

The New World

Mesamarat al-Gayb, 12 August 1945

These past days have genuinely proven momentous, in the history of the new world — the very days beginning last Thursday, the second of August, and ending this Thursday, the ninth.

On the second day of this same month, the leaders of the three great powers announced some part of the decisions they had reached, in their own meeting at Potsdam. On the seventh of this same month, the world learned of this same momentous event: the use of atomic bombs, as a means of hastening the war's own end. And on the ninth day of this same month, the world learned Russia had declared war on Japan. And so the old world hastens, with real speed, toward its own end — its own dissolution, into this new world expected to take its own place, through whatever systems are prepared for it, whatever plans are drawn up for it, and whatever hopes are placed in it, of comprehensive reform, complete security, and lasting peace.

I do not know to what degree genuine optimism proves justified here, nor to what degree genuine pessimism imposes itself, upon those genuinely capable of reflecting on what has already happened, assessing what now exists, and predicting what might yet come to be. Certain philosophers of history have long held that human life resembles itself, one instance to the next, exactly as one drop of water resembles another; and that human life diverges from itself, one instance to the next, exactly as night diverges from day; and that the history of humankind itself rests upon these same two significant laws — the law of concord, on the one hand, and the law of discord, on the other. By virtue of the law of concord, understanding arises among individuals and groups, cooperation arises among nations and peoples, and whatever advancement of civilization, whatever progress of knowledge, whatever mastery of man over the difficulties and obstacles obstructing his own path, is genuinely achieved. By virtue of the law of discord, meanwhile, unity fractures, and division arises, among individuals and groups within a single homeland, followed by divergent interests, conflicting passions, and opposing concerns, and whatever rivalry, conflict, and war arises from all of this.

There appears to exist no genuine way for humankind to free itself entirely from the authority of either of these two laws, or of both together

— it remains subject to them, rather, at every time, and under every circumstance. All that genuinely changes is that these same two laws contend with one another, one prevailing for a time, the other prevailing in its own turn.

It stands entirely clear we now live, at present, in an age where the law of discord genuinely prevails. Neither the First World War, nor the Second, nor the rivalry between the two, was ever anything but a manifestation of exactly this same hateful dominance. I do not number myself among those genuinely devoted to the philosophy of history, nor among those who genuinely believe in its own sweeping general laws, laws that captivate the mind through whatever appearance of precision, and comprehensiveness, they happen to display. But it stands entirely certain that the age we now live in is no age of agreement, and harmony — it is, rather, an age of discord, and conflict.

We were told, at the very start of this century, that the First World War would eliminate the very causes of division, and restore the world to complete accord, reassured security, expansive hope, and genuine, thriving activity. Once that same war failed to fulfil these same alluring promises, and peace never truly settled upon the earth, those who spoke of it said: it never truly ended, in 1918 — it was merely a truce, between two wars, before conflict resumed once more. We were then told, afterward, that Germany's own collapse, her own complete submission to the victors' own authority, and the occupation of her own soil, in East and West, by their own triumphant armies, would be exactly what finally brought the war to its own true end, settling peace upon the earth, and laying the genuinely firm foundation for the new world.

Germany did indeed collapse, and the victorious armies did indeed occupy the whole of her own soil, and the leaders of the victorious powers did indeed gather in her own capital, to lay the foundation of peace, and establish the very order of that same peace. Yet we are told: the war has not yet reached its own true end — Japan still resists, in the furthest reaches of the East, and must genuinely collapse, exactly as Germany collapsed, before any talk of peace could ever prove genuinely frank, genuinely sound, genuinely fruitful. All of this has already been said — and all of it continues to be said, even now.

The English, the Americans, and China have genuinely striven to finish with the war against Japan, hastening the world's own arrival at exactly this same peace it burns with genuine longing for — so they sent

Japan a genuinely serious final ultimatum, demanding she surrender, exactly as her own Hitlerite ally surrendered, unconditionally. Once she refused, they struck her with two formidable bombs, in under a week, indeed in under three days... they struck her with the atomic bomb, this past Monday, then struck her with Russia's own declaration of war upon her, on Wednesday. And they now wait for Japan to genuinely weigh her own fate. Either she surrenders unconditionally, and comprehensive peace returns — or she persists in her own obstinacy, and atomic bombs are poured down upon her without restraint, Allied armies invading her from every direction, the final outcome already certain, beyond any doubt: Japan's own defeat, and surrender, at the earliest possible moment.

And so, God willing, we shall emerge from the authority of the law of discord, and enter, God willing, into the law of concord instead, under whose own authority a peace shall govern the world, one whose own substance is order, harmony, and accord, knowing neither disagreement nor division. And so matters proceed, genuinely smooth, genuinely easy, in people's own conversation, whenever they speak of it, and beneath writers' own pens, whenever they write of it — and we might well recite, smiling, genuinely reassured, the ancient poet's own words:

*If these hopes prove true, they shall prove the finest hopes of all —
and if not, we shall still have lived, for a time, a genuinely pleasant life
within them.*

It seems most likely, though, that these same hopes prove untrue — that the law of discord remains a genuinely constitutive part of human nature itself, and that the interests of individuals and groups, of nations and peoples, will always, eventually, clash, even under peace, so long as any given state remains merely exhausted, and worn down. Once she rests, gathers herself, and recovers her own military and economic strength, genuinely violent rivalry, genuinely fearsome conflict reappears, the law of discord openly declares itself once more, and armed confrontation resumes.

Those who speak of it have already said: this second war has not, in fact, ended war itself — it has merely brought the world to a genuine truce, longer or shorter, exactly like that same truce that once existed between 1919 and 1939. For everything announced, among the decisions taken at Potsdam, gives no real indication whatsoever that humanity has genuinely returned to reason, come back to its own senses, chosen genuine well-being, or laid the foundations for a genuinely sound, lasting

peace.

I have no real wish to dwell upon the decisions the three leaders reached regarding the German people — they remain victors, after all, who suffered genuine horror at warring Germany's own hands, and find themselves genuinely compelled to deal harshly with this same unjust people, exactly as that same people once dealt harshly with their own peoples, and with other peoples besides; genuinely compelled to disarm her entirely, train her carefully in civilization once more, and transform the very mentality tyranny itself once corrupted within her. I do not know whether they will succeed in this, or fail — but I genuinely understand the attempt, and very nearly find genuine grounds to justify it.

What I genuinely wish to dwell upon, rather, is the very position the three leaders adopted toward themselves, first, toward their own allies, second, and toward the other, neutral nations, last of all. They took, toward themselves, a position genuinely full of self-interest, and genuinely lacking in real restraint — granting themselves whatever they were able to grant themselves, and granting others scarcely anything at all. It is only fair to say that Great Britain and America took nothing whatsoever of German soil, content, rather, with occupation, longer or shorter — but Russia took, for herself, a genuine part of Germany, including the city of Königsberg, once home to the great German philosopher [Kant], and granted another part to Poland, to compensate her for what she had taken from her, in the east, when the borders were redrawn.

As for German industry, it was divided among the three powers, in a division where Russia genuinely prevailed, having borne more of the war's own evil than her own allies. It stands entirely clear this same self-serving division will never be confined to Germany alone — it leaves, within the very souls of the other Allies, those touched by the war with exactly the same harm inflicted upon others, genuinely dangerous consequences for future peace. Whatever the case, no one could possibly claim France, Belgium, Holland, and Greece feel entirely, genuinely satisfied with exactly this same approach the three leaders took, at Potsdam.

As for the other nations, scattered across the countries of the earth, the three leaders' own position toward them proved genuinely strange too, not without this same evident self-interest. Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia remain subject to Russian influence, without

any doubt; Austria remains a matter of some minor disagreement. As for the Near East, the leaders never openly declared their own view of it — since it holds problems the new Labour government, it appears, could not yet settle with any firm opinion, before genuinely studying, and turning over, every angle of thought. Russia holds demands upon the Turks, and a particular view of the Straits... and the Arab countries hold genuinely serious problems, the Palestinian problem by no means the least significant among them. Genuine patience, then, would serve better here, resolving them gradually proving both easier, and more likely to succeed.

As for the Iranian question, the delegates said nothing whatsoever about it — yet it has emerged, today, that they have already agreed, on this same matter, on exactly the kind of preliminary measures used to placate children, ones never genuinely binding upon the future in any significant way: the Allies will evacuate Tehran immediately — though evacuation of Iran itself remains a matter still genuinely open to discussion, to be taken up once Japan has surrendered.

And so the new world has been given foundations no different, in truth, from those of the old world — resting, before all else, on self-interest, which only intensifies real rivalry, on the one hand; on international balance, which leaves certain victors genuinely fearful of others, on the other; and, third, on bargaining, and manoeuvring, which merely postpones the resolution of genuinely complex problems. It stands entirely clear that the superiority Russia has already secured amounted to an immediate payment, for exactly what we have read today: Russia's own declaration of war on Japan. As for the deferred payment, the days ahead will reveal it, in Turkey, or in Iran, or in both together — and in the Far East, in any case.

The clear conclusion, from all of this, is that the world may well secure a genuinely lasting peace — yet it will prove a peace exactly like the peace the Roman Empire once imposed upon the ancient world, one whose own substance is strength, superiority, and might. The three great powers have already monopolized exactly this same strength, superiority, and might between themselves, and shall impose their own peace upon humanity — and I say "their own peace" deliberately, meaning exactly what I say. They shall never impose upon humanity a genuinely human peace, one all people alike might genuinely enjoy, within the bounds of justice, and equality — they shall impose upon it, rather, a genuinely Anglo-Saxon-Russian peace, one remaining comprehensive only so long as matters remain settled between the Russians and the Anglo-Saxons

themselves. As for the rest of the earth's own nations, nothing remains for them but to listen, and obey — and should they refuse, the atomic bomb already exists, genuinely capable of restoring reason to the mad, and instilling a genuine love of security, and order, in whoever might think to disturb that same security, and order. But the genuinely significant question we ought to pose to ourselves is this: which will prove the stronger authority over mankind, the more lasting influence in guiding humanity's own course — the power of the atomic bomb, or the power of right, justice, and equality?