

"A Holy Struggle"

The Shah of Iran proposes an international counterpart of the Peace Corps

A NUMBER OF PEOPLE in the world enjoy economic prosperity, a superb health service, good food, advanced education and a high standard of life. On the other hand, the large mass of the earth's population are caught in the clutches of poverty, hunger, disease, ignorance and a standard of life lower than a decent minimum. Can we, in conscience, look at the members of the second group and still quote the great verse in the Bible: "So God created man in His own image"? I have no doubt that God did create men in His own image but I am inclined to add that man's injustice and selfishness has crushed and misshaped them. . . . Racial discrimination, class distinction, social injustice, aggression against the freedoms of the individual, still prevail in many communities. Some methods of education are not right. Not enough attention is paid to the moral and spiritual needs of the individual.

We are disturbed to find that our society is unwell, that the world is beset by darkness and that the human race is suffering from various forms of injustice. We realize also that against this general background, our private grievances, whether within the country, the town or the family, are of relatively less significance. The fact is that even should we be able to improve the state of our home, our city or even our country, and should human society be sick, this will naturally affect the well-being of each and every one of these units. Until such time as the roots of the curses that afflict humanity are removed, we shall never be able to enjoy peace and tranquility.

I WANT TODAY to make a suggestion to all the people who are prepared to enter a holy struggle for rendering real service to humanity. Such service is undoubtedly their sincerely cherished ideal and my suggestion is meant to afford them an opportunity to advance toward their ideal without being obliged to follow the strict routine required by ordinary political and social organizations.

There are today hundreds of millions of people throughout the world who are in the clutches of hunger, ignorance, and assorted social inequalities. They are in sore need of help from persons moved by the spirit of benevolence and self-sacrifice. Hundreds of millions of men, women and children in the four corners of the world are anxiously hoping and expecting that some other persons, out of kindness, should come to their help, and to soothe their sufferings. I am certain that, at the same time, there are millions of people not far away who, in

their hearts, cherish the desire to render selfless human service to their fellows; and would find spiritual solace and moral satisfaction in living for a high ideal and a holy purpose.

Today on the basis of these facts, I propose the creation of an international organization to be known by some such name as the Universal Welfare Legion, in which individuals irrespective of country, class, race, religion, sex, age, economic level or social status will render service. Their only common denominator will be the fact that they have decided to devote a part of their lives to the service of mankind. The headquarters for the general administration of this organization should be attached exclusively to the United Nations; that is, to the greatest organization which has been created internationally to serve the whole of humanity.

I dearly wish that the countries of the world will take a decisive step toward final disarmament, and then place a part of the amount they thus save, at the disposal of this international legion. Before that day arrives, however, one can hope that such help shall be given voluntarily; that is, benevolent individuals and organizations as well as governments will render financial assistance to such a legion in the form of donations through the United Nations. It is, no doubt, the United Nations that should provide for the living and working expenses of these volunteers who aim at nothing but the happiness of mankind.

SINCE imperial Roman times many legions have been formed for the purpose of military conquest. Let us, for once, create an international legion for the purpose of gaining victory in the fight against the real enemies of humanity; that is, against poverty, hunger and social injustice in any form. Let future history bear witness to the fact that the moral power of the servitor of humanity is greater, and more lasting, than the force of any army and the energy of any destructive device. Let those who wish to devote themselves to the service of humanity gather together and make the voice of selfless service reach the ears of hundreds of millions of their shelterless despondent brothers and sisters throughout the world. In the depressing darkness of discriminations, oppressions and unscrupulous, ruthless calculations, let this legion be the torchbearer of selflessness and benevolence. Let this legion give objective reality to the great words of the great classical Persian poet Sa'di when he wrote:

*If thou hast no sympathy for the troubles of others
Thou art unworthy to be called by the name of a man.*