

## **1. Eivind Berggrav - What Scandinavia Can Do! - November 1939**

W h a t S c a n d i n a v i a C a n D o !

R e c o n c i l i a t i o n !

D e m o c r a c y ' s F o u n d a t i o n .

P e a c e N o w !

By Dr.Eivinød Berggrav,Bishop of Oslo and primate of the Norwegian Church. Published November 1939,in Oslo, Norway, by H.Aschehoug & Co.(W.Nygaard).

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Everything is so entirely different this time from what it was last time. One would have thought that when war finally had been declared and all the previous peace efforts had failed - then that was that. But quite the contrary: now came the peace talk for the first time in earnest. In two ways. First with the direct object in view: Peace now, and then with the indirect object: A good, a real peace when it finally comes after perhaps a long war. The experience of our time makes people just as afraid of peace as of war, both have possibilities of evil. The words "Versailles peace" over the whole world have come to have just as unhappy a meaning as the words "world war". Therefore this time we are experiencing a world which from the very first moment of the war was taken up with the thought of peace. Last time everyone talked about "Victory". No one mentions it now. There is no glory in the word. "Victory" has become an empty word which awakens unpleasant associations.

Therefore being neutral has also become something quite different this time from what it was before. Then it was a question merely of holding oneself outside, to protect one's separateness from all the others. Then the warring nations were sufficient unto themselves. We had nothing to do with it. This time they are looking in our direction. Not as possible allies in making war, but as allies for peace, allied in the battle they all must fear to lose, the battle for a good peace. This changes our entire attitude, it brings in a new factor into the idea of neutrality.

Neutrality means that we declare ourselves outside the conflict, but not that we declare ourselves outside

outside humanity. Neutrality means that our convictions do not lie with any one side, but it does not mean that we are without convictions. What kind of convictions?

The communiqué of 19. October from the meeting at Stockholm was the most serious answer that was given to this question. The disappointment felt by many when this news came - because it did not mention the hoped-for concrete attempt to contribute to the solution of the conflict - must not blind us to the fact that there are powerful realities to be found in that document. The Scandinavian governments see it as the call of Scandinavia to "work in the service of reconciliation." Those are strong words. The communiqué closes by speaking about what we can do.

That is not merely a question of "peace". Our chiefs of state use the much weightier word reconciliation. A work and a contribution in the service of reconciliation we are here asked to take up. One must turn to the New Testament to find anything like it. There is Paul's second letter to the Corinthians:

"God reconciled us with Himself and gave us the service of reconciliation". Here we are messengers in the place of Christ, as if God Himself gave command through us. We pray in the place of Christ: Be ye reconciled to God!

A modern political document cut directly out of the New Testament - that is the Stockholm appeal! It is directed to the people of Scandinavia. In democratic countries things are accomplished by an interchange between government and people. We cannot fold our hands and merely wait for our statesmen. By our attitude our statesmen will be both inspired and given a basis for their contribution.

I.

Shall We Give Up Before We Begin?

(7 pages)

II.

What Does It All Depend Upon?

(10 pages)

III.

The Outward Front.

(14 pages)

IV.

The Present Action: Peace Now!

There are many who have been disappointed that the effort for peace which has been expected has not come from any of those who could make it. Others have said on the other hand: it is just you who want a reconciliation and not merely a short "peace" who must not now work for a quick end to the war.

It is clear that we who are not politicians must respect those who do not take action. There is much we do not know. But we others do not therefore escape all responsibility. There have been many questions: why don't those who are free to do so do something? It would be all too easy to "do something", preferably something spectacular, so that people would say: see, these people have really done something! Then perhaps afterwards one could be proud and say: "Yes, we acted!" But we cannot escape our responsibility so easily. It might just as well be said that many groups and people have worked very hard, worked where there might be a chance of accomplishing something. The Scandinavian meeting in Stockholm is the proof of how the Scandinavian powers have been exceedingly alert. They have received masses of appeals from their people.

We do not accomplish our task merely by issuing general appeals for peace or by waiting in a distinguished manner for others to ask us to arrange a conference table. We must also realise that to do the work of a reconciler makes it impossible always to be on the best of terms with everyone at once. There would be nothing to reconcile, if all were agreed that they wanted a reconciliation. The call of the reconciler assumes that there will be opposition against reconciliation. The work of reconciliation will often be dependent upon the courage of our unselfish attitude to challenge. Scandinavia cannot take up the call of reconciler if we at the same time want to assure ourselves against every discomfort and against every risk of being disliked or misunderstood by someone

someone during the exercise of this calling. "Fearful reconcilers" is a contradiction in terms.

The negotiations of politics have an extremely easy way of going in circles and weaving a spider-web where one always remains sitting firmly in the middle and saying: "No, the time is not yet come, the situation is not yet clear, we must wait for a more opportune occasion." Before all we must realise that he who will undertake a reconciler's work never can assure himself in advance that this work will have the prospect of success. The demon of politics is called success. It is that demon which is the very inspirer of war. Could it also be the inspirer of reconciliation? He who will assure a personal success can never be a reconciler. The politicians of Scandinavia, or of the Oslo states, or what you will, will of course use clear thinking and wise acting, but something more is demanded to be a reconciler.

It is possible that the situation is not ripe today, although I believe it is, but in any case it is extremely dangerous to close one's mind with the thought that the time has not come. If it has not come today, it can then suddenly come tomorrow. We live in the era of completely unexpected events. Everything, even the constellations of the nations, change so quickly that truly the reconciler must be both alert and quick if the tragedy is not to repeat itself, which the president of our parliament talked about: the wasted opportunities which never return.

The "psychological moment" is here a dangerous idea. That moment is dependent not merely on the two sides - on when they are "ripe". It is first of all dependent on the third side: when is it ripe, that is to say unselfishly courageous.

The writer of these lines has the opinion that at this moment - it is 30 October today - these both could and ought to be peace.

There could be. The war aims havenot yet been clearly stated! But so much do we know - this is not merely guess-work or newspaper talk - that there is now the possibility that both sides might rest on a basis of a free Poland for the Poles ("Kongress-Polen"), a free Czecho-Slovakia and an arrangement with the colonies. "Free" means then everything which is a vital necessity for the independent life of a nation including a trade route to the sea.

A question which is also involved in a general European settlement is the military arrangements in the two countries mentioned. On this question peace should not need to break down. The chief thing is: Peace cannot be treason against the central right to life of any nation.

This concerns the more immediate war aims. Far more difficult is the question which both Daladier and Chamberlain have raised in their latest speeches: the guarantees. "What we want is a Europe freed from threats of attack. We shall fight until we have obtained definite guarantees of security."  
(Daladier. 10 October.)

It is for the sake of these guarantees that the war is now to continue. But it has never been shown what such guarantees exactly should or could consist of. The word "guarantee" is like a fog bank, and in this fog the total war goes on.

Let us put ourselves in the position of the western powers. They cannot make peace with people who do not keep their word, they say.-- let us say without more ado: that is understood. What we have experienced the last years is of such a kind that everything seems undermined. There is talk enough of breakage of promises from both sides. But this cannot weaken the fact that the cynical breaking of promises shouts to heaven. The word guarantee is therefore quite completely understood as a necessary demand. But let us investigate how it is thought to realise it -looked at from the west.

The present government in Germany is closely tied up with one person. Is the removal of this person the guarantee looked for? In that case one must realise that the person has become a symbol. A symbol remains in the roots where the people's instinct are determined. Napoleon was a far less important symbol. But when he was removed, he grew in his own people. A symbol removed by outward violence become afterwards the martyr-crown and works then like a fever, slowly or acutely in the body of the people. A symbol can only be destroyed from the inside, be loosened by the fact that something else takes fast hold. The symbol only becomes more firmly rooted under threats from the outside, it begins to dissolve however  
in an atmosphere

in an atmosphere of undeserved help. If there was a question of a short-term guarantee, then the brutal removal of the symbol would be enough. Not so if it is a question of anything permanent. In a way one can say that the origin of the symbol became possible through the "guarantees" which were enforced after the last war. Guarantees can be so made that they work like a boomerang. If one removes the symbol of the day ("Hang the Kaiser"), then one thereby has prepared tomorrow's perhaps worse "symbol".

We must count on the fact that the events of these last days have had an effect in every country. An effect is dependent upon whether it is carried too far or whether it is stopped at the right moment. Forgotten it can never be that there lives a great, young people in the midst of Europe, whom one must reckon with. The only "guaranty" would otherwise be that they did not exist. But the fact stands fast, and we must reckon on it, the lesson from the last time says clearly: by violence against this people lasting guarantees can never be created. No one thinks either of trying Versailles over again. No intelligent man dreams of splitting Germany into small states by force. To divide it from the outside would be to unite it from the inside - a fact which would also soon find its outer expression. Military occupation in the style of the Ruhr is recognized by all as madness. Disarmament of one nation has been tried sufficiently. In all these ways exist only boomerang-guarantees.

But the blockade - there is one "ism" which is worse than all others, that is "Hungerism". For it attacks not only on people, its poison spreads everywhere. If hunger gets its death grip on a nation, then every desperate power is turned loose. Then finally all guarantees are destroyed for all countries. Quite rightly it has been said: "One starved out and two worn out powers can never themselves make peace. It is made (or killed-) by powers which they themselves cannot control.

Lasting guarantees can therefore never be won by continuing the war. Then there is every prospect that all guarantees disappear for good. To be willing to accept the total war in Europe in order to obtain such guarantees, is the most gruesome, the most devilish speculation and blasphemy.

It lies in the very word guarantee that it presupposes a good atmosphere. There are still possibilities of realising such an atmosphere. Herein is the only possible

guarantee.

This is the "reconcilers" moment. He must be able to invite the two sides to meet without an armistice. Both sides will now refuse any such proposal. The reason is obvious. There is also a sufficiently good armistice the way things are today. The two sides could meet under a neutral presidency and between four walls. They need to meet in that way. But none of them dares to admit it. And others are afraid to come with the proposal. Is it really to break down on that point? The invitation must not be any attempt to "arbitrate" or come with proposals of conditions. But it must be concrete in certain definite things. First a definite place must be named, a city. Let us say Malmö or Bergen to visualise it. This very name of a concrete place will release something in millions of people, release a hope, a will to let it be tried - one last time. Only the fact that they meet, meet now when the situation is so serious - no one knows what it could let to. As Lloyd George said to his electors (reported in the Times, 23 October). It is certainly not more dangerous to discuss than to carry on war, is it? We can be just as firm in our attitude at the conference table as at the front!" A proposal, a concrete invitation now, no one could say no to, because in that way they would come to bear the responsibility for the unknown evils that await us. The invitation must not be to a peace conference, but to an upright exchange of aims, a precise statement of war aims and of the mutual demands and the mutual offers of concrete guarantees within the limits of possibility. Such tangible guarantees are not unthinkable - for instance, the removal of the troops from the areas which are to be the new free states and a surrender of the temporary government there to a mutual council. Let us not simply assume that anything is "un-thinkable". We do not know until it is tried.

Such guarantees are inadequate, it is said. But can there be found any others which in themselves do not bear the seeds of new miseries? Can what one longs for be won at all by carrying on war to frightful extents? Is not the first and best guarantee for the future that this war be stopped?

Those who answer no, base it upon the allegation that in that way one would certainly continue with armaments and war of nerves and only obtain a short respite of "peace". Better to get it all over with now, they say.

To this



To this there are two things to be said: first that which has been said before that the end of such a war can be the total ruin of all of us and all our values, a maimed world, gasping with hatred, humanity in bondage to the devil. Is that what one means by "getting it all over with"? When the end has finally come, we can look back and say: but we didn't mean this, think if we had realised it in time.

Secondly: everything must be done to create the instruments which could make new possibilities for the living together of nations. New arrangements of the economic international life on a radically changed basis, hectic protectionism replaced by free avenues, cost what it will - it costs less than the series of wars which otherwise come. New arrangement of the fellowship of the nations-if not in the form of a new League of Nations, then in a federative arrangement according to historically tried models. The point is that now that the experiments have been made with the old, there is a willingness to see with new eyes. That disarmament is a chief factor in this new order is clearly said by both the fighting sides. The guarantee for the whole thing lies first and foremost in getting it going while there is still time and while there is still an atmosphere of mutual accommodation.

The League of Nations began in a period of one-sided power, therein lay its death sentence, its paralysis bacteria. Between victors and vanquished there can be no mutual give and take. If the war is to be fought to the end, then these will be a giving and taking of evil alone. Can one imagine a new order in Europe which is not from the very beginning on a mutual basis in an agreement of the nations? It is the last second!

When one therefore says: you who will have not only a sealed-off conflict, a lie of a peace, but a real reconciliation, you must want war, it is illogical speech. Shall we open all the sluices of hatred as a means to reconcile nations?

It is true in the other hand and an uncomfortable truth, that reconciliation does not take place in a moment. If peace should come now, then our responsibility for a new life of the nations has just begun. The democracies fight not only the battle against the totalitarian states, the democracies fight first of all

all the battle for their own souls. If they lose that, it makes no difference what they call themselves, Democracy's faith that people can be on earth as brothers and work together without having any single nation or any single race being master, is a faith that needs deep roots in order to live. It is understandable that the totalitarian states will throttle everything and everyone who represents the "holy" which is above the state. If peace comes, then the democracies must begin to work seriously. Therefore we must not believe that "peace" is an open Sesame for the return of all good things- if we did it would mean the return of all evil things. If peace came immediately, then would the work of reconciliation just begin seriously. Then there would be a request for the contributions of Scandinavia. But peace is the first condition.

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