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On 2 September 1919, the day after he turned forty-eight, Major J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the Judge Advocate General's Officers' Reserve Corps stood in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City to publicly oppose America's entry into the League of Nations. Clark was a highly respected international lawyer, had served on many national and international commissions, had prepared a brief on the Versailles Treaty for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and had been awarded three silver war service chevrons and the Distinguished Service Medal. No one could doubt his integrity, ability, or patriotism, and it was significant that this prominent man should become involved in the highly controversial cause of attempting to keep America out of an international organization which was supposed to prevent all future wars.

But Major Clark had an axe to grind as he boldly stumped the state of Utah showing forth the weaknesses of the League. At first he may not have realized what an emotion-laden controversy he was injecting himself into, but by the time the debate was over, one Mormon apostle had declared the League to be inspired of God, another apostle had used Mormon scripture to oppose it, Elder B. H. Roberts had attacked

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Clark's arguments with his own positive analysis of the League Covenant and by quoting the Book of Mormon, and the President of the Church, whom Clark revered as a prophet, had openly endorsed the League which Clark so doggedly fought to defeat.[1] It must have been a bitter-sweet victory at best when he heard that the United States Senate had finally failed to ratify the treaty.

J. Reuben Clark's fight against the League of Nations was only the beginning of over four decades of struggle against what he considered to be the withering away of certain fundamental American traditions. After the League was set up without American membership, Clark found himself opposing the World Court because it was part of the League, but at the same time proposing his own plan for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. In the 1930s he became a leader in the isolationist movement, attempting to keep America from involvement in the wars of Europe. At that time his cause was highly popular, but by the end of World War II he was again on the unpopular side as he inveighed against the United Nations, against NATO, and against anything that might compel the United States to involve itself in the political affairs of other nations.

After World War I Clark achieved greater national status as he participated in more international conferences on behalf of the United States, became Under Secretary of State, and eventually was appointed Ambassador to Mexico. In 1933 he became a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, and Mormons began then, as now, to search out with even greater interest and respect both his political and religious views.

President Clark was always one to take full personal responsibility for his views. Although he found ample justification for his political attitudes in the teachings of the Church, he was careful to avoid equating his own opinion with Church doctrine. In a way it was a prudent restraint, for the man who drew him into the First Presidency, Heber J. Grant, was also the President who, in 1919, had openly espoused the League. More important, however, is the fact that Clark was sincere

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[1]The apostle who called the League inspired was George F. Richards, President of the Council of the Twelve, while Reed Smoot, who was then a United States Senator, rigidly opposed it. The President of the Church, Heber J. Grant, used the occasion of a stake conference to endorse the League, and his remarks are found in the *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* October 1919.

in making such assertions as "For what I shall say tonight I am alone and solely responsible."[2]

This paper is an attempt to synthesize what it was that J. Reuben Clark, Jr. wanted to be responsible for as he looked at American involvement in international political schemes from 1919 until his death in 1961.

In his tough-minded attitude toward world organizations, Clark demonstrated an impressive consistency throughout his life. Beginning with his critique of the League of Nations, one can observe certain prevailing principles and ideals in his public statements. To be sure, not all of them appeared in every talk, but together they formed such an integral part of his political character that only by analyzing each of these themes can his attitude toward world organization be fully understood or appreciated.

A MAN OF PEACE WITH HONOR

First, Clark was a man of peace, and much of his attitude toward international relations was determined by that fact. He hated war; he deplored the machinery of war, and raised his voice consistently against the political and military establishment that would tend to promote war.[3] He was no pacifist, however, and frequently suggested that there were, indeed, some things worth fighting for. He declared in 1919:

> We all hate war with its agonies and its curses. We will do everything that within us lies to abolish war or to make it less likely; and yet even as there are worse things than death, so are there worse things than war. Honor, truth, virtue are and must be to the God-fearing man, dearer even than life, for they are worth sacrificing life for.
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> Where would Christianity have been today had our Christian fathers not been willing to give their lives for their beliefs and to vindicate the blood to whom this argument speaks in so loud a tone. . . .
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> There are causes, believe me, worth fighting for and dying for, and so long as man is lustful for power, is selfish

[2]J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "Our Dwindling Sovereignty." Address delivered at the Fourth Annual Pi Sigma Alpha Lecture, sponsored by the Institute of Government, University of Utah, 13 February 1952, and reprinted in J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Stand Fast By Our Constitution* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1962), p. 96.

[3]For an analysis of Clark's isolationism as well as his antagonism to war, see Martin B. Hickman and Ray C. Hillam, "J. Reuben Clark, Jr.: Political Isolationism Revisited," *Dialogue* 7:37-46 (Spring 1972).

> and ambitious there is, I warn you, no peace everlasting in the world.[4]

But more often he decried war, and seemed to consider most such conflicts as wars of conquest.

> Nothing is more unrighteous, more unholy, more un-Godly than man-declared mass slaughter of his fellowman for an unrighteous cause. . . . The law declared at Sinai was 'Thou shalt not kill,' and in the Garden of Gethsemane: 'All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' With these divine commands deep-embodied in our spiritual consciousness, we can look with no degree of allowance upon the sin of unholy war, and a war to make conquest or to keep conquest already made is such a war.[5]

Clark was not reluctant to condemn even his own country for past aggressions, as demonstrated by his 1947 remark on "our War with Mexico of the 1840s, where we were the aggressor—our motives for waging that war will scarcely stand objective scrutiny, either as to altruism or unselfishness."[6]

The avoidance of war, then, was one of J. Reuben Clark's great political objectives and any world alliance that might involve America in war was to be shunned. It was from this perspective that this self-proclaimed advocate of peace analyzed the efforts toward international organization that followed both wars. In each case the objective of the new organization was to maintain peace, but Clark charged that the League of Nations, far from preventing war, would simply legalize it in certain cases and make it compulsory in others, and he chided the proponents of the League for changing one phrase in their propaganda from "prevent war" to "minimize war."[7] As he interpreted the Covenant, if two member nations could not settle their own disputes and the League was called

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[4]J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "Dangers of the Treaty Pointed Out." Address on the peace treaty and covenant of the League of Nations, Salt Lake City, 2 September 1919, reprinted in *Deseret News,* 6 September 1919. Clark was preaching the same theme twenty-two years later when he said in a General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "We believe in Peace. We are the devoted followers of the Prince of Peace. We abhor war, save in the actual defense of our homes, our families, our liberties." Clark in *Conference Report,* April 1941, p. 21.

[5]Clark in *Conference Report,* October 1939, p. 11.

[6]J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "Let Us Have Peace." Address before the Agency Management Association, Chicago, Illinois, 14 November 1947, reprinted in *Church News,* 22 November 1947.

[7]*Deseret News,* 12 September 1919. Report of an address given in Ogden, Utah, 11 September 1919.

in to do it for them, or even if two non-members had refused membership in order to conduct their own war, military action on the part of the League might be necessary. In order to bring peace through the auspices of the League, then, a new and "legal" war would begin in which America would surely be involved, "and any such war so legalized must inevitably lead us into a world conflagration far greater than the one we are but now finishing."[8] After World War II he felt the same way about both the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Typical of his attitude toward the U.N. was a statement written in 1945:

> There seems no reason to doubt that such real approval as the Charter has among the people is based upon the belief that if the Charter is put into effect, wars will end . . . . The Charter will not certainly end war. Some will ask,—why not? In the first place, there is no provision in the Charter itself that contemplates ending war. It is true the Charter provides for force to bring peace, but such use of force is itself war. . . . The Charter is built to prepare for war, not to promote peace. . . . The Charter is a war document not a peace document. . . .
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> Not only does the Charter Organization not prevent future wars, but it makes it practically certain that we shall have future wars, and as to such wars it takes from us the power to declare them, to choose the side on which we shall fight, to determine what forces and military equipment we shall use in the war and to control and command our sons who do the fighting.[9]

In addition, Clark saw America's expanding military establishment as a possible contributor to future wars; and treaties of alliance which might require America to go to war tended to feed the growth of the military far beyond its actual defensive needs. In 1947 he sounded a warning cry which has clear present-day implications:

> I am almost ashamed to say, that at the moment, our military branches seem in almost complete control of our government. They appear to dominate Congress, and under the circumstances, we may assume they are in sufficient control of our foreign relations to be able to set the international scene. . . . We are not justified in doubting, on

[8]Clark, "Dangers of the Treaty Pointed Out."

[9]Unpublished 1945 manuscript, quoted in Jerreld L. Newquist, ed., *Prophets, Principles, and National Survival* (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1964), p. 458n. Clark's concern is expressed seven years later in "Our Dwindling Sovereignty."

> the facts we have that we of the United States are, for the first time in our history, under a real threat from our military arm, and that if the plans of the militarists carry, we shall become as thoroughly militarized as was Germany at her best, or worst. Certain it is we are being generously dosed with that sovereign narcotic, which designing militarists have in the past always administered to their peoples, the doctrine that to ensure peace we must maintain a great army and gigantic armaments. But this ignores, indeed conceals, the unvarying historical fact that big armies have always brought, not peace, but war which has ended in a hate that in due course brings another war.[10]

Essential to Clark's opposition to American participation in international political bodies, then, was his love of peace, and his conviction that certain world organizations would not only find it impossible to keep the peace, but would actually promote war.

A SENSE OF HISTORY

Clark's attitude toward world involvement was bolstered by a second theme that characterized most of his writings: an avid interest in history and a personal interpretation of the past, on the basis of which he built his concept of the contemporary world. He was also concerned that other Americans become acquainted with the important historical documents which were necessary to understanding international relations. In attacking the North Atlantic Treaty before a group of American financiers, for example, he listed the major alliances and treaties to which America had been a party since World War I and asked how many had read them. Each of these documents, he reminded his listeners,

> dealt in an intimate way with our international relations. Every one of them concerned us, not alone in certain international policies, but as a result of their provisions, in many strictly domestic policies. There is not one of them that does not in some way, more or less directly, affect every trust that you have under your care.[11]

To J. Reuben Clark, history clearly demonstrated that war was inevitable so long as human nature remained what it was, and that no man-made international organization could

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[10]Clark, "Let Us Have Peace."

[11]Clark, "The North Atlantic Treaty, An 'Entangling Alliance,' " in *Stand Fast by Our Constitution,* p. 85.

change either human nature or the tendency toward war. He accused proponents of the League of Nations of assuming that the Great War just ended had "somehow changed human hearts and that we are now entering the millennium," but he could find no "distinguishable signs" that such was the case. Rather, he said,

> We still find the same old ambition, the same old lust for power; selfishness is everywhere, honesty is not the universal rule, and disease and death still stalk among us . . . . The treaty before us displays as much land hunger, as great a land grabbing, as any treaty in the history of the world. We are today very much what we were two years ago. You cannot legislate righteousness into the hearts of the people.
>
> You cannot bring the millennium by negotiating a treaty. That will come only when you have placed the gospel of Christ . . . into the heart of all mankind.[12]

Years later he outlined for the Sixty-Seventh Annual Congress of the Sons of the American Revolution various efforts at international organization, from the Amphictyonic Council of Greek States in 1497 B.C. to the United Nations. All of them, he declared, had failed, and he saw no reason to believe that the U.N., which had the same "essential machinery" as the Grand Design of 1638 and the League of Nations of 1919, would be any more successful. "Some wag has said that the trouble with this generation is that it has not read the minutes of the last session . . . . We must have peace in the human heart before we shall have peace in the nations; and the level of righteousness of the mass always falls below the level of righteousness of the component individuals."[13]

If Clark's acceptance of the inevitability of war was pessimistic, he struck notes of both hope and discouragement in his analysis of American history, which demonstrated to him that involvement in world politics must inevitably lead to involvement in war. He divided the American past into three periods, each characterized by the nature of its political involvement with other countries. The first began with the early British settlements, and lasted until 1800. As part of the British colonial empire, the American colonies were constantly embroiled in the affairs of Europe and found themselves both participants in and victims of the wars of England. In each case, Clark felt,

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[12]Clark, "Dangers of the Treaty Pointed Out."
[13]Clark, "A World State," in *Stand Fast By Our Constitution,* p. 172.

the conflict had nothing to do with American affairs but, as in the case of the French and Indian War,

> the mother countries were fighting, so we on this side again went at one another's throats . . . .
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> Thus in three-quarters of a century, we had fought four wars, merely because the mother countries were fighting. In none of them were we concerned as to their causes. They cost us a lot of lives and money. We fought only because we were entangled in European Affairs.[14]

Clark saw in the American Revolution not only the breaking of political ties with England, but also the opportunity for the United States to end its involvement in the politics of other countries. He lauded George Washington's Declaration of Neutrality in the war between France and England as the basis for the ideal American policy, and one which was practiced for the next century and a quarter. He constantly reminded his contemporaries that both Washington and Jefferson repeatedly warned against American violations of strict neutrality. "What a vision and what a prophecy!" he declared as he read the following from George Washington:

> I hope the United States of America will be able to keep disengaged from the labyrinth of European politics and wars; and that before long they will, by the adoption of a good national government, have become respectable in the eyes of the world, so that none of the maritime powers . . . shall presume to treat them with insult or contempt. It should be the policy of the United States to minister to their wants without being engaged in their quarrels. And it is not in the power of the proudest and most polite people on earth to prevent us from becoming a great, a respectable, and a commercial nation if we shall continue united and faithful to ourselves.[15]

In warning America to steer clear of permanent alliances with any other country, Clark declared, the first president formally framed and announced "the great and wise policy of isolation."[16]

Clark depicted the second period, which lasted from 1800 until the outbreak of World War I, as the truly glorious era of American history. Free from entangling alliances with any country, America became a proud and powerful nation. Its

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[14]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," p. 100.
[15]Ibid., pp. 106-107.
[16]Ibid., p. 109.

independence was typified by the Monroe Doctrine, which Clark saw as the voice of a young, weak nation, "speaking to the great European powers on terms of equality, telling what we would do and what we would not do, we were speaking to them as equals, and we were maintaining our complete independence of them. These were great days in our diplomacy. We were wholly free from entanglement in European problems. We kept so."[17] Clark recognized that the United States had participated in three foreign wars during this period: the War of 1812, which he thought necessary, the war with Mexico, which, he said "I never like to discuss . . . [for] I do not think that the war with Mexico shed any great credit upon us;" and the war with Spain, which he considered an unfortunate accident. More important, however, was the fact that except for these conflicts America had been able to settle by peaceful means every other international disagreement and "unhampered by entangling alliances, we made the greatest growth that has ever been made by any nation at any time, in the whole history of the world."[18]

But it was in the third period, World War I to the present, that American history became a tragedy. Two world wars, with their staggering costs in both lives and money, were bad enough, but to get involved in the United Nations, which, Clark believed, would inevitably lead America into further wars, was inexcusable. The Korean War, not yet ended when he gave his famous speech on "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," only illustrated the point that political commitment to other nations would lead to nothing but further tragedy by committing us to military action in areas where we had no legitimate political concern. After recounting the staggering costs of America's twentieth century wars he declared:

> Our adventure into world politics, contrary to the principles that were framed by the good sense and, I think, inspiration of our Founding Fathers, has levied upon us a tribute leading almost to the brink of disaster, and so far as ordinary human foresight can determine, we are by no means yet to the end of the road.[19]

Clark's historical sense, then, provided him with ample precedent for his opposition to American involvement in any inter-

[17]Ibid., p. 115.
[18]Ibid., p. 117.
[19]Ibid., p. 130.

national political union constructed by the hand of man. From history he seems to have drawn at least four important lessons: (1) that wars are inevitable so long as human nature remains what it is; (2) that world organizations cannot succeed in preventing war; (3) that American involvement in international politics can only lead to American involvement in wars in which it has no real concern; (4) and that no nation, not even America, is ever wholly right or wholly wrong in its dealings with other powers. With reference to the last point, it is clear that Clark was no chauvinist, for he criticized not only modern wars, such as the Korean conflict, but also the admittedly aggressive Mexican War. In 1947 he declared:

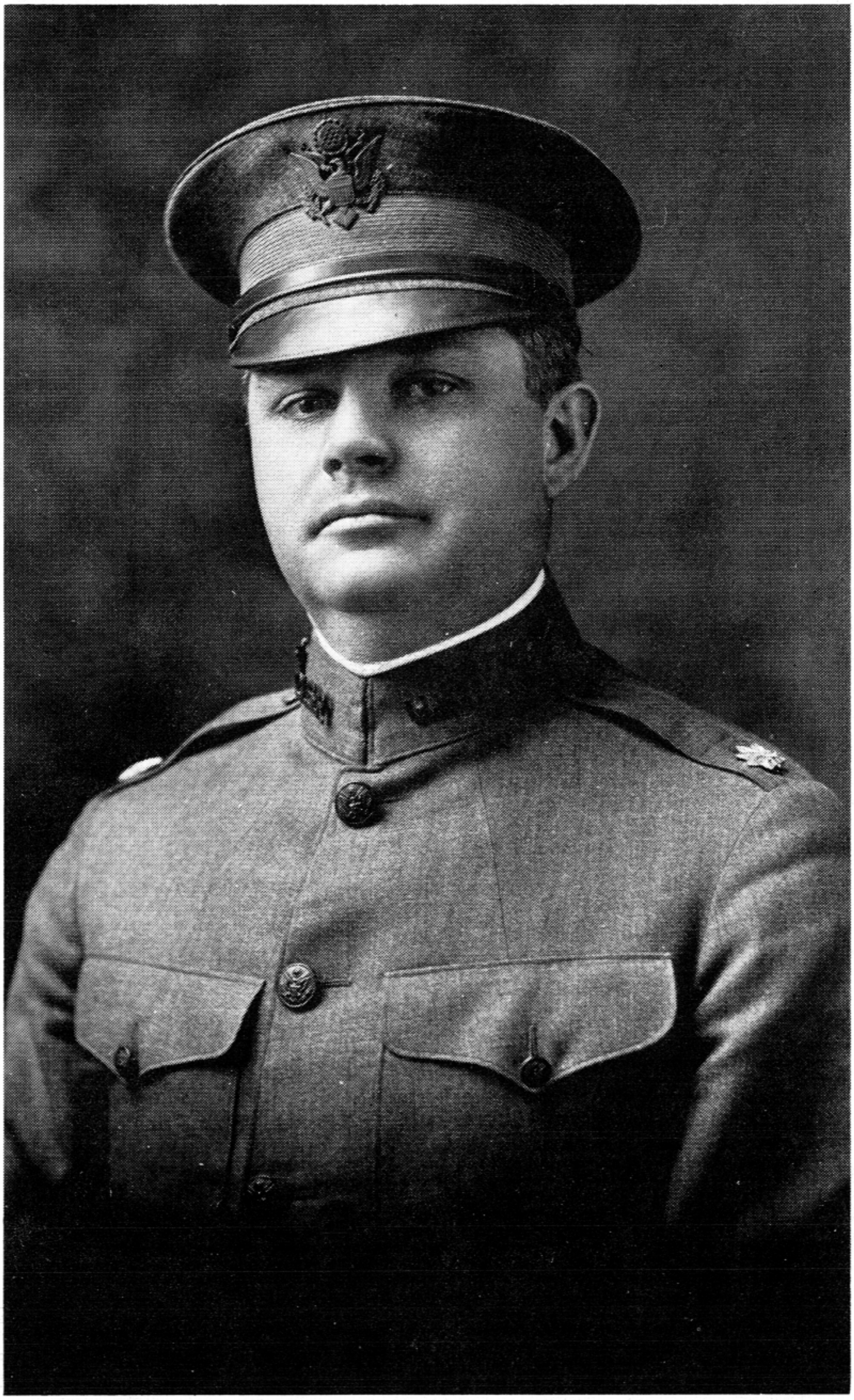
> In our course under the new gospel of interference with everything we do not like, we have gone forward and are going forward, as if we possessed all the good of human government, of human economic concept, of human comfort, and of human welfare, all of which we are to impose on the balance of the world—a conquest born of the grossest national egotism. In human affairs no nation can say that all it practices and believes is right, and that all that others have done that differs from what it has is wrong. Men inflict an unholy tragedy when they proceed on that basis. No man, no society, no people, no nation is wholly right in human affairs, and none is wholly wrong. A fundamental principle of the operation of human society is to live and let live.[20]

CLARK'S AMERICANISM

J. Reuben Clark's opposition to American involvement in any movement toward world-wide political unity may not be separated from his attitude toward America in general, and his interpretation of its divine destiny. This outlook was obviously related to his religious faith, but he was not hesitant to proclaim it boldly no matter whom he was addressing. America was a choice land with a God-given destiny and a divinely inspired Constitution, [21] and to the degree that any individual political commitment would detract from its ability to function independently, or in any way require a change in its constitutional principles, Clark believed it would also detract from

[20]Clark, "Let Us Have Peace."

[21]See, for example, Clark, "America—A Chosen Land of the Lord," in *Stand Fast By Our Constitution,* pp. 173-198. Nearly all the other selections in this book carry the same theme.



Major Clark in 1916.
Photograph by Courtesy of J. Reuben Clark, III.

the ability of America to work out its destiny.[22] America, he said, "was not set up as an eleemosynary government to feed and clothe and nurture all the rest of the world. It was set up for the purpose of establishing a government which should bring peace and prosperity to the people of this nation."[23] America was not in the business of world conquest but rather, was to be a light on a hill, a great independent beacon showing to other nations and peoples the way toward peace and prosperity. Everything he said about this divine destiny, whether associated with a specific discussion of world political organization or not, emphasized at least implicitly the mission of America, acting alone, to be the great example to the world. In 1949, for example, when Clark was especially concerned with the war in Europe, he proclaimed:

> I am an American because this Nation has no scheme or plan of conquest, because it has a respect for the rights of other peoples and of other nations, because it promotes justice and honor in the relationships of nations, because it loves the ways of peace as against war . . . , because it has conquered the land greed which so afflicts the nations of the world.[24]

Twenty-one years earlier, part of his opposition to the League of Nations was based on the fact that by Article X of the treaty the signatories guaranteed certain territorial concessions

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[22]Speaking of the withering away of American constitutional rights because of certain domestic policies, Clark declared: "It is to be said of the past that no necessity has thus far arisen in our history which could not have been ultimately and adequately met by constitutional methods. And history justifies the further statement that the cry sometimes raised for amendment of our great fundamental charter to meet transitory and pseudo-emergencies, the charge that we are governed by an antiquated instrument embodying obsolete principles unsuited and irresponsive to the needs of modern life, this cry and charge almost always comes from those who, from want of individual or racial capacity, are incapable of understanding or appreciating the fundamentals of, or to think practically and creatively about, the problems of free self-government. There is every reason to believe that those who understand the spirit as well as the word of the Constitution will be able in the future as in the past to find a way under it to meet all national emergencies and yet preserve its great principles and the republican form of government for which it provides." Clark, "Let Us Not Sell Our Children Into Slavery," in *Stand Fast By Our Constitution,* p. 158.

[23]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," p. 103.

[24]Clark, "Why I Am An American," in *Stand Fast By Our Constitution,* pp. 2-3, as reprinted from the *Congressional Record,* 11 June 1940. Continuing, Clark said, "I am an American because I believe that the destiny of America is to be the abiding place of liberty and free institutions, and that its own practice and enjoyment of these blessings shall be to the world a beacon light which shall radiate its influence by peaceful means to the uttermost parts of the world, to the uplifting of all humanity."

that Clark was not at all sure were justified, and in this way America became party to conquest:

> We who, for almost a century and a half have held ourselves aloof from European entanglements, who for a century and a half have followed the prophetic wisdom of Washington uttered in his farewell address, now find ourselves not alone in European alliances, which he condemned, but actually co-owners of European territory.[25]

Clearly, his opposition to the League, as well as to later international organizations, cannot be separated from his special pride and confidence in America—especially when America acted according to the principles of independence and honor which he held so dear.

ISOLATIONISM AND NEUTRALITY

A self-admitted isolationism was obviously fundamental to Clark's historical perspective, his abhorrence of war, his idealization of Americanism, and his anti-world state outlook. Some observers may have felt his isolationist philosophy extreme, but when it is related to his total world view it becomes at least consistent and understandable, as the deep convictions of a broadly educated, well-informed and certainly neither narrow-minded nor chauvinistic patriot.

It is essential to observe, however, that his isolationism was not total: it was directed primarily at the kind of political alliance that would limit America's choices in her relationship with the world. At the same time he recognized that the United States was part of the community of nations, and as such had an important role to play in that community. He looked back to the fourteen treaties the young American nation had negotiated during the Confederation era, and suggested that "they embodied some of the fundamental policies of our diplomacy and our national policy, as they were finally developed." The subjects covered included such things as liberty of conscience, rights of aliens, and agreements concerning problems arising during wars, including the treatment of prisoners.[26] He also recognized the need for trade relations, and treaties covering those relations. In addition, he knew that serious political disputes would arise between nations,

[25]Clark, "Dangers of the Treaty Pointed Out."
[26]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," pp. 103-104.

but had the utmost faith that these disagreements could be settled by peaceful means and that America should lead out in setting the example. He praised American efforts at the two Hague conferences to work out plans for peaceful settlement of international disputes, and his own plan for such settlement, outlined below, certainly recognized the need for continued political relations with other countries as well as some sort of international organization to implement peaceful settlements. He saw America as a powerful mediator in disputes between other countries, and in this way it would be both an influence in and an example to the world:

> From the Jay Treaty with Great Britain of 1793, until the recent past, we have encouraged and sought to secure the settlement of international difficulties and disputes by friendly means,—by arbitration where we were concerned, and by arbitration and mediation where others only were involved.
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> We have more than once mediated to stop wars between other countries; the outstanding example of this is our mediation under President Theodore Roosevelt of the war between Russia and Japan. We have repeatedly exercised our good offices to adjust differences between other countries, particularly in the Latin Americas. In these the peace motive guided our course.[27]

Clark did not see the United States, then, as completely uninvolved in world affairs, but felt that its political role should be limited to mediation and arbitration. Beyond this, his isolationism was firm, severe, and unequivocal.[28]

If isolationist sentiment led Clark to abhor American involvement in international political organizations, it also de-

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[27]Clark, "Let Us Have Peace."

[28]A statement in 1947, for example, might be considered a sort of declaration of isolationism: "I am a confirmed isolationist, a political isolationist, first, I am sure, by political instinct, next from experience, observation, and patriotism, and lastly, because while isolated, we built the most powerful nation in the world . . . .

"I am a political isolationist because:

"I fully believe in the wisdom of the course defined by Washington, Jefferson, and other ancient statesmen. The whole history of America before and since the Revolution proves the truthfulness of their assertions.

"I believe American manhood is too valuable to be sacrificed on foreign soil for foreign issues and causes.

"I believe that permanent peace will never come into the world from the muzzle of a gun . . . .

"I believe President Wilson had the true principle when he spoke of the strength and power of the moral force of the world. Moral force in a

manded strict neutrality when it came to the disputes of other countries. While America must exercise its moral leadership in attempting to bring about arbitration, it must also never meddle in such a way as to impose unwanted political settlements on other people. Adherence to an international political organization could hardly, in Clark's view, be compatible with neutrality, for the very nature of that body would imply the imposition of political solutions upon peoples engaged in conflict, and this could only lead to greater tragedy.

> For when the world adopts the principle of interference by force by one part to compel another part to do its will, to live according to its standard, the progress of civilization and humanity itself are doomed.[29]

J. Reuben Clark never deviated from his philosophy of strict neutrality. It was an important part of his opposition to the League of Nations in 1919, and in the 1930s it caused him to issue impassioned pleas to a nation that he saw headed for new embroilments in European affairs. In 1939 President Franklin D. Roosevelt felt frustrated in his efforts to avoid war and at the same time to prevent a German victory, for he believed that if Germany defeated the Allied powers America could not avoid a war with that country. In October Clark devoted his entire General Conference address to the war, and to a plea for strict American neutrality. He personally sympathized with the British, but so fundamental was his neutralism that he felt America should not raise a hand to help either power. Recognizing that there were Church members who favored both sides, he declared that "each group of us must see and understand the view and feelings of the other."[30] Drawing upon his historical perspective, he observed that the

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nation fructifies industry, thrift, good will, neighborliness, the friendly intercourse of the nations, the peace that all men seek; whereas force is barren.

"I believe America's role in the world is not one of force, but is of that same peaceful intent and act that has characterized the history of the country from its birth till the last third of a century.

"I believe that moral force is far more potent than physical force in international relations.

"I believe political isolation will bring to us the greatest happiness and prosperity, the greatest temporal achievement not only but the highest intellectual and spiritual achievement also, the greatest power for good, the strongest force for peace, the greatest blessing to the world." Clark, "Let Us Have Peace."

[29]Clark, "Dangers of the Treaty Pointed Out."

[30]Clark in *Conference Report,* October 1939, p. 13.

question of who should dominate Europe had been a question from the beginning of our national life, but that "it is not our concern."[31]

President Clark did not even go along with those who felt that America should fight in order to protect its neutral rights on the high seas. War, he believed, imposed hazards on neutrals that they simply must face. After the war, the belligerent might be asked to pay for infractions of neutral rights, "but war is not resorted to even to compel these payments."[32] Clark's neutralist views ran deep and, as the following statement illustrates, were part of an idyllic vision of America:

> America, multi-raced and multi-nationed, is by tradition, by geography, by citizenry, by natural sympathy, and by material interest, the great neutral nation of the earth. God has so designed it. Drawn from all races, creeds, and nations, our sympathies run to every oppressed people. Our feelings engaged on opposite sides of great differences, will in their natural course, if held in due and proper restraint, neutralize the one the other. Directed in right channels, this great body of feelings for the one side or the other will ripen into sympathy and love for all our misguided and misled fellowmen who suffer in any cause, and this sympathy and love will run out to all humanity in its woe, thus weakly shadowing the infinite compassion of the Master . . . .
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> As the great neutral of the earth, America may play a far greater part in this war, it is our duty to play a far greater part, than merely impartially to carry out our neutral obligations under international law towards those who come to our shores for trade and commerce or otherwise. It is our solemn duty to play a better part than we can do by participating in the butchery.
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> America has today the only great national moral force and influence for peace left in the world. We have lost most of what we once had—we lost it when we permitted the looting at the Versailles peace table. . . .
>
> Our plain duty to humanity and the cause of peace, our duty to our Creator, require that we preserve the moral force and influence we now have, that we regain what we

[31] "The question is of no more importance to us now than it has been for a hundred and fifty years. The dominant power could always make war on us if it wished. A hundred and fifty years ago we were one of the weakest of the weak, and the hazards to us of such a war were great; now we are one of the strongest of the strong, and the hazards of our losing a defensive conflict almost nil. Do not let fear of what might happen in such a defensive war cloud in any way your judgment. We are relatively better able to defend ourselves today against aggression by a foreign foe than we have ever been before in our whole history." Ibid., p. 14.

[32] Ibid.

> have lost, and that then we increase to the highest possible point this greatest of all instrumentalities for world peace. If we become parties to this world war, on whatever side, to determine the present issues of the war, we shall lose all this moral power and influence, and sink with the world to the level where just our brute might shall be the sole and the only measure of our strength. This would be an appalling prostitution of our heritage.[33]

How should America use its great moral force? First, it must demand of the warring powers that insofar as possible they protect innocent noncombatants, refrain from bombing unfortified places, and wage hostilities only against the armed forces of belligerents. The penalty for failure to do these things would be the closure of American ports. Second—and in this point Clark illustrated in a curious fashion how far he was willing to go to demonstrate America's real humaneness—he urged that America announce its unalterable opposition to mass starvation of the innocents, and

> declare that when actual and bonafide mass starvation shall come to any of them, no matter who they are, we shall do all that we properly may do to see that they are furnished with food. On the present outlook one cannot be sure which side will finally need this sort of relief. And if in such an effort we should come to the last extremity, one can think of few more righteous causes for war itself than such a high service to victimized, suffering humanity.[34]

The United States could then rebuild its moral power by offering mediation between belligerents and "America, the great neutral, will thus become the Peacemaker of the world, which is her manifest destiny if she live the law of peace."[35]

But after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States again entered a world conflict and Clark patriotically arose to support its cause. After the war, however, which demonstrated a new technological capacity for world-wide communication as well as for destruction, Clark immediately returned to his advocacy of strict neutrality. In a public address in Chicago in 1947 he declared:

> I am not shaken in my convictions nor frightened by the assertion of many good people and fostered by the communists and "new thoughters," that the doctrine of the

[33]Ibid., pp. 15-16.
[34]Ibid., p. 17.
[35]Ibid.

> Fathers is outmoded, and that we are in a new world. All the age-old forces are still peering out at us,—greed, avarice, ambition, selfishness, the passion to rule, the desire to enslave for sordid advantage of the enslaver. . . . While radar, the radio, the telephone, the airplane have facilitated our talking and visiting with our neighbors, they have not made new beings out of us nor out of them, nor changed either our characters or theirs. We are just as we were, with the possibility of a little more backfence gossiping and quarreling, and a little more brawling among the children. But the households remain essentially as they were. We still have oceans between us; we live on different continents, under different conditions. We can and should mind our own business and let others do the same.[36]

In his most famous attack on the United Nations in 1957, he could still declare that,

> I am anti-internationalist, anti-interventionist, and anti-meddlesome-busybodiness in our international affairs. . . .
>
> In the mad thrusting of ourselves, with a batch of curative political nostrums, into the turmoil and tragedy of today's world, we are like a physician called to treat a virulent case of smallpox, and whose treatment consists in getting into bed with his patient. That is not the way to cure smallpox.[37]

AMERICAN SOVEREIGNTY

But by far the most serious concern in Clark's mind was his conviction that adherence to international political bodies threatened the sovereignty of the United States. It was inconceivable to Clark that America's divine destiny could be worked out as part of a world body that could in any way dictate to individual nations, but he found in each of the international schemes which he opposed elements that would thus erode, if not destroy, American sovereignty.

In the Covenant of the League of Nations, for example, Clark saw such a departure from tradition as constituting "one of the most critical moments in our history," and concluded that "nothing looms before us which could be equally disastrous."[38] He saw at least two important ways in which American sovereignty would be violated. The international labor provisions, as he interpreted them, required American

[36]Clark, "Let Us Have Peace."
[37]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," pp. 96-97.
[38]Clark, "Dangers of the Treaty Pointed Out."

representatives in labor organizations to be approved by other powers, thus taking away from America the right to choose its own representatives. Second, and probably more fundamental to Clark, was his fear that the League could require America to go to war. Such compulsion would violate the Constitution, which placed the war-making power solely in the hands of the elected representatives of the American people.

> Should it be said in response to this that we engage in no war except by the unanimous vote of all the members of the council, and that therefore we shall not be called on to furnish arms, munition and money in a cause in which we have not an interest, then I tell you this league is only a shadow, a bubble.
>
> I tell you, then, that you have been betrayed.[39]

Clark accused proponents of the League of making a distinction between moral and legal obligations by suggesting that the United States, even if a member, had no legal obligation to follow the dictates of the League. To this he indignantly replied that he could see no such difference and that

> . . . no matter what kind of promise we give, we must keep it when given. Honor lies in no other course: our preservation can be assured in no other way. . . . We must not become a hiss and a byword among the nations of the earth. If we join the treaty we must keep its every obligation, no matter what it costs. If we are not prepared to do this, we must reject this treaty. There is for us no middle course of seeming expedience and cowardly repudiation.[40]

It was on the basis of this all-or-nothing polarity that Clark proceeded to show that the League would, indeed, commit America to programs it did not want to follow. In addition, it would inhibit such action as America might want to take independently, for it would keep any country from intervening when convinced that intervention was in its best interest. To illustrate, he said that if the League had been in existence America could not have freed Cuba from Spain, and France could not have helped America in the revolution. Such a statement may be somewhat inconsistent with Clark's general anti-interventionist attitude, but his foremost concern was that America be permitted to make its own decisions,

[39]Ibid.
[40]Ibid.

intervention or non-intervention, without the pressure of the political requirements of an international sovereignty.

Clark used similar arguments against the United Nations. He saw America's entry into this world body in 1945 as an abandonment of traditional policy and a direct repudiation of the ideals of the founding fathers. It called forth his 1952 "Dwindling Sovereignty" speech in which he stated once more his basic concern:

> Every engagement with a foreign nation which, if met, deprives us of the power to determine our own course at the moment of implementation, impairs our sovereignty.
>
> Every treaty of alliance, bipartite or multipartite (the United Nations Charter is of the latter class), impairs our sovereignty, because every alliance requires a surrender of rights, since mutual aid in strictly non-sovereign interest, is the purpose of the alliance.[41]

Specifically, Clark maintained that the United Nations Charter violated American sovereignty in at least three ways. First, the United States had lost the right to make the treaties it wanted to make, since all treaties must conform to the provisions of the charter. Next, it lost the sovereign right to adjust its own international difficulties, for at any stage in a dispute the Security Council might intervene and recommend a course of action. Such recommendations, he said, "do not fall far short of commands, with attaching sanctions." Even the obligation imposed by the Charter to settle disputes peacefully was anathema to Clark, though he approved of peaceful settlements, for the imposition of a method of settlement was itself an impairment of sovereignty. Finally, he said, America's war powers were impaired, since the Charter took away from the members "those great attributes of sovereignty, upon which the very existence of sovereignty depends: the power to declare war . . ., the power to decide against whom we shall make war, and the power to conduct war, and the power to make peace and to determine its terms.[42]

As late as 1957 (just four years before his death), Clark continued to express his concern for American sovereignty. As an expert in international law, he was especially alarmed with what he saw as a modern trend to interpret treaties in such a way that they could circumvent the requirements of the

[41]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," p. 118.
[42]Ibid., p. 125.

Constitution. One writer whom he quoted had gone so far as to assert that treaty laws can override the Constitution by taking powers away from Congress and giving them to the president, taking powers from the states and giving them to the federal government or some international body, or cutting across the rights "given" to the people in the Bill of Rights. Such a broad interpretation of the treaty-making power cut to the very heart of Clark's interpretation of the Constitution, and of American sovereignty. As he told the Sons of the American Revolution:

> The Bill of Rights did not give anything to the people; the people reserved these rights to themselves. This treaty-law doctrine is power-thirst gone mad.
>
> Of course, if this were the law, or if it was to become the law, which pray God may never be, then the sovereignty would be shifted from us, the people, and would be lodged in the Chief Executive and a two-thirds majority of a quorum present in the Senate. We would cease to be a Republic and become a . . . virtual despotism, for there would be in the Chief Executive and the Senate unlimited sovereign power.[43]

In addition, such a theory of treaty law could pave the way for American participation in a world state, and Clark was not above suggesting that such a plan might be in the offing.[44]

WHAT WOULD CLARK DO?

J. Reuben Clark was not so uncharitable toward the League of Nations, the United Nations, and other schemes for international political alliance that he did not recognize that the noble aim of all of them was to maintain peace. Since he shared that objective, how would he suggest that international disputes be settled? In spite of his historical knowledge of the wars of mankind, he retained great faith in the power of arbitration and mediation, and in all his discussion of America's foreign relations he praised the great arbitration agreements as examples of what could be accomplished through peaceful means. In addition, in 1923 Clark presented his own proposal for "The Pacific Settlement of International Disputes." The plan demonstrates that he was not so isolationist that he did not see the need for some organization where the

[43]Clark, "A World State," p. 164.
[44]Ibid., p. 196.

nations of the world could meet to try to settle their differences. He was careful, however, to provide for absolute sovereignty and freedom of choice on the part of individual nations.[45]

Clark's plan called for a World Congress to be formed which would represent *all* nations, and which would be a deliberative body with powers to recommend courses of action. (No military alliance or other method of forcing compliance was even suggested.) War was to be declared an international crime, and nations guilty of this crime would be punished by being called upon to make drastic restitutions. The only direct punitive action suggested, however, was that these nations could be called upon to deliver to the World Congress for trial and punishment those of its authorities who were responsible for the hostile acts. Clark was realistic enough to recognize that such a convention would hardly abolish war, but he felt it to be worthwhile anyway for it would "crystallize a growing world sentiment against war," would set up a standard for judgment, and would give direction to the great moral forces in the world which alone could cause the disappearance of war.

The second phase of Clark's plan called for the codifying of international law in order to provide a clear guide for the nations as to what was expected of them in international disputes. Finally, he called for setting up a world judicial system which would consist of three classes of courts. The Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration would become part of this system. Clark made it clear that under his plan there would be no connection with the League of Nations, and that American interests, institutions, or sovereignty would not be sacrificed in any degree.

Clark's plan was presented at a time when America was involved in a flurry of peace moves that eventually led in 1928 to the Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war. In 1920 a World Court, long promoted by such Republican leaders as John Hay and Elihu Root, had been established under the auspices of the League of Nations. Clark's plan was undoubtedly in partial response to the pressure for American membership in that Court, if not in the League itself, and he opposed joining the Court as strongly as he opposed membership in

[45]For details of Clark's proposals, see his "The Pacific Settlement of International Disputes," *Unity* 5:35-48 (4 October 1923).

the League. In 1934, the year a Senate resolution for American entry into the Court was defeated, Clark joined with other prominent figures in supporting the opposition. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he declared that by joining the World Court America would become at least partially a member of the League of Nations since the power of the Court sprang from the League itself.[46]

Beyond his faith in arbitration and mediation, Clark also believed that America could avoid international conflict by greater attempts to understand and coexist with nations whose interests were different. He was seemingly ahead of his time when, in 1947, he criticized Americans for not trying harder to reach a peaceful agreement with Russia on post-war disputes. He did not hide the fact that he thought Russian communism a "new poison-plague" for which the western world had as yet developed no antidote or cure, that it was bent on world conquest, and that it presented a threat to America. But he abhorred the new rivalry that was building up, including the arms race, and declared:

> We alone in all the world challenge Russia's aims. She hates and fears us. We hate and are fearful of her. Thus far the two powers seem to plan and scheme only in terms of force. . . . So far as we of the public know, the two sides have never worked together honestly in trying by peaceful means to reach a mutual live-and-let-live understanding. We do not know of even an effort on the part of both parties together, mutually to concede, mutually to put out of view the intent to use force to gain the end sought . . . . Indeed, we must regretfully admit that our own military establishment seems to be now deliberately planning and preparing for another great war; it must be with Russia.[47]

Later he reaffirmed his hope that America would try harder to deal peacefully with the communists:

> I doubt that there has ever been a wholehearted, honest effort made between the United States and Russia to reach an amicable arrangement. I do not suppose that it would have been possible to reach such an agreement, if such honest effort had been made; from all we know it probably would not have been. But surely such an effort should be made before we blithely enter upon a war of extermination.[48]

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[46]*New York Times,* 17 May 1934.
[47]Clark, "Let Us Have Peace."
[48]Clark, "Our North Atlantic Treaty," p. 93.

Beyond his specific plan for a world congress and a series of courts, and his urging America to remain neutral in international politics and to settle its own disputes through honest negotiation, Clark seemed to have little more to suggest by way of settling international disputes, except to offer his faith that eventually permanent peace would come not by the sword but by the establishment of the Christian millenium.

EVALUATION

As we attempt to assess Clark's attitude toward international organization in the light of today's war-torn world, what can be said as to its significance, accuracy, or value? Certainly his ideas have significance for the Latter-day Saints, at least, for he is still revered by Mormon leaders as having one of the greatest minds in the Church, his writings are widely distributed, even having been studied in priesthood classes, and his opinions are widely quoted within the Church. He still helps formulate, albeit posthumously, the basic attitudes of large groups of Mormons toward international as well as domestic affairs. The effort here has been to put his attitude toward international organization in the perspective of his somewhat broader ideology in order to give it the kind of balance he himself might have suggested.

With regard to the accuracy of his views, any judgment is bound still to be subjective. It is clear, however, that some of his forebodings of disaster proved to be prophetic. As a result of its political commitments to other countries, or, what Clark would call "entangling alliances," the United States has, indeed, become involved in two wars in Asia, one of which resulted in successfully reaching its limited objectives, but the other in the loss of nearly 50,000 American lives with little, if anything, to show for it. Clark was right, too, in his prediction that the military would grow stronger in its voice in government, and that with a growing military establishment committed to world-wide goals, political considerations would often be dictated by military concerns. On the other hand, Clark's fear of the violation of American sovereignty through affiliation with the United Nations and the NATO pact seems not to have been as fully realized. True, the United States has involved itself in world affairs more than Clark would have liked, but in each case the choice was its own.

If, as Clark himself contended, the Korean operation was a violation of the American Constitution and the United Nations Charter,[49] it was not because the United States was forced to get involved, but, rather, because its own policy of containing communist expansion seemed to demand it at the time. Thus America made its own commitment to a program which Clark disapproved, but certainly with its sovereignty still intact. The same thing might be said of the Vietnamese operation.

Clark's condemnation of the United Nations seemed generally to be political, and did not suggest his attitude toward other phases of the world body, such as the World Health Organization, UNESCO, and other charitable bodies. While he may have objected to them simply because they were part of the United Nations, thus seeming to require American support without direct American consent, one is hard-pressed to speculate on what he would say about either the objectives or successes of these U.N. groups.

It is also difficult to evaluate Clark's historical sense, for among historians any interpretation is open to criticism, no matter how well documented. It might be observed, however, that his historical knowledge was undoubtedly influenced by certain classic American historians who saw the hand of progress as a theme.[50] Modern historians would look at parts of American history quite differently. They would interpret the War of 1812, for example, which Clark seemed to justify, as a conflict which could have been fought just as easily against France and probably could have been avoided altogether had not the "war hawks," bent on the acquisition of territory, pressed the issue so hard. In addition, they would question the international morality of American intervention prior to World War I in such areas as Panama and the Dominican Republic. Clark himself actually seemed to do that in his famous Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine, but these actions hardly fit his pattern of the period prior to World War I as the greatest period of American diplomacy, and in the discussions referred to here he hardly alludes to them. In general, however, his awareness of history was most impressive, and

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[49]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," p. 129.

[50]Clark, for example, referred to the period of the Confederation (1783-1789) as the "critical period" in American history, which is the term used by the late nineteenth-century "social Darwinist" and historian, John Fiske. The ideal of a divinely appointed progress in American history ran throughout Fiske's writings, as it did those of many nineteenth-century authors.

it was an important element of his conservative outlook on American foreign relations.

In another vein, Clark seemingly has a lot to say to the world of the 1970s. Two decades ago he good-naturedly remarked:

> I am what the kindlier ones. . . would call a rabid reactionary (I am not, in fact, that). Some of the unkindly ones will shrug their shoulders and say, 'He is just a doddering old fogey.' I admit the age, but deny the rest of the allegation—the doddering and fogeyness. Some will join issue with me on this personal estimate and conclusion; but so be it.[51]

Especially after World War II he was fighting for an unpopular cause as even conservative Republicans such as Robert Taft joined the Democrats in applauding the United Nations and in committing the United States to the political task of containing Communism around the world—a task which led to growing militarism and almost continued fighting by Americans somewhere in the world ever since 1950. But today, albeit unknowingly, a growing number of Americans are raising the same questions raised by Clark a generation ago as well as almost steadily for two generations before that. Does America really have an interest in the affairs of other countries, and are our advantages abroad really worth the cost in lives, money, and friendship? Do we really need a military establishment for more than our basic defense needs, and has not that establishment already grown too ominously large and powerful? Should not America pay more attention to being a moral force for peace in the world and remember that peace does not come by the sword, but by a righteous example? And isn't it possible that continued "entangling alliances," whether they be our military commitments imposed by the U.N., our defensive treaties with the nations of southeast Asia, or our military commitment to NATO, will involve us in wars not of our own choosing, not to our advantage, and for causes not necessarily in our own interest? To moderns, the questions of the so-called "old fogey" of 1952 seem disturbingly pertinent.

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[51]Clark, "Our Dwindling Sovereignty," p. 50.