

A STATEMENT ON THE PRESENT WORLD SITUATION

**By the Sutton Preparative Meeting of the Society of
Friends (Quakers)**

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GRAVE and ominous as are the days in which we live, we feel it is not a time for despair but rather for the hope and courage that led to creative action. Now is the time to encourage the latent forces for peace that exist in every land and to this end we call men and women everywhere to witness to the seed of goodness that seeks to live in their hearts and minds.

The division of men into hostile camps is a denial of the Christian conception of society. Jesus saw through men's outward professions and ideologies to the possibility of kindling the living truth within them. This truth in its redemptive quality would ultimately heal strife and division.

The world's condition cannot be solved by methods of expediency or force but by men and women applying the eternal verities to their own lives. God has given to each man His Divine Light, which, if he would but follow, will lead him to the Truth, and we reaffirm that this Divine Light is in all men of whatever nationality, class or creed.

This in effect implies the unity of all mankind under the Fatherhood of God; that we are indeed members one of another and that in His Kingdom there is neither East nor West.

In our daily lives it is to this Divine Light in others (and in ourselves) that we must always appeal. If our appeal fails, we must, as Christ taught us, be willing to

suffer the consequences. But history testifies that out of such failures the seeds of true peace have often grown.

We will never inflict suffering by armed strife on our fellow men however wrong we believe their opinions and deeds to be; nor will we willingly cause suffering by any other means. To do so, may destroy men to whom God Himself has given His Light.

We do not condone that which is evil in Soviet Russia, but we ask that we should neither be blind to the good that exists in that country, nor overlook the background of her history and the sufferings of her people.

Moreover, who can say that all is well with Western Democracy? The truth is that mankind has lost its way. Individual men and women the world over are morally sick and tired, while fear and suspicion are characteristic of our time.

As Quakers we are conscious that we frequently turn aside from God's Guidance and that we have far to travel before we reflect the mind of Christ, but we are certain that the essential Christian message that has been relegated to the background by the modern world must be recalled and implemented in action if men are to live together. This message alone can reconcile a desire for social justice for men in the mass with the rights of the individual.

There exists in each of us unknown reserves of love, compassion and wisdom and if we would but call upon them they would guide us from darkness into light. It is indeed to the degree to which we avail ourselves of these eternal qualities that God comes to our assistance. The creative journey into peace will undoubtedly entail risks—risks for national sovereignty, risks of personal sacrifice—but the way of peace has a redemptive quality of its own and as hatred begets hatred, so goodwill begets goodwill, and in the end the healing of the nations as well as of men will be secured.