

The Price of Peace is Hard Thinking

AMONG the representatives of United Nations at Lake Success, Charles Malik of Lebanon, is hardly as well known to the world as Yakov Malik of the Soviet Union, but when the former spoke a few days ago in the UN programme "The Price of Peace" New Zealanders discovered that he was worth listening to. The full text of his address, which drew more favourable comment from listeners than any other so far heard in the series, is printed below.

IN my opinion, the first, the most important "price of peace," the peace on which everything else depends, is to be absolutely clear as to what the fundamental issues are. This requires hard, sustained thinking. Thus the first price is of an intellectual order; namely, to understand and be sure of the truth. One basic tragedy in the world today is that hard-headed thought among even the leaders is not at a premium. People have replaced reason and thought with emotion, feeling, instinct, reliance on force and a vague and wishful hopefulness that all will somehow turn out well in the end.

In the 19th Century certain grave social and economic ills developed in Western society. These ills would not have developed if the mind and conscience of the West were sharp in their apprehension of the truth. Thus it was a softening of the spirit and mind which gave rise to the crises of industrialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

It follows that the rise of Karl Marx a hundred years ago must be blamed on the spiritual crisis of the West. If people were not as greedy and callous as they were, if they did not slip from the respect for man and his spiritual needs to the respect, even the worship, of machines and things, and if they clearly perceived the consequences of their ideas and acts, Karl Marx would never have arisen, and if he did arise, he never would have succeeded in translating his doctrine into political embodiment. Thus the "price of peace" today, whereby Marxism can be met and adequately answered, is to do everything possible to turn the attention of men toward their moral and spiritual responsibilities.

We do not see our fellow men enough. We do not know them. We do not recognise their souls. We do not enter into loving relationships with them. We hardly ever meet them as person to person. As a result, we know them only as moving animals producing and wanting economic goods. A society that thus reduces man to the level of the "economic animal," and does not show sufficient active concern for his soul, can never know peace. For peace is to be in the truth; and the truth is that man exists primarily by his reason and conscience, so that if these are neglected, there is no end to the social havoc that his distorted being will then produce.

IT is customary these days to see in the underdevelopment of certain regions the possibility of war. And so people say, "If only you remove poverty, do away with hunger and starvation, cure disease and raise the so-called 'standard of living' of these regions, you will have peace."

But nothing can be more fallacious than this sentimental, even if sincere, reasoning. In fact, Marx chuckles in his

grave when he hears it; for this is exactly his analysis of man. This reduction of man to his economic and material needs is the triumph of Marxism in the Western world today. Marxism can never be met, and peace can never be established, so long as people employ the Marxist viewpoint, whereby man is derived purely from his economic and material conditions, in their fight against Marxism.

The poor, the sick, the dispossessed must certainly be done justice to. But to suppose that there will be peace when everybody is materially happy and comfortable, just because they are materially happy and comfortable, is absolute nonsense. It is the rich and comfortable, those who have no material worry, who are so bored with their existence that they can only tolerate it by hating, scheming against, and fighting one another.

Thus I ask you: is it an accident that it is never the poor and dispossessed in the underdeveloped countries who first disturb the peace, but always the intellectuals? It is these intellectuals, living amidst real situations of injustice, but at the same time filled with hatred and nihilism and a false view of human nature, who are the real cause of unrest in the world today.

So the root cause of upheaval and war is a distorted mind exploiting the misery of unhappy people. And the "price of peace," therefore, is to correct this intellectual aberration, to touch the wills of these intellectuals with redeeming love, to restore them to the sanity and peace of Truth. For man, entirely apart from his material needs, has a will and a soul which exist in order to be touched by love and friendship; and, therefore, when man is not loved, when he finds himself friendless, when he suspects that he is rejected, he will rise in rebellion against the whole universe which has brought him into existence only to make a mockery of him.

The viewing of man in his proper nature as a creature endowed first with reason and conscience;

the honest elaboration and affirmation of human rights in theory, and the constant endeavour to close the gap between theory and practice in this realm;

the intellectual showing up of Marxism for what it is, namely a spiritual onslaught on nature, reason, freedom and spirit;

the adequate meeting of this challenge, not by outwitting it in its own terms and on its own plane, but by emphatically reaffirming that which it denies, namely, the primacy of the spiritual and intellectual, and by placing that which



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it affirms, namely, the material and economic, in its proper subordinate place—in short, the vigorous awakening of the Western world to its original intellectual, moral and spiritual foundations:

this is the first and most important price that must be paid if we are going to have peace, real peace, in the world.

OF course, there are given concrete, material conditions that must be faced:

(1) The military weakness of the Western world has been a great danger for peace. Those who voluntarily disarmed themselves five years ago under the impact of a wave of sentimental optimism have only themselves to blame if they find their countries and cultures in danger today. The "price of peace," therefore, is for the Western world to strengthen itself and its friends to the utmost.

(2) It is nonsense to suppose that there can be peace in the world without conditions of peace and stability in Europe and in the Far East; and it is even greater nonsense to imagine that there can be real peace in Europe and the Far East without a healthy, vigorous, peaceful and peace-loving, trusted and trusting, self-respecting and rehabilitated Germany, Italy and Japan. Without the positive contribution of the immense genius of the German, Italian and Japanese peoples, there can be no peace.

(3) The Near East lies at the heart of the world. It does not, therefore, serve the cause of peace to drift with respect to certain states of disaffection in the Near East. Surely the resources of statesmanship are not exhausted in regard to our outstanding problems. Two conditions must be fulfilled: there should be firmness, vision and an honest regard for justice; and the peoples of the Near East must be given a chance to play their full part in defending themselves.

(4) He works for peace today who works for the independence of China.

If the Chinese Communist leaders cannot evolve soon an independent national policy, the balance of power will remain upset in the Far East. But if they can evolve such a policy, peace is completely within their grasp. The Korean embroilment could be settled to everybody's satisfaction if the Chinese Communist leaders were able to strike out on a bold, independent, purely Chinese policy.

(5) The "price of peace" is never to despair of negotiation. Secretary Marshall said three years ago that it was the policy of the United States to be the first to go to an international conference and the last to quit it. President Truman said recently that the door to negotiation is always open. This is an absolutely sound attitude. One must keep on *ad nauseam* arguing, discussing, refuting, articulating one's point of view. This is especially the moral and political obligation of the Western world which, despite its many internal trials, has not yet, at any rate officially, renounced the potency of reason and argument in attaining the truth and in convincing oneself and one's adversary that we should all be bound by it.

(6) The "price of peace" is to distinguish sharply between Marx and what he stood for, and the Russian people. It is impossible to read the great 19th Century Russian literature, with all its depth, and suffering and yearning for salvation, and not to fall in love with the Russian people. It is impossible to meet and laugh with a Russian as a human being and not to like him. Whatever one's attitude toward Marxism, the "price of peace" today is to love and pray for the Russian people and when occasion arises to prove to them that they are not hated by the rest of the world.

(7) If three things are fulfilled: if Communism renounces revolution and violence as a method of social and historical change; if the non-Communist world grants, within its domain, full freedom to this reformed Communism to further its doctrine and prove its worth; and if the Communist world opens up its present unnatural closedness to the outside world, so that there occurs considerable, free, intellectual and social intercourse between the two worlds—then the objective conditions for the development of confidence and understanding will have been assured.

(8) Finally, the "price of peace" is, not to be afraid of war. Nothing may bring war more speedily upon us than the soft characters who tremble before the possibility of war and who, therefore, seem ready to buy peace at any price. There is such a thing as "too high a price" for peace. Surely there must be a limit beyond which a person is gladly prepared to go down. He will go to war sooner than pay the price of yielding beyond that limit. What this limit is must be perfectly understood.

There is where hard and bold thinking is required. It is quite possible to lose a war without having fought it; and, therefore, it is much better to go down in war than to go down without war. What then are the things which belong to the limit? I suggest, without truth, love and freedom, life is not worth living.