

ONE WORLD: A Philosophy

The philosophy of One World is a philosophy of the future. A "world community" is not yet in existence. At present despite the formation of the United Nations Organization, one world is still a Utopia — nowhere — or, at least, nowhere except in thoughts and hopes and dreams of men, in novels, philosophies, poems, paintings, plays, and Scriptures. Philosophers, artists, and prophets see more than what now is. They decry the one world-to-be.

IT IS, indeed, mysterious that we can discourse intelligibly about what does not now exist. However, our whole life rests in the future. The common man plans for the coming day; everyone speaks about the future, and everyone knows what is meant—a something-not-yet that is coming-into-being. Since philosophy is saying what we mean and meaning what we say, there can be a philosophy of the non-existent future — a philosophy of One World that is to be.

Every stage of history is incomplete. Every present is pregnant with a future. Every present is a potential future, or rather is many potential futures. At Versailles and at Lake Success, many possible futures were envisaged. Successive decisions were made and out of these decisions came many hostile communities fighting each other for its own ideal of the future. The war was once non-being; in 1919, it was not yet — it was nothing then. It became real because of a series of human choices, carried out with

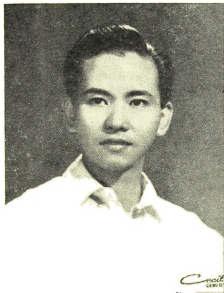
agony, passing into the realm of non-being. Just as surely as this is true, so surely will decisions be made in the coming months whether the philosophy of One World will become a reality, and to what degree and under what difficulties it will become real.

Paradoxical as it seems, therefore, there can be a philosophy of One World. Not only can we define what one world might be, but we can think of it as future reality based on present reality, although it be now wholly unreal.

Since we are concerned with One World, we must define what we mean by one and what we mean by world. By one, we mean a single unit or a number denoting unity, and by world, in this connection, we mean the entire human race. Here the word race is used in one of its few impeccable senses. The world is all human beings, however they may now be organized, socially or politically; whatever their cultures, their creeds, their economics, their

beliefs, their doubts, their traditions, or their policies. This is the world — all sorts and conditions of men, good, bad, indifferent. In the world, birth, life, and death go on in a continuous process, regardless of our philosophies. For some it is under conditions of luxury, and for others under conditions that would seem impossible and unendurable were it not for the fact that they exist and are endured. The human world lives in a natural world of plenty; yet the wealth of nature is unjustly distributed. Nature is not wholly friendly, it is true, but natural perils of earthquakes, typhoons, fires, and plague are less dangerous to man than man is to himself. *Homo homini lupus*; man is a wolf to man. No optimist can deny that Hobbes' bitter words convey at least a part truth about the human world, both in war and in peace — where exploitation, ruthless competition, and the law of the jungle still continue, and racial hatreds are baser than the jungle code.

The world is not wholly chaos.



THE AUTHOR

In spite of differences, conflicting cultures, and crimes, the world is better than Hobbes took it to be. Never has humanity been *bellum contra omnes*. Not every house is divided against itself. Not every friend betrays his friend. Not every believer wages an unholy Holy War against men of other creeds. War of any kind — civil, international, class, religious or criminal — is not itself possible if there is an absolutely universal war of all men against all men. War itself presupposes peace; that is, there must be a certain amount of orderly cooperation in an army if it is to function as an army at all. Otherwise the very fighting would become nothing but an aimless riot, and a literal war of all against all, ending in speedy extermination of the whole human race.

The human world, in sum, is a scene of mingled hostility and concord, competition and cooperation, enmity and community. Our problem is: How to subordinate the forces of hostility, competition, and enmity to the higher forces of con-

cord, cooperation, and community. This is our world and its task.

In dealing with the greatness of the task of building a one unified world, two alternatives confront humanity: One World or World Warfare. The situation up to the present has been that of conflict

tion of two spheres: a sphere of economic and political organization and a sphere of cultural action and development. The economic, has to do with the means of existence; the cultural, with the ends of existence. For effective economic action, a common plan and cooperative organiza-

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between these two principles. The world has not yet been willing nor able to give up the principle of warfare; nor has it been willing or able to give up the principle of One World. At one extreme is the totalitarian view. There might be a totalitarian world community, but its tyranny contains the seeds of its own destruction from within. As we have seen the other extreme, that of provincial anarchism, is also self-destructive. Thought can move back and forth from the absolutistic thesis to the atomistic antithesis and see nothing but internal and external destruction of society. History has already developed the germ of synthesis, in the ideal and practice of democracy. The pure organicism of the thesis and the pure pluralism of the antithesis are both defective, yet neither is wholly wrong. Human nature needs both social organization and individual freedom, and the principle of democracy may well be called organic pluralism — the principle of society of free men who perceive their mutual interdependence and communal needs. Such free men also perceive that freedom for development, joy, and realization of the highest values is rendered possible only when the individual surrenders many of his private whims and preferences to the common good, while at the same time retaining his sacred right of free conscience, free speech, and free political action.

Democracy implies the recogni-

tion are more essential. For cultural development, freedom of thought and speech, personal initiative, and personal commitment are more necessary. In One World we shall need the proper balance of economic planning and cultural freedom. Yet it is undesirable that economic and political planning without cultural freedom would be in immediate danger of totalitarianism, and the plurality of the gigantic pluralism would be swallowed up in the maw of the great organism, Leviathan. Cultural freedom means the right and duty to choose and be loyal to one's own religion or irreligion, to speak and write freely, to express and enjoy art, to investigate truth and report the results of investigation, to criticize freely economic governmental measures: in short, to be an autonomous man.

The philosophy of One World organized on the principles of organic pluralism, providing economic and governmental schemes within the bounds of cultural freedom, would be a fulfillment of the dreams of poets, prophets, and philosophers. Once organized, it might prove to be more simple, practical, and permanent than our world rivalry, appeasement, and war. The future is not yet. But there will certainly be a future and it may be better than anything that yet has been. It is apparent that we move toward a free world — a One World, as we preach the dignity of man.