

"The World Community" - Dr. S.

Radhakrishnan

Introduction

"The World Community" by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan is a plea to the great powers of the world to unite under a single umbrella, namely, a world federal government. To achieve this, he enumerates on the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and wars. According to him, world peace is not a dream in a shrinking world. It is a necessity, an essential condition for the survival of the human race. For this, a world federal government is the way out; with powers limited to establishing and maintaining law and order among the nations of the world.



Wars – An Illegitimate Instrument of Politics

In World War I, of the ten million people who were killed, 95 per cent were soldiers and five per cent were civilians. In World War II, of the fifty million people who were killed, 52 per cent were soldiers and 48 per cent were civilians. In the Korean War, of the nine million killed, 84 per cent were civilians and 16 per cent soldiers. Thus, war has degenerated into mass murder of the defenceless, women and children. It has become an illegitimate instrument of politics.

Dangers Posed by Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear developments have given enough power to the great countries to annihilate the human race many times over. Politicians have become indifferent to this growing danger. The apathy and indifference among the masses have resulted in a creeping paralysis of the people. The building of nuclear armaments means, the destruction of cities, the ruin of countries, the suffering of millions of human beings and the demoralisation of the world. There is no protection from nuclear weapons through shelters or emergency regulations.

Alternatives for the Military Methods

In a world, where peace is becoming more and more precarious, the great powers have a special responsibility. William James in a famous essay on "The Moral Equivalent of War" proposed a 'substitute for war's disciplinary functions'. It is necessary that we devise alternatives for the military methods. Issues which were hitherto decided through wars should hereafter be decided by peaceful means. In political life, we cannot exclude conflicts altogether.

These have to be settled by a world organisation, an international authority. Kant, in his essay on "Perpetual Peace", suggested a group of states'. Observing minimal rights of civilised behaviour. He proposed a notion of world citizenship without the support of an overall sovereignty. World control by a single authority is an illusion. A federal solution is the way out, a world community which substitutes the processes of law for armed conflicts. Dharma, in Indian thought means a gathering in, a binding together, integration; adharma, its opposite, is a scattering out, a falling away, disintegration. Thus, a world federal government capable of establishing and maintaining law and order among the nations of the world is a practical way of achieving just and lasting peace.

Pre-requisites for a World Community

For a world authority to be effective, a world understanding is necessary. We should work for a world community, for, the alternatives are chaos or world tyranny. The Hammurabi code of the Babylonians, and the Egyptian Book of the Dead contain suggestions of the Ten Commandments of the Israelites. One of them reads, "Thou shalt not oppress the stranger for ye were once strangers in Egypt". Alexander looked upon the whole inhabited world as his fatherland. All good men are of this world; the wicked are the aliens. Ashoka, Harsha, and Akbar represent this view of life. By continually dwelling on the selfishness of others, we ourselves become more selfish. Not by accusing others do we get out of our selfishness, but by purifying ourselves.

Jesus could not accept the primitive morality of an 'eye for an eye'. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Return good for evil. Bless those that curse you', he said. Professor Max Mueller, who did a great deal for the interpretation of Indian religion to the Western world said that the aim of human existence was a world community. The real force working for world unity is man's inborn compassion for others.

The Law of Nations

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Democracy – Basis of a World Community

A universal moral order is possible only with a commitment to the ideal and practice of democracy based on the dignity of the individual. Even the most powerful nation or ruler must say with Shakespeare's Richard II:

I live with bread like you, feel want
Taste grief, need friends; subjected thus
How can you say to me I am a king.

Democracy aims at achieving its ideals through persuasion, love, example, and moral force.

Violence and the machinery of intolerance are inconsistent with the spirit of democracy. Even the Fascist system claims to be democratic. Gentile, the Italian philosopher, sets forth the Fascist claim in these words: 'Democracy consists in giving the people what they want'.

The UNO and World Government

The United Nations Organisation is the nearest we have to world government. It attempts to eliminate the causes of conflicts. It affirms that international disputes should be resolved not by force of arms, but by reasonable negotiations. It uses moral force as a check on the aggressiveness and harassment of others. The U.N.O tries to free nations from political domination, racial oppression, and economic exploitation. The right of a nation to survive depends not on the extent of its territory or the size of its population or its military might, but, its integrity and adherence to law.

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Freedom from Political Exploitation and Racial Oppression

Freedom from political exploitation is essential for human dignity. Freedom is a spiritual quality. Freedom is universal in its application. Nationalism at one stage integrated people in Europe. The mainspring of nationalism is the will of the people to be members of an independent sovereign state.

Racial oppression is anti-democratic. There is only one race, the human race. It is above considerations of politics and nationality. Every democracy should fight race discrimination. Nationalism has lost its drive. Now, many in Europe hope to live under a universal system.

Conclusion

Every area can be made fertile and habitable, every disease can be removed and every scarcity can be conquered. These are attempted by the Food and Agricultural Organisation and World Health Organisation.

If a fraction of the expenditure we incur on armaments is diverted to social welfare, we can clothe every man, woman and child, and build schools, advance general health, housing, nutrition, culture and other ingredients of social well-being. This will help to eliminate free hatred

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If a fraction of the expenditure we incur on armaments is diverted to social welfare, we can clothe every man, woman and child, and build schools, advance general health, housing, nutrition, culture and other ingredients of social well-being. This will help to eliminate fear, hatred and bigotry among nations. Hence, we should wage a war against poverty. A true democrat should identify himself with the poor and the outcast. We must work for this social revolution.