerness to give and less to hold or get, appreciation of each nation's good qualities and rivalry in deeds of friendship such as our help to Tokyo after the earthquake and Japan's

gift of cherry trees to Washington. Actually the State Departments and the War Departments of both nations were always looking over each other's shoulders to see how big were the navies behind. Billions of dollars were spent on these instruments of death infected to the hilt with germs of fear and suspicion while no comparable sacrifices were made regarding tariffs, immigration arrangements, revision of frontiers, readjustment of a war-inciting economic *status quo* and no provision of third-party international machinery for peaceful adjustment which could have effected real change in the direction of justice. To sum it up, both nations paid more tribute to Mars, and put more faith in him than they did in Christ or in the discovery of truth about human relations which Christ had proclaimed for all. When either nation did wrong the other had not enough reliance on love to forgive; much less to risk any course of conduct that might lead it near a Cross. We trusted in Mars, each gradually became more like him and Mars has us both in his horrible grip today.

Will continued war break that grip? The reply of Christianity—even of common sense—is that it cannot do so. Deliverance from the body of this death is possible only through repentance. And that means radically changing our past methods and ways. Nations today are so interdependent—like parts of the body—that competitive killing can only bring more woe. "Except ye repent", said Jesus to his countrymen, "ye shall all likewise perish."

Faced with the outbreak of war as a result of the conditions to which I have referred and which our contemporary, *The Christian Century*, has often recounted with brilliant and impassioned eloquence, *The Christian Century* in a recent editorial, entitled "An Unnecessary Necessity" states:

"We, too, must accept the war. We see no other way at the moment but the bloody way of slaughter and immeasurable sacrifice. Our Government has taken a stand. It is *our* Government. It spoke for us as the voice of our national solidarity. It was *our* voice. The President is *our* President, and all his official acts, even those which we disapprove, are *our* acts. We are all bound together in the bundle of a common national life . . . *The Christian Century* goes into the war with the consciousness of having to make a tragic choice . . . We choose to stand with our country."

The Christian Century makes its choice with "haunting doubts" in what it denominates an "area which might be called the no-man's-land of reason and ethics, a choice which faith must make in the twilight zone of God's revealed will." It is "not sure" that its "judgment is sound."

If now Kagawa of Japan should say the same words, substituting only the word *Emperor* for President in the above quotation, would he, a Christian, be acting under "an unnecessary necessity"? Was Martin Niemoeller, likewise a Christian, acting under "an unnecessary necessity" if, as reported, he offered from his concentration camp, to go and operate a submarine for Hitler? Even though there were much more to be said for American statesmen and against the Japanese than I have indicated, what does Christ hold to be necessary for his followers both in Japan and here? Does God's revealed will for men stop at the border "of a common national life"? Does it sidestep any "no-man's-land" or fail to assert the supremacy of

His universal timeless kingdom? Has Jesus taught his disciples nothing distinctive about overcoming evil? Is there, at the present desperate Christmas and Epiphany season no "radiance streaming" from the Star of Bethlehem?

In the judgment of some 25,000 members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation—living in many nations, loyal to their own folk but bound also in the bundle of humanity and in super-national allegiance to the kingdom of God—the one effective answer to totalitarian aggression is total Christianity. This includes for us total pacifism. This faith gives us radiant light. We have seen it give light to others. Through others, such as the Quakers, this light first came to many among us. We are persuaded that what we see thousands, and then millions, of men can see. In the near future—if you measure time by centuries instead of years—men will live by the light and power of the pacifist faith and method just as today whole nations live in the daylight of truth revealed by the scientific method and its pioneers.

The Executive Committee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States has suggested to members some points for our way in the midst of war. They will be found on page 2 of this magazine. *Fellowship* intends to be guided by them. We shall not support the war. Our allegiance is to a total Christ who calls us to the ways of a total love that casts out the evil methods of war.

Why Conscience Matters

The advance of the community depends not merely on the improvement and elevation of its moral maxims, but also on the quickening of moral sensibility. The latter work has mostly been effected, when it has been effected on a large scale, by teachers of a certain singular personal quality. They do nothing to improve the theory of conduct, but they have the art of stimulating men to a more enthusiastic willingness to rise in daily practice to the requirements of whatever theory they may accept. The love of virtue, of duty, of holiness, or by whatever name we call this powerful sentiment, exists in the majority of men, where it exists at all, independently of argument. It is a matter of affection, sympathy, association, aspiration. Hence, even while, in quality, sense of duty is a stationary factor, it is constantly changing in quantity.

The amount of conscience in different communities, or in the same community at different times, varies infinitely. The immediate cause of the decline of a society in the order of morals is a decline in the *quantity of its conscience*, a deadening of its moral sensitiveness, and not a depravation of its theoretical ethics. The Greeks became corrupt and enfeebled, not for lack of ethical science, but through the decay in the numbers of those who were actually alive to the reality and force of ethical obligations. Mahometans triumphed over Christians in the East and in Spain—if we may for a moment isolate moral conditions from the rest of the total circumstances—not because their scheme of duty was more elevated or comprehensive, but because their respect for duty was more strenuous and fervid.

The great importance of having this priceless element in a community as free, as keen and as active as possible is overlooked by the thinkers who uphold coercion against

We know that nations in our day, as in Christ's day, are blind to this light. But Christ's light of the world should shine in his disciples' minds and hearts and in the fellowship of Christian believers. If the light that is in them be not darkness, then are they commissioned to go and "teach all nations". Amidst the complexities of the present world situation, they must often "walk by faith and not by sight", must learn to "sow in tears" and only later perhaps "reap in joy". They must leave much to God in whose hands are the issues of history. Yet their brethren in the Church who now bow to "an unnecessary necessity" and take up the weapons of war—and who must indeed obey their consciences, as the pacifist must obey his—are in more tragic plight. They can have little assurance of controlling the terrible forces of total war which they now help to accelerate. Beset with "haunting doubts", they cling to a slender hope that "the bloody way of slaughter", which they deprecate and abhor, will *this time* lead to peace.

Pacifists, on the other hand, though they be a tiny minority in the midst of a war-making world, are unshaken in the assurance that it is for such an hour that they have been called to the Kingdom. They do not need to fear nor bow before "an unnecessary necessity". They have enlisted under the banner of the mightiest of all leaders, the banner of *Jesus, Prince of Peace*.

liberty, as a saving social principle. Every act of coercion directed against an opinion or a way of living is in so far calculated to lessen the quantity of conscience in the society where such acts are practised. . . . Louis XIV, in revoking the Edict of Nantes, and the author of the still more cruel law of 1724, not only violently drove out multitudes of the most scrupulous part of the French nation, he virtually offered the most tremendous bribes to those of less stern resolution, to feign conversion to the orthodox faith. This was to treat conscience as a thing of mean value. It was to scatter to the wind with both hands the moral resources of the community. And who can fail to see the strength which would have been given to France in her hour of storm, a hundred years after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, if her protestant sons, fortified in the habits of individual responsibility . . . had only been there to aid!

—Lord Morley: *Essay On Compromise*.

John Haynes Holmes, Pacifist

The others move. The other stars wheel by.
Inching across the night, they saunter forth.
But this one mental fire stays sternly north,
Unhindered by the drift across the sky.

A compass will be set against this light
In later years, when ships are planned to scar
Pale glimmering waters, formerly too far,
And undiscovered countries loom in sight.

There must be movement as the planets press
Their plea for music, rhythmical design,
But Man's unsteady heart will choose as shrine
A polar point of astral changelessness.

EDITH LOVEJOY PIERCE.