

Preface

When once the Americans have taken up an idea, whether it be well or ill founded, nothing is more difficult than to eradicate it from their minds.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

Democracy in America, 1835

The statement in George Washington's farewell address that: "The nation which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest," is less frequently quoted than his warning against the entangling of "our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice." Yet though it be true that our first President could hardly foresee our international commitments as the strongest world power, his statement concerning "habitual hatred" and "habitual fondness" is at present even more timely than in our nation's childhood.

Habitual hatred and fondness have done us immense harm, and they are just now the gravest threat to our peace and security. Hatred and fondness are emotions, not concepts. Hence to foster them harmonizes well with the thought that Americans cannot be asked to sacrifice their lives and fortunes save for ideals. Millions of my compatriots are wont to proclaim this doctrine with ostentatious self-esteem. Yet I venture to say that one could cite no surer evidence of our political immaturity.

A foreigner, whom I know as a keen observer of

Churchill's and Roosevelt's foreign policies, once remarked to me that obviously the British could be led into war whereas the Americans must be maneuvered. This was not flattering and I was inclined to resent it. However, sincere self-examination may oblige us to find some truth in that verdict. Our stature is that of an adult, even a giant, but we are comparatively new in international relations, and therefore, our mental attitude in this field is more often than not that of an adolescent.

Afraid of being called cynics, most people do not desire to admit the truth that in default of a law-enforcing agency, international law is virtually non-existent and the relations of sovereign states are, in general, such as hold between gangsters—dominated by interests, not by sentiments. The idea that we are just now on the threshold of a better era is refuted by the fact that the second World War has immensely increased the power of the most perfectly totalitarian nation.

As a nation advances, it becomes increasingly aware that it is profitable to take other nations' interests into consideration. This is but an improved way of defending and promoting one's own interests; it does not change the nature of international affairs.

Do not believe that the United States took part in two world wars just to live up to its ideals. The United States entered into both these wars to defend its vital interests. It may be said that in doing so it misjudged its interests. It may be said that it failed to protect them. These objections are open to discussion, but the fact remains that America took part in these wars for the utterly material reason that England's defeat would

have jeopardized America's safety and prosperity. This, rightly or wrongly, was America's real motive.

We are not the only nation which feels that it must have its wars idealized. The old battle cries of "For God, For King, For Country!" were more truthful than our modern slogans, but even in those times the war lords found it advisable to fill their soldiers with the belief that God was with them and against the enemy. Riding the wave of miraculous progress, our age has substituted doctrines for deity.

It can readily be understood why we Americans have gone to such lengths to hide our interests in idealistic wrappings. Our experience in international relations is naturally much shorter than that of the Old World. Just as a horse, coming from an endless line of ancestors, need not be taught which herb is healthy and which one is poisonous, peoples of the Old World know almost instinctively the limits of terms like "alliance," "enemy," "oppression" or "peace." They know that beauty is relative to the beholder's eye; while we are still believers in the absolute. They have oppressed others and been oppressed. They have been the aggressors and the attacked. They have fought with everyone and against everyone. They are skeptical; we are still gullible. They realize that, knowing little of the past and less of the present, men know nothing of the future. We think that we are masters of our destiny. This faith is a source of strength but also of great error. He who looks too far ahead may easily stumble.

We shall not be on an equal footing with Old World nations until we acquire their sense of relativity. Hence our so-called idealists are the worst enemies of our national success. They blindfold us. They are responsible

for our losing the peace after winning the war. They are the manufacturers of habitual hatred and habitual fondness. They make our diplomacy rigid and inadapt-able.

As businessmen we know that co-operation need not be based on personal friendship; nor need we hate our competitor. We know that he is not necessarily a wrongdoer. In his way he may be right, just as we are right in our way. Our interests clash, that is all. As a nation we are still lacking this wisdom.

When, after the first World War, American and British scholars began to reveal that the war guilt had by no means been one-sided, our approach to their writings was chiefly emotional. Had we been a mature people, we should have been able to say: "Perhaps we were not crusaders after all, but we fought on the right side anyway, because we defended our interests." I admit that every nation would find it hard to attain that measure of aloofness. But even a slight admixture of it to our diplomacy would have sufficed to produce a more intelligent peace than the one patched up in the suburbs of Paris.

Convinced that we had fought on the side of the angels, we not only allowed our allies to put in practice the secret treaties they had withheld from our knowledge; we even made ourselves the champions of some of their most destructive designs. To top all that, we let them prescribe for us on which nations we had to bestow our habitual hatred and on which nations our habitual fondness.

The first World War, like the second one, was a struggle between two coalitions. I believe that not many Americans have ever considered that within a

coalition there may be defenders of a bad cause along with defenders of a good one. Yet it is a general truth. He who fights against a coalition might easily be fighting on the wrong side and at the same time on the right side. This is not a reflection for generals, but it ought to be one for peacemakers.

We know now that, as the English historian G. P. Gooch put it, "the First War was an East European quarrel. Germany was dragged in by Austria; England and France by Russia." In other words, if we want to establish the original war guilt, we have first to consider the responsibilities of Russia and Austria-Hungary, whose respective allies were not given much choice. There is little doubt that Russia was more imperialistic than the Danubian monarchy, which had been on the defense against modern nationalism ever since the French Revolution.

To us, the first war appeared primarily as a conflict between Germany and our allies in western Europe because it was there that our troops fought. Austria-Hungary to us was a German satellite, and the part played by Russian autocracy was soon and conveniently forgotten. We were not burdened with knowledge of eastern European history and snatched gratefully the simple formulae offered by foreign propagandists. Since Germany was the enemy, Germany was wrong; since Germany was wrong, her Austro-Hungarian ally was wrong too. Since Russia was about to quit, why bother with her? France, Italy, England and Japan were certainly right.

Am I exaggerating? I do not think so. When Hitler began to make himself the heir of the Hapsburgs, Americans began to wake up. Since then I have been

told by innumerable individuals that we should not have destroyed the old Austria—"but what else could we do?" they add. By way of justification they cite the "fact" that the Danubian empire was "ramshackle": It would not have held together anyway because, they say, modern nationalism had rendered it obsolete. Had we not been so informed by Hungarian, Slovakian, Croatian, Czech, Italian, Rumanian and even German-Austrian nationalists among our immigrants and visitors? If all of them had the same complaint, was that not sufficient proof? It did not occur to these Americans that the complaint might prove merely that no matter how ramshackle in appearance, the empire had kept any one of these races from chaining the others. Once the empire was dissolved these nations did not want its restoration. Americans do not seem to be aware that the most fervent longing of modern nationalists is not for freedom but for mastery. Austria-Hungary seemed ramshackle to Americans. Russia, just as heterogeneous as she, did not, because the czars, more reactionary than the Hapsburgs, had kept their subjects illiterate.

Making good use of our impression that we had participated in a principally Western conflict, our allies and associates laid down for us laws of habitual hatred and fondness concerning eastern Europe. We responded by being obedient and trustful, like draft oxen under the yoke. The English and French had already developed the conception of Latin-Slavic co-operation against non-Slavs and non-Latins. The German-Austrians and the Magyars were neither Slavic nor Latin. Hence these two were treated as vanquished and guilty while the Slavs of Austria-Hungary were nominated

victors, although with exceedingly few exceptions they had defended the Hapsburg empire for four and a half years with no less fervor and tenacity than had the others. We Americans were ordered to love Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia and to applaud the ill-treatment meted out to Hungarians and German-Austrians. We did. We bowed reverently to the fact that one racially mixed community, Austria-Hungary, was replaced and absorbed by a number of states, three of which, namely Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania, were no less mixed than the dissected empire had been, whereas two states, Hungary and German-speaking Austria, suffered amputation of their best provinces.

I say we bowed to this settlement. To be quite exact, we did not care. The limited attention we gave to Europe hardly crossed the Rhine. If it suited the British and French to put millions of German-Austrians and Hungarians under Czech rule, Hungarians under Rumanian, and Croats under Serbian domination, why should we be squeamish?

But having helped our allies to win, we had our share of responsibility in the results of victory. We should not have washed our hands of all the injustice committed in the name of national self-determination, and yet we did. The fact that others, nearer to the spot, were no wiser than we may exculpate us, but it does not mean that we acted wisely. Peace treaties involve recognition of new factors that have been introduced by war; they also should involve a consulting together on the part of *all* the belligerents as to how best to set the world in working order again. Our desire to dictate

the peace deprived us of much needed advice and criticism from experts among the countries most affected.

Even before Hitler shocked us into realizing our blunders, the truth had dawned upon some Americans who visited the dismembered empire. Businessmen, having visited first Croatia and then Serbia, or first Transylvania and then old Rumania, would ask me in bewilderment why advanced races had been put under the rule of comparatively backward ones. I could not find a satisfactory answer. Apparently in 1919 Christian statesmen had not yet discovered—as we now seem to have discovered—a method of chasing millions of provisionless people over the border without the slightest regard for family ties.

It is amazing how enduring have been those habitual hatreds and fondnesses produced in the first World War and then foisted on us by our allies. The explanation is propaganda—an amount of propaganda unthinkable at the time of Washington's warning. People deprived of their livelihood by their neighbors never even had a hearing. At the same time, those who profited by the victors' arbitrary discrimination showered us with an unceasing flow of propaganda. Especially does this refer to the Czechs, who took some of the best agricultural parts of Hungary and the richest industrial parts of German-speaking Austria. Many millions of dollars were spent every year in various kinds of propaganda—the object of which was to keep what had been seized.

All of this may sound like past history, outrun by events of incomparable magnitude. In reality it is living history. The same habitual hatreds and fond-

nesses are still alive and have already begun to shackle us and to make us blind to our own interests. I am not speaking of Germany and Japan, although these are cases where a policy of permanent hatred would be the source of most fateful blundering. I am speaking of the eastern half of Europe which includes one half of central Europe.

Again, as in 1919, we are asked to consider the Slavs our natural friends and the non-Slavs our natural enemies. But Slavism now means something quite different from what it meant after the other war. Then it referred to small and separate nations, to Poles, Czechs and Serbs. Now it refers to the largest continuous empire on earth, which, controlled by a dictator, stretches from the Pacific Ocean into the heart of Germany, having reduced to the position of satellites all the Slavic races which had not been under the scepter of the czars—all Poland, Bohemia, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria. At the same time, we are expected to contribute, at least by acquiescence, to the chaining of those elements in the Soviet sphere which are non-Slav, principally Hungary, Rumania and German-speaking Austria.

With great foresight, Russian, Czech and southern Slav-communist propagandists, drawing from seemingly inexhaustible funds, prepared the ground for this policy before the second World War ended in Europe. A shrewd distinction has been dinned into our ears—a distinction between Hitler's victims and his collaborators and satellites. How many Americans remember that Dr. Edouard Benes was swept out of office as president of Czechoslovakia by an irresistible wave of pro-German collaborationism which even rotted his own

National Socialist Party, whose champions, Beran and Chvalkovsky, he had nominated as premier and foreign minister? How many remember that the Slovaks, described for twenty years as members of the one Czechoslovak race, sided with Hitler in his war against Russia and declared war on Poland and America? Very few, it is safe to say. But everyone seems to believe that "feudal and fascist Hungary" was Hitler's enthusiastic ally. Again, few remember that the Moscow Declaration, signed by us in 1943, reminded Austria, Hitler's first victim, of her responsibility in having participated in the war. The labels "victim," "collaborator" and "satellite" have even been interchangeable. As long as it suited Moscow, Bulgaria was called a satellite of Hitler. When she became a satellite of Russia, it was acknowledged that she had been Hitler's victim. The same happened to Croatia.

It is not the purpose of this book to offer new objects of fondness or hatred. I am not asking anyone to like Hungarians and German-speaking Austrians and to despise Czechs, Croats and Serbs. Events to come may compel us to accept such an about-face in self-interest. But the less emotionally we act, the better we shall fare.

I have known many of these different races and ethnic groups and have found all to have attractive and charming traits. I reserve my own aversion for narrow-minded, boisterous, intolerant jingoes, whether they speak Rumanian, Czech, German, Hungarian, Serbian, or any other tongue. In this I hope the reader will join me. It is best to reject the master race mania wherever it is met, and it is not confined to any one country. First of all, it is well to recognize that much so-called leftism is simply camouflaged nationalism.

Ethnic democracy, that is, racial equality within a country, is more important than democratic elections and cannot be replaced by the latter. Soviet Russia's habit of calling herself a democracy will perhaps compel us to discontinue the use of this term. As long as we do use it, it must not mislead us.

Many people think that it is useless to protest if one is face to face with accomplished facts that cannot be changed without another world war. My reply is that facts are really accomplished only when recognized as permanent, and that to consider another world war as the only remedy is to put into practice a defeatism which is not yet warranted.

Having been United States Minister to Hungary from 1933 to 1941, my regular post of observation in those critical years was Budapest. It was a unique post because the Magyars, neither Teuton nor Slav, were always aware of being between the two fires of German and Russian imperialism. During those years, most of us saw only one fire, the German one. Hungary's vision was far ahead of ours. Had we listened to Hungarian statesmen, we should perhaps have been able to limit Stalin's triumph in the hour of Hitler's fall.

Hungary, between the two wars, was a small country, and from my watchtower on the Danube my eyes could roam over her neighbors and neighbors' neighbors, over Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Germany and Italy. The Department of State encouraged my travel across many borders. Anticipating what I want to show in this book, I might say that what I witnessed was a tragic and insoluble conflict between fear and honor, in which fear was bound to win. It is an undeniable fact that on

many occasions those who had been treated as step-children by the Western powers in 1919 showed more loyalty to the Allied cause than their spoiled favorites did.

Would it not have been better if we had opposed the arbitrary discrimination indulged in by the surgeons of 1919, who thereby afforded Hitler his most powerful arguments? Offered a second chance, we ought to set ourselves strongly and firmly against a repetition which this time would allow Slavic imperialism to run amuck.

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