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P e a c e I n D e e d.

The year was 1910, in Cambridge. The Western World was half way between the First and the Second Russian Revolution. In a decadent society, the more sensitive people began to wake up and to worry over the interplay of wars and revolutions, of international anarchy and social disorder. With admirable sagacity, Henry Adams prophecied the breakdown of the crazy race of acceleration for the year 1917. And one other righteous man was found, right here on the Harvard Yard, who heard the earthquake.

William James, despite his being a professor of psychology pierced the closed shutters of the purely civilian attitude that was so prominent in the thought of the last century, and saw the future of our society. The future would ask for a new synthesis of "Wars" and "Peaces". It would force the educated and so far purely academic classes out of their parlour attitude and make them conceive life as the daily creation of peace out of incessant war. It would ask from us to have the courage by which man can count up to three:

1. That nature is "war eternal.
2. That whenever peace is not created daily, wars - relapses into nature - are bound to happen.
3. That, for the creation of peace, the warriors virtues are indispensable.

William James addressed his Moral Equivalent for War to the World War Generation, then and there, in 1910 at Harvard, thirty

years ago. The"Moral Equivalent for War" proposed that every college graduate should serve a year in an army against nature, "to knock the childishness out of his bones."

This is 1940, and the Saturday Review of Literature has reviewed any number of brilliant ideas, ever since, produced by the finest minds of America; it has all remained literature. Intellectuals have barely time to take stock of so much brilliancy. We had reports from Belgium, Serbia, Russia, Greece, Turkey, Manchukuo, China, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, and under the impact of all this dazzling reportage, the heart of the world - as Professor Walter Cannon telegraphed, after the Fall of Barcelona, - "The heart of the world has turned to stone." The heart of the world must turn to stone when the brilliant idea does not come to life but is left on the shelf, between two covers.

At this breath-taking moment, we are not even wrestling with the question of William James: Can the fighting spirit be transformed so that the virtues of the warrior may enter a new body?

The Moral Equivalent for War is waiting for Harvard; it still hovers over the Yard. For the last thirty years the writer of this article has thought and worked towards the same goal. Therefore he now enjoys the privilege of being invited by the Guardian to bring William James to the attention of the Second World War Generation.

The last generation gave William James praise; they never took heed to him. We certainly no longer live between the First and the Second Russian Revolution as did James. However, we must admit

that we live between the First and the Second World War. Of course we can say: "What of it? This time, the United States are not in the war." Then let us state it more practically. We are between the failure of the First Generation and the failure - or success - of the Second Generation, to make peace. And since one generation won the war and lost the peace, let the new generation have their chance - even by losing the war perhaps - to win the peace.

William James' divination discovered a much bigger truth than, in his days, he could know. The army of peace has ceased to be a noble idea for discussion: now it is your only instrument to produce peace in your generation.

A peace between great nations, bitter experience teaches, must be based on a daily practise. A formal agreement, even when voted for by every voter in all the countries concerned, is bound to be torn up by suspicious neighbors on a globe grown narrow through the airplane. The simple facts of different uniforms worn daily, of different languages spoken incessantly, make for war. The long periods of peace during the nineteenth century were owing to a daily practice of peace. It was the growth of trade, the free flow of capital, the development of new markets that made the best training school for peace, because it was every day life. War came when the end of all this was in sight.

Since then, the world has become industrialized and a new power, labour, has come to the fore, rivalling trade and capital. The twentieth century is in danger of incessant wars because no daily training for peace outweighs the separatism of the national labour markets.

The Peace of Vienna in 1815 was followed up by the Industrial Revolution. No such new force of cooperation followed the Peace of Versailles. Intelligent leaders proposed a common work army for the reconstruction of France. But the nobility of manual labour and the importance of a moral equivalent for war were ideas far too new at that time.

To-day, the Moral Equivalent for War has a history of thirty years. It has become a reality in scores of countries all over the world, in the form of voluntary or compulsory labour services.

But it is distorted. Hence it is no instrument of peace: these services still work under the false pretence of nationalism: each under national flag in a national uniform.

Is it possible to strip the product of a world wide labour evolution of its nationalistic disguise and make it serve the daily practice of peace?

If it appeared that the gentleman's agreement of the next peace could be followed up by a man's service for its daily enactment, it would be easier to establish a democratic basis for peace. It might also make it possible to approach the termes of the peace more realistically.

A world army for reconstruction, composed of the peace-making nations, should be established at the end of this war. It should work in Poland, Spain, Finland, Africa, China, or whereever revolution and war have wrought destruction. The common administration of this army would be the easiest way of turning the nations toward close cooperation without interfering with their principles

of military independence. War would not be abolished as in the Kellog Pacts, by words of a Prohibition attitude which invited bootlegging from the beginning. Instead, peace would be introduced into the daily relations of the ordinary citizens of the world. Then, the words of the peace treaty would not ring hollow.

In a world of gentlemen, sportsmen, and businessmen, this proposal smacks of forced labor, and does not seem to require the cooperation of any educated person. One of the leaders of Harvard frankly told me that the compulsion to stay in such an army - when a man in this country can quit his job at any time - made it unpalatable to free Americans. However, the finest flower of many nations have directed their leadership and vigour and creativity to these services. And William James proposed the "Moral Equivalent for War" explicitly to the "Gilded Youth of America". In an international Work Army the best Americans would just be good enough to compete with the spiritual leaders from other nations. The class that excluded itself from this competition would commit social Harakiri. Perhaps, there is less "Gilded Youth" to-day than in 1910. Still, in the American colleges young men still drink amply from the good things of life..But as to the effects of these drinks on society, one is reminded of the famous "conspicuous waste". In so-called peace campaigns for instance students shout themselves hoarse till they are drunk with the word "peace". With this mentality peace is impossible. It will come when we "do" peace soberly and inconspicuously, when we "do" it as the Moral Equivalent

for war with the non-chalance of the soldier, not because it is easy, but because it is difficult, not because it pleases us, but because it makes us into men.

Four Wells,
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