

# AN ARMED INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL THE SOLE PEACE-KEEPING MECHANISM

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Some thoughtful men believe that the human race is benefited by the heroisms, the sacrifices and the discipline of war. They conscientiously oppose efforts to subjugate nations to that rule of relative peace which obtains between the groups constituting nations.

Other thoughtful men (now the vast majority, I believe) hold that killing-contests subtract from, more than they add to, the sum of human happiness. They believe that discipline, sacrifice—yea, even heroism—may enter into the civil life of men while we still strive to lift up heavy masses of our brethren from poverty and ignorance to comfort and enlightenment.

This latter view is here assumed—though it is recognized that argument may be required to sustain it against the militarist view first stated.

If we want to escape from international war, and from the burdensome preparations for war—how shall we do it?

Obviously the most direct and safest method would be to follow general experience gained in suppressing violence between individuals, tribes, clans, provinces and federated states as they have successively coalesced into groups of larger numbers and more complex political organization. In this process *sovereignty* has been continuously sacrificed to a greater or less degree. The loss of this precious attribute has been compensated by the gain of *order*—of settled tranquillity. This compensation is not yet complete even in our most civilized states. Violence still appears occasionally between individuals and between various groups—political, social, economic. But the repressive mechanism soon works. Order re-appears.

Contests, other than the physical shock of body against body, continue, while yielding a little after every disturbance, to a larger coöperation. Now the mechanism which produces this result may be wholly typified by the justice-of-the-peace and his constable. And it may be described as centralized judging power controlling



centralized force. These have been substituted for diverse or independent judging and for competitive force. This centralized mechanism is the foundation of civilization within the state. It deals with imperfect men. Had it waited upon ideal citizenship, we should still be savages.

The relative tranquillity thus attained is bought at a price. That price is the subordination of *minor interests* to *general interest*. It pays me to submit to what I consider an unjust decision, because by this submission I participate in the general tranquillity, and obtain protection from all violence except that of the central force. And if I have not sufficient intelligence to grasp this fact, then you—the majority—put me under duress. Your organized central force renders the task comparatively easy. Mere knowledge of the existence of your force renders me comparatively tractable.

Can those groups which are now the remaining sovereigns in our world—the fifty odd independent states—find any other formula for attaining that (relative) mutual tranquillity which is enjoyed within their boundaries?

Let us briefly consider some of the compromises now much mooted.

There is, first, limitation of armaments by mutual agreement. Small armaments—or even disarmament—cannot guarantee peace. It only diminishes the peace-time cost of war. We may fight with less expensive weapons than dreadnaughts. But we shall find no way of controlling war-preparation by rules which smack of the Sermon on the Mount. Strength will not write itself down to the level of weakness, *while physical violence remains as the ultimate determinant* of international disputes. And if such folly were put into words, the inventor would bring them to naught. He will sleeplessly defeat any attempt to fix exact ratios between ready-to-use capacity for destruction.

Next, we have various forms of “cooling-off” devices—agreements to delay war after failure of diplomatic agencies—by submission of disputes to various forms of forceless courts.

The vice of all these methods lies in this—that very frequently the *issue will be resolved in favor of one or the other contestant*, during any period of delay beginning after failure of all formal and informal methods that have always been open to states. To delay will mean to yield. We may always do that without treaties and toothless

courts. And meanwhile, what suspicions, what hates, will be engendered as we learn—or fancy we learn—of our rival's preparation for the ultimate shock of arms!

Next we have the proposal of the League to Enforce Peace. Again forceless courts. Again final resort to arms. But something else beside. We must see the miracle of unanimity among all on-looking nations who are to judge when a supposed recalcitrant shall have committed an "act of hostility" before going to a court. But we have cut each other's throats for ten thousand years expressing differences of view as to what constitutes an "act of hostility"! Why should we agree in the future? And if the League program be modified to provide for a central organism of judging and enforcing, then we reach the Armed International Tribunal—sole peace-keeping mechanism.

To attain it, we must amend our Constitution. A proposal to that effect is now pending before the United States Senate. It may produce the great desideratum—Simultaneous Discussion in Responsible Parliaments of Identical Propositions for an International Tribunal.