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## "THE CRUSADE OF THE STARSPANGLED BANNER"

A document of 1918, written  
after the first attack of  
the Americans, at the Marne.

The pre-war era in Europe was a period during which all forms gradually decayed. From the coats of arms of nobility to the form of greeting and the dress of wet nurses, from the coronation of the emperor to the doctor's hood, many forms, of course, were still conserved; but they were no longer believed and therefore not born anew every day.

They hung on as historical mementos in a sterilized manner, at which we smile. It would have seemed unbelievable to reveal the spuriousness of a bond of lovers merely from its lack of form, from its utter crudity of form. On the contrary, this freest and most flighty sort of love was appraised the only true, the only genuine love. It would have been forbidden, in the coats of arms of states, like the Prussian eagle or the half moon of Islam, to seek more than a sign of recognition, a kind of trade-mark. That we people nowadays no longer give in to forms was clear; and that we developed our freedom under an innocuous covering, destitute of all forms, into a purified humanity was the basis of public discussion of all political-human events. On the other hand, fear and shyness of forms or symbols, as if they could, falsely chosen, enslave our senses and wills with superhuman power, was a superstition and phantom about which one complacently lets himself be told on occasion by a preacher of penitence and a clown (Chesterton!). The stiff greeting of a soldier, kneeling before God, the bow before a noble, the oath on the Bible, all this produced an effect like an antique, like a residue of faith.

All the symbols, however, which had and have survived in the decay of forms are indeed only the environs, the outworks, of the essence of all the symbols of the last millennium, the most wonderful and unnatural form on earth. And so the decay of forms must turn above all to this powerful form which pierced the era in the strangest manner, with the challenge of inmost necessity. It is the form which departs from outer nature, which just for that reason is imparted to us from the heart as a noble sign of inner divinity, of the rebirth of paradise: the Cross. At the same time, however, it reveals the human chaos which is lacking from unfeeling nature. It is also the sign of the most severe, of human torment. The decay of forms has succeeded in displacing the Cross from all phases of life, first from science, then from forms of society, and finally from Christendom itself. Innumerable are the outpourings of natural Christendom which discovered, invented, reproduced it in its "essence", in its "intrinsic value", calling it "pure", "genuine", "fundamental", "human", "German", but without its necessary form. They all gave a Christianity of the author, that is, one without the form in which it had been embodied up to the time of the decay of forms, without the Cross. But with the war, an external event swept over people which made them cry out for inner needs; a social, historical event

happened which one could not scorn like a curtsey or animal emblem as "mere" form. If life is still to remain bearable, then spiritual necessity must be granted to a merely human-social, most definitely unnatural event. The war must be taken symbolically. It must be believed in its necessity, for people are, in fact, passionately affected and carried away by it. It cannot be laughed away like paying taxes and honorary positions and decorations as mere external forms of life under which one freely carries on his own real life. It must therefore express what arose from divine will and decision. The forms of life suddenly became sober again. The salute of the soldier again became meaningful; indeed, the symbols of the secular states even took on, for the newly converted faithless, an aura of sanctity and divinity: so completely did they profess faith in these symbols, for the first time, that it seemed a miracle.

Yes, forms bind and enslave us; there is no freedom from form. What appears so is pure crudeness of form. Nobody escapes the forms of human, animal - transcending, of clothed life. A dreadful pattern, a pitiless relationship reigns in forms. They give birth to that which they bore witness. Eagle, cock and lion, bear and whale, on state coats of arms, have become deadly earnest. In the mirror of forms we again examine life since we again live under the yoke of war and for the sake of our self-preservation must believe that it is rather the spirit that builds for itself the body of social-political life.

In the war between Europeans, which faded out in 1917 and though the Bolshevik upheaval was brought to the ends of the earth, it was all a matter of national symbols and forms, which left the main form, the Cross, untouched. The empires and kingdoms, the princedoms and republics, with their tricolors and national hymns, all left the Cross out of the drama; or, as far as they did retain it, it was as the Cross of St. George or the Iron Cross, the opponents being comprised to an equal degree. The Christian Church was neutral in the war between Europeans. The papal note issued in August 1917 expressed this feeling of very definite impartiality. At the same time it declared the certain feeling that the European war was then at an end and at the point where it ought to be called off. And it was. It did end then. The strike of the workers in all countries meant: "The war for money and property must cease at once; it has outlived itself." What is happening today (1918), since the Eastern peace, is a new war, no longer European, but a World War.

And in this war the Cross is no longer neutral. The condition of compulsion, propelling the European states into the World War although their war was at an end, made itself manifest in the form in which the papal intervention for peace was answered. England and Italy, France and Russia did not even reply. They would otherwise have had to accept the papal note with regard to the Bolshevik wave which was flooding Europe. They intrenched themselves behind a foreign power: only the American President, only Wilson answered the papal note.

With this something new had happened. Our opponents in Europe had chosen as their spokesman for the first time the "great

neutral" in the other world. For the American leader appears before us in the double role of the true neutral and of the first "disinterested" belligerent.

When, as a belligerent, he stepped into opposition to us Germans, he did so also to the Pope as the other, the true neutral. And so henceforth the Papacy is likewise threatened by him with spiritual weapons. The rock of Peter in Rome threatens to sink down to a mere European neutral over against the world judge at the Capitol in Washington. A completely new war is in process, an American-European war, with other aims, about other issues than the three year war of the European powers.

In this new conflict it is no longer a question of trade and empire; for welfare and riches are everywhere gone. Here it is a question of the forms of life and of faith. And because the necessity of forms is disputed over, the fight centers, the fight must center also about the Cross.

The devastation of the present campaigns can be compared with that of the Thirty Year's War. Germany's fate in the 17th century seems to resemble the present day fate of her neighbor, the frenzy of the fight finding a counterpart only in the bitter animosity of the religious wars. At that time it was a question of the spiritual rending asunder, the inheritance of faith, among brothers who all stemmed from one mother's house; therefore the division of faith cut through the midst of all brother-peoples. From 1914-1917 the issue was the great disruption over the goods of this world; the war, as hereditary divider, was supposed to decide about trade, colonies and wealth. As different as the aims both times were, in both cases there raged a Civil War. And so they are like each other in the fury with which the next-door neighbor is suddenly denied and torn to destruction.

The European war from 1914-1917 was a civil war but not a war of faith. Therefore the nations have brought it to an end in a kind of spiritual numbness, without change of ministers, without any national movement. But underneath ran a subterranean current of fire which finally ignited the World War, the new war of faith.

This current of fire ran over in the new world which the sons of Europe, the emigrants and refugees had built up, ran over into the crucible of the old European nations and made the contents of the crucible burn red hot. For America this war is no civil war like the Thirty Year's war or the Three Year European war. For America this War is a Crusade.

Since 1095 Pilgrims and preachers have put the occident in a tumult through the news of the sorry plight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Moslems, who honor in Christ only the human being, not the God, had raised their half moon over the Cross. Christians languished in slavery and Christian children were mistreated. Pope Urban II directed the universal indignation into a unified form. In the following years individual bands of volunteers took the field. They were miserably shipwrecked. Not until several years afterwards

was there assembled the real army of crusaders. The Western body of knights formed an alliance with the Byzantine Emperor and the Christian princes of Syria in spite of much antipathy and mutual distrust, and pressed on under unspeakable difficulties to the Holy Land. Indefatigable, Urban ordered, led and directed every step from Rome. The army, long torn by quarrels and jealousy, finally achieved a unified command. And then, under the leadership of Godfrey of Bouillon, the miracle happened: on July 15, 1099 the walls of Jerusalem were scaled. The undreamt of, colossal event dazzled the west after the desperate troubles and disillusion of the previous year like a visible miracle of God.

The first Crusade had become the fusing event which joined the peoples of the west into a unity of European Christendom. The melting pot of migrating peoples had in the common act of the Crusades founded its own community. The fact of setting themselves off from the outside world and the fight against the half moon united the crusaders, as many tongues and countries as there were. Under the sign of the Cross, the supernatural sign, the war was a war against the sign of the visible heaven, the crescent moon. The infinite pride, the self-consciousness of Christianity, its feeling of superiority over all races and peoples on the earth, as it till then filled only the heirs of Rome, inspired, since the first Crusade, all the young peoples of the West. This victory was due not to the Emperor, but to the Pope. And so the preeminence of the Papacy over all secular power was sealed with the conquest of Jerusalem.

Since 1914 countless envoys have passed through the new world of America. What had been struck up by the English and French as a kind of Homeric, heroic alarm, the cry of German atrocities, worked differently over there. It became a cry of horror of tortured humanity. The complaint and slander of the brother and neighbor in the mouth of the quarreling brother, of the litigating party himself, is one thing; but it is another thing in the ear of the distant and foreign descendant. What is there in American the temper and excitement of the moment, of the time of war, and remains so despite all fury, petrifies here to the dreadful and medusa-like truth and reality. That word only is common when from the heart throb of the actual event it can also be reconquered and rejected. Relieved of the material test and verification, it hardens like an ore. The handbills and pamphlets which battling Europe has screamed across have become like brass plates. The atrocities of the Germans are truths in America as the atrocities of the Moslems in Palestine were truths at the Council at Clermont.

A Crusade, a disinterested, selfless war is now the battle against the sultans and emperors of the old war. Not a civil war over land and people or over religious forms and ancestral tradition, but a war against the arch enemy of humanity has broken out and is being centrally directed by the president in the White House at Washington. The people of good will, no, quite simply, the good people are fighting against the evil, the German militarism which enslaves human beings, which considers them evil and therefore rules them with distrust and policemen. America, on the other hand, is the land which is ruled with the new and good form, with the natural form of

psychology. Not for nothing has "psychology" always been the pride of the American, even before the war. He innocently believes he can practice the inexplicable magic of the management of souls. The art of psychology takes the place for him of the brutal power which he incontestably believes dominant in the empires. He will therefore come to the help of the noble and only sister republic in old Europe, which also is built upon "psychology", on leading the masses or deceiving the masses, on the sovereignty of the people; France is America's only natural ally in Europe. France is the Holy Land to America; the French Revolution has endeavored to adopt into Europe someday the noble doctrines of the American Declaration of Independence and rights of man. Paris is the chosen city, which it is necessary to save not only as the Mecca of Civilization but as the Jerusalem of Humanity. America allied with England, on the other hand, only from the force of circumstances and interests.

Just as the relation between the crusaders and the Byzantines was poisoned with distrust and jealousy, with the scorn of the Byzantines for the western upstarts, with the indignation of the Frankish heirs of Rome at the arrogance of the easterners, so little did a warm feeling unite Americans and English. But only across the modern Constantinople, only across London does the way lead into the Holy Land. And the British Empire must make the best of a bad bargain for its own enfeeblement, through America.

We stand in the middle of this crusade, which, as 800 years ago, is directed from across the sea with a fantastic exaggeration of all power and resources and with swaggering and boasting. But because the melting pot of the new world is boiling over here, because the power of imagination is inflamed, because the future of mankind must be saved from the Huns, therefore the measures of this world of ideas will have to be somehow satisfied by the events before the ardor can cool off. To save Belgium or hand Alsace-Lorraine over to France - or - above all, to overthrow the two imperial thrones - any one mighty symbolical act alone is sufficient to bring to an end such a first Crusade. Because America finds herself first and foremost in this war, certain and determined, there is need of a symbolical event than can become the seal and security of the future.

But what is the dogma for which America is fighting? It is this: Man is good! Tyrants falsify and commit violence with his true nature. Human nature creates out of itself peace and freedom, the brotherhood of man and justice. Only princes prevent this natural harmony. All peoples could live nobly, freely ranged together like the stars in the firmament; that's how we live in the New World. Well, we want to bring these blessings to the old world too!

Even in peace the only form that had an effect as being a living one midst the formlessness of American education and midst the crudeness of public life, was the American flag. The children of immigrants, in the Jewish section of New York, for example, receive no other national instruction than to dance and sing an hour every day around the flag. But now in the war the cult of the flag has become the declared symbolical language of Americanism. The star-spangled banner has been declared sacred by law. In the land of militarism,



only military persons are required to salute when flags and standards are driven past. But woe to the civilian in America who does not salute the star-spangled banner. The star-spangled banner - that is the America with its 48 free states, that is the natural freedom of people living side by side on the earth, that is the league of nations in which every nation has room to shine like a star, whether big or little. What the infinite heaven guarantees the stars: playroom, to carry out one's own career unmolested, - that, the poor, crowded earth should and will be able to guarantee to people under the star-spangled banner.

A final word is to be added to complete the picture of a mighty crusade movement: America itself calls its war a crusade. To America itself the belief is not foreign that the fight for the highest blessings, which once set free Jerusalem, is now being repeated. The connection of the two emperors with the arch-enemy of that time, with the Turkish caliph and with Islam, strengthens this equation by virtue of the deep aversion towards the half moon which still fills the breasts of all Christians. The President today calls the faithful new world to a united world order against the dying old world. Not unintentionally did he declare war on Good Friday. And his messages recall Urban's encyclicals with their noble turns of expression and lofty thoughts. His address at the grave of Washington on July 4, 1918 displayed every known magical power that can today sweep human hearts to faith. Just as sincerely as then the banner of the cross, the star-spangled banner is today brandished as the bringer of better times.

Thus America beats at Europe's gates with a lofty countenance. And Europe must tremble, for it has forfeited the right of contrasting the cross with the star-spangled banner.

Is then the star-spangled banner heretical in the Christian sense? And what is its heresy?

The star-spangled banner is fighting against the doctrine of law and original sin. To it people have not gone astray and are not confused in their passions, not in danger of tearing each other to pieces in war; and therefore it casts aside the law, the first great covenant of God with man, which He established to check the evil will of the nations and to make peace and order secure on earth. America's heresy is Humanism. The Cross teaches that love, in eternal surprise, overcomes the eternal order of the law, that love and law are both in the world at the same time. Humanism is the heresy of the last century that believes in the priority of the love sermon. America is the filial land which turns against the European fatherland because it forgets its dowry and which hence might shake off the parental cross.

America does not see anything particular in the fact that Europe sent over to it not wolves but people, educated people. It has forgotten the redskins. The population of its melting pot America takes for something "natural". It does not consider that these English, Germans, Irish, Poles, Italians had all already been stamped and educated by the law of the old fatherland before they filled the

new world in the stormy drive for freedom. And so America sticks only to the dogma of love, which worked itself out in the new land, and lets fall the basis of this dogma, the dogma of law and of the sinfulness of the natural animal man. America has had things too easy. Year in year out Europe delivered to America adult, full-grown freemen and colonists. Europeans were the bricks with which America could build its house. Europeans: they are no longer people in the state of nature, as they were born out of their mothers' womb, but people filled with ideas, people with culture. Thus, America saved the spiritual factories, the educational institutions and coercive establishments, for the great part, in which the spirit of the law in Europe is incessantly reborn. Not until the War, which ends the emigration to America, is America finally deprived of this advantage, this reduction in cost of its institutions of life. Europe had to and must still continue to sustain all institutions of life in completeness, those of the Old Testament as well as those of the New. For it is the nature of European culture to be really self-sufficing, that is, to beget and to preserve completely within itself all institutions for the education of the human race.

Up to now America has saved a part of these institutions with impunity and from them has drawn its conclusions - wrong conclusions. America's heresy originates in the privilege which was assigned to it as the Benjamin of culture. She considers her function to be the vortex of peoples from the European world of states, the one Natural thing, and so wishes to set free the peoples of Europe from their "medieval" structure of states. She wishes to induce Europe to throw overboard a part of its superstructure and rigging only because up to now she has been able to carry on in the wake of Europe without the superstructure and rigging.

Because America considers stale the precept of the Old Testament, of the life of peoples based upon the secular level of being educated in legality, and considers the state as a mere association of immigrants, there, therefore, arise on her soil all the naive horrors that astonish us. Lynching, tarring and feathering, the extensive venality of officials and judges, in short, a denial of the simplest lawfulness, has so far been the price which the melting pot must pay for its star-spangled banner. The crisis, however, in which its faith is at stake, is this war, in which the office of president itself, that means the faith in the standard bearer, is being weighed. For this president changes today from a peaceful ruler to a leader of war. The constitution of the army, however, is the embodiment of the nature of the law, of the authority of the European state, which has been spared America up to now. But this calls forth all the contradictions and difficulties of the national order; and so every appointment of officers in the American army is today a nail in the coffin of its constitution.

But Europe has not the right to hold the Cross against America. Europe itself has created the nourished the delusion of brother Jonathan. America's crusade shatters the constructive work which the Cross distributed among the nations of the west and so ends the era which arose with the first crusade. But that happens only because the nations of the west have definitely broken away from faith in the

Cross in their three year civil war. Against true faith heresy is powerless; against complete faithlessness, however, enthusiastic false-faith must prevail.

The Europeans nations have lost their faith since they claimed their peculiar national order of life as national, free property and set themselves up for mastery of it. The people of Europe forgot the single difference which separates them from the people of Nature, that they are reborn out of the spirit. For this rebirth out of the spirit of Christ pertains not only to individuals but also to nations. In the last thousand years a definite function was incumbent on the individual nations in the common life of European Christianity. This task in the whole of civilization bestowed upon the great peoples their dignity; and the institutions and establishments which were created by each nationality for the fulfillment of this task protected Europe against the barbarians. These mighty creations, like the Church, Paris, the English Parliament, the Prussian general staff -- they ennobled their possessors into great powers.

Hardly, however, were the great powers established on the basis of nationality - and it required precisely the last century to complete it - when the nation arose, became vain, forgot that the Cross had assigned this task to it, and declared the natural, pre-Christian man as the creator of these endowments. Europe forgot its origin in the Crusades, forgot its mother, the Church of the Cross. The nations declared themselves the chosen people without any intermediate instigation or mediation for this favor by Christendom. They paganly derived their own incomparableness from their races and their species of animal. To trace this dissolution from the culture-whole would be a separate task. Here it is sufficient that America has this sight before her eyes. From the self-adulation of the nations, it may be inferred that they are all equal before God. The great powers will thus be destroyed and there will be an end to the selective process and architecture of Europe. Europe shall be inhabited again by purely natural people living side by side, according to the creed of the star-spangled banner. The organization of nations according to the tasks within Christianity is abandoned. A league of nations of natural men shall arise.

Thus America's crusade is by no means directed only against us. Her allies too shall be ruined. Thus far it is even true that we shall not fare worse than her allies. She will only put an end to militarism as the particular gift of Germany to the rest of the world, as she will put an end to England's missionary position or Italy's quality as the supporter of the Church. But in all this the nations themselves are taking the lead since they forgot that they were supposed to hold an office in Christendom.

And so Europe threatens to become a worthless agglomeration of Poles, Czechs, Irish, Germans, Estonians, Finns, Flemish, Italians; ruin threatens like that brought by Alaric's march against Rome. But even that time Alaric was victorious because Christianity was corroded with Arianism. America is victorious today because of the nationalism and humanism in which the European peoples indulged. Like Alaric, Wilson is a mild and respectful victor.



Christianity experiences, now as then, that only a free Church is capable of saving up for the third millennium the incorruptible truth that has been represented in that proud European culture. For against the American heresy of the star-spangled banner the Church alone may uphold in calm majesty the right creed, the news of the Cross with its eternal conflict between law and love.