

The Practice of Peace
A lecture on Dag Hammarskjöld

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WERE MR. HAMMARSKJÖLD HERE, I'm certain that he would acknowledge where we are—in a house built, so to speak, by Alfred Nobel, and dedicated to his memory and values. The links between Dag Hammarskjöld and Alfred Nobel are richer than one might think—links historical and spiritual, as if they were both precipitated, though in different generations, out of the same vessel by similar chemistry. It might not have occurred to me to bring this relation to your attention and to explore with you its significance, were there not a surprising tie between them. The still young Swedish pastor, Nathan Söderblom (1866 – 1931), who presided over Nobel's funeral in December 1896, went on to occupy a chair in theology at Uppsala University and in 1914 to be named head and archbishop of the Church of Sweden. The two men, though widely different in age, had enjoyed conversation with one another in Paris from 1892 forward, when Söderblom became pastor of its Swedish-Norwegian Congregation.¹ A man of fire, intellect, and conviction, a future peace activist and skilled organizer, Söderblom with his family became closest of friends with the Hammarskjöld family in Uppsala. It was he who served young Dag as an early and unforgotten first mentor in religion and nearly all things. The exceptional mind that had interested Nobel in his late years now drew Dag in his early years. Söderblom's children were among Dag's playmates and companions, and Anna Söderblom, the archbishop's wife, appears to have played a central role in his development—as a woman of wisdom and reliable affection, not in the family but close.

Well and good, but were this all, we wouldn't linger. There is more to notice. From his early days as Secretary-General of the United Nations—you will recall that he was inaugurated in April 1953—Hammarskjöld often drew the portrait of modern man as fundamentally divided. If there was to be some movement toward peace and good will, he knew that we would have to understand ourselves better, to see the division in our minds and hearts, and to take steps toward ourselves that would also be steps toward authentic community. There is “a war to be fought in the hearts of men,” he said in 1954. “It is here that I see the great, the overwhelming task . . . of all men of good will . . . in the work for peace.”² A few months earlier before a university audience, he had said that “we must seek a fuller knowledge of man himself—a knowledge that will more nearly match our mastery of science and of techniques. Only in proportion as we close this gap shall we be able to diminish the dangers of fear and suspicion and of the irrational behavior that follows from them.”³ It wasn't textbook knowledge he had in mind. It was something more intimate and lived: “the knowledge which you can derive only from a study of yourself and your fellow men, a study inspired by genuine interest and pursued with humility.”

Alfred Nobel (1833 – 1896) is “divided man” writ large, a man in whom intellectual and entrepreneurial concern for technology and concern for human welfare lay uneasily resolved—until the far-reaching gesture through which he completed his life. As you may recall, his father was a pioneering munitions expert, the inventor of land and sea mines for the Russian military. Young Alfred was born to the trade, born to the science and technology of explosives, and his 355 patents demonstrate how true he was to his calling throughout his life. His invention of dynamite made possible the large-scale, beneficial public infrastructure works of his era—and intensified the violence of war. Pursuing his discipline with deepest curiosity and skill, later in life he invented “smokeless powder,” which by and large cleared the battlefield of obscuring smoke—and intensified the deadly range and power of artillery. In 1894 he purchased the Bofors machine works to develop it as a world-class arms and cannon manufacturer. All of this was the logic of the man, the destiny of the man. Nearly one hundred factories around the world bore witness to the international reception of his immensely gifted mind's work.

Yet he was a peace-loving man, a poet in his privacy, a reader, a man of letters, with something of a mixed temperament. His Austrian friend Bertha von Suttner (1843 – 1914), an early and leading peace activist, described him as “a thinker, a poet, . . . bitter and good, unhappy and cheerful, whose thoughts ranged far but who had his moments of foreboding, a man who passionately loved the . . . sweep of . . . human . . . thought and . . . despised the pettiness of human stupidity, a man who understands everything and expects nothing.”⁴ The “baroness and friend,” as he called Bertha von Suttner, engaged a debate with him in his last decade about the possibilities for disarmament and enduring peace. *Die Waffen Nieder!*—“Lay down your arms!”—she had written in a novel of 1889, a surprise best-seller in multiple languages in addition to the German original.⁵ Nobel’s sincere affection for her—she was a woman he could have married, had she been free—kept him close to her projects, her peace congresses, her civilized but impressive agitation in high circles. But he had his doubts: “My factories,” he wrote to her, “may put an end to war before your congresses: on the day two army corps are able to destroy each other in one second, all civilized countries will recoil and disband their troops.”⁶ Rather than total disarmament, which he regarded as imprudent, he looked toward another solution, a collectivity of some kind, “a convention,” as he put it once, “under which all governments would bind themselves to defend collectively any country that was attacked.”⁷ As well, he favored the development of international arbitration in preference to Suttner’s larger-scale abolitionist projects. Yet Bertha von Suttner’s influence and steady friendship over the years played a role in his decision to establish the fifth prize, the peace prize, through his historic Will. Her values were present in the Will, present in his person over the years. Yes, a man divided: a technical man with a dream, drawn by innate gift and long practice to the science of explosives, drawn also to the hope of a world at peace. Just weeks before his death he wrote to his friend, “I am delighted to see that the peace movement is gaining ground.”⁸

Do you see where the wind is blowing? Nobel’s somewhat inchoate notion of a collectivity of nations and the baroness’s peace congresses, well-meant and ultimately ineffectual, led nonetheless to some of the thinking behind the League of Nations. The League in turn, bravely conceived, ultimately ineffectual, led to much of the thinking behind the foundation in 1945 of the United Nations. The Nobel Peace Prize would annually remind the world of the care and courage, and often sheer brilliance, of men and women who labor for peace on this embattled earth. It would be an annual flash of light. All three of the figures so far mentioned—Bertha von Suttner, Nathan Söderblom, and Dag Hammarskjöld—were recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, respectively in 1905, 1930, and posthumously in 1961. But the larger point is that Nobel himself, a man poignantly divided, is the *individual* model or pattern of the *world* Hammarskjöld encountered as secretary-general. The United Nations gave form and force to the global pursuit of peace and justice. On the other side of the ledger, what Nobel predicted had become reality: “a substance or a machine,” as he put it, “with such horrible, enormously destructive capabilities that wars would become absolutely impossible.”⁹ He did not foresee that such a substance or machine would instead embroil the world in fear, suspicion, ineradicable anxiety.

And so these two men of differing genius but comparable temperament face each other across a gap of some sixty years marked by two merciless world wars, historic revolutions, and the grim stasis of the Cold War. All of that—and the creation of an instrument for global peace and justice, the United Nations, which has endured. In a talk of 1954, Hammarskjöld picked up the thread from Nobel, so to speak, and cautioned people to look somewhat dispassionately at the development of weapons of mass destruction. “We may have reached,” he said, “the ultimate

limit of the process of multiplication in the destructiveness of war that has been going on in this century. I think it is wise and right to think of the hydrogen bomb in this way as the logical conclusion of a policy of total war in the age of science. To view it as an apocalyptic event heralding the end of the world is more conducive to panic and to those false leaders who rise to power on the wings of unreasoning fear.”¹⁰ With his Secretariat colleagues and with trust in the basic good sense of the Member Nations of the UN, he intended to *manage* the threat and, insofar as possible, reduce it. He had no illusions about the difficulties he and all must face. “The process of learning to live together without war in this torn and distracted world of ours,” he said in 1954, “is going to continue to be painful and a constant challenge for the rest of our lives. Yet we know what the choice is. Either we manage it or we face disaster.”¹¹

I cannot overstate the emphasis he gave throughout the UN years to the insidious role of fear. He seems to have considered fear to be the often concealed or disguised but central motive for misunderstanding, distance, and rupture. In one of his earliest addresses to the UN community, New Year 1953, Hammarskjöld called to his colleagues to recognize that fear, and much else, and to find the way past it. They too were implicated. “Our work for peace must begin within the private world of each one of us,” he said. This was always his way: to focus first on the individual actor, the responsible agent. “To build for man a world without fear, *we* must be without fear. To build a world of justice, *we* must be just. And how can we fight for liberty if we are not free in our own minds? How can we ask others to sacrifice if *we* are not ready to do so? Some might consider this to be just another expression of noble principles, too far from the harsh realities of political life. . . . I disagree.” He spoke on that occasion of the men and women of the UN as “a generation to whom the chance was given to build in time a world of peace.”¹²

Hammarskjöld would point to the centrality of fear in language that varied from diplomatic-formal to deliberately everyday. However expressed, the thought was consistent about what he once called “the fear that is our worst enemy but which, somehow, seems to taint at least some corner of the heart of every man.”¹³ There is a good example of “everyday” in a press conference of early 1955 after his return from a diplomatic mission to Beijing. “You as journalists know very well,” he said, “that one of the most curious and most upsetting features about the present world situation in the East is that everybody is afraid of everybody.”¹⁴ Simple language, but the point is memorably made and nearly in the language of the playground, as if it is childish for everyone to be afraid of everyone. He was quite different with a group of firm UN supporters in London. For them he drew on timelessly resonant thought in the New Testament Letter of James: “The United Nations is faith and works,” he said, “—faith in the possibility of a world without fear and works to bring that faith closer to realization in the life of men.”¹⁵ And in the same speech he conveyed in one formal sentence an entire vision: “The United Nations has always recognized that its efforts in the political sphere to build a world without fear will succeed only if based on a solid foundation of economic and social justice within the nations and among nations.”¹⁶

The point I wish to make here is that *voice* mattered enormously, crucially, in Hammarskjöld’s practice of peace, and it continues to matter if the UN is to find its way brilliantly forward. The UN must speak to us, and we will only hear it in the endless noise if it speaks in a way that deserves to be heard: with integrity, authority, clarity, urgency, humanity, freshness. And not least, a sense of history and of future possibility. One felt of Hammarskjöld that he *remembered*, that the history of the long struggle for peace on earth was inscribed in him not just as knowledge but also as a matter of sensibility, of feeling. The voice with which he endowed the UN in his era was distinct, instantly recognizable, eloquent without deliberate

show. And all occasions were good occasions, from very public to very private. In a letter to a Swedish friend in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis, he wrote, I think unforgettably: “It is difficult . . . to hear the low voice of reason or see the clear little light of decency, but, of course, both endure and both remain perfectly safe guides.”¹⁷ This from a letter to a friend, though the words carry far. Still more privately, in his journal published posthumously as *Vägmärken*—in English, *Markings*—Hammar skjöld once recorded with prophetic wrath the value of the true word, the destructiveness of false words. “*Respect for the word*,” he wrote, “is the first commandment in the discipline by which a man can be educated to maturity—intellectual, emotional, and moral. Respect for the word—to employ it with scrupulous care and an incorruptible heartfelt love of truth—is essential if there is to be any growth in a society or in the human race. To misuse the word is to show contempt for man. . . .”¹⁸ This, too, was Hammar skjöld; this was an element of his practice of peace and what he expected of others upon whom he could rely as what he once called “fighters for peace.”¹⁹ He rarely spoke publicly in this way, with prophetic force; he once allowed to a journalist that he was “a colorless sort of prophet, maybe.”²⁰ A light remark. But his words here make clear the voltage in the man, the coiled energy.

How did Hammar skjöld understand the condition of peace? It was not *Im Westen nichts Neues*, or as Remarque’s great novel is known in English, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It is a dynamic condition, stirring with movement and inquiry, a blessed restlessness subject to constant exploration and advances. Many of you will recall Sir Brian Urquhart, who was operationally close to Hammar skjöld from the Suez Crisis forward and also his first comprehensive biographer.²¹ Some years ago Sir Brian expressed admiration for the precise definition of peace which Hammar skjöld voiced late in 1953 in a talk at New York’s City Hall—an event that might have been routine but clearly was not. “Peace is not just the passive state of affairs in a world without war,” he said. “It is a state of living devoted to action in order to build a world of prosperity and equity where occasions for conflicts either disappear or are quickly challenged if they arise.”²² One can parse this like a Latin sentence: every word counts, every word conjugates with every other and with reality. Five years later, the basic thought was still intact. “We cannot afford to reckon peace as merely the absence of war,” he said at a university gathering. “We have to make of it a positive and overriding discipline of international life.”²³

How did he exercise that discipline? As he was ceaselessly engaged in dialogue and often engaged in formal negotiation, those are the best places to look for answers. At this point I sigh, because there is such a wealth of material, of insight at all levels from principles to tactics. I can only suggest—but I will suggest—how he thought and acted. In 1955, as part of a meeting with young people, he drew on the practical wisdom, I think of his friend, the progressive American journalist Walter Lippmann, as he offered a quite comprehensive view of negotiation. “The other day,” he said,

I read some observations on the perennial laws of peace-making made by an outstanding observer of foreign affairs. He enumerated what he called the fundamentals of good negotiation—careful preparation, truthfulness, precision, patience, impassivity, and modesty. These are good qualities on all roads of life. They are essential in dealings between nations or inside nations where we have to carry responsibility for the fate of others. There is a widespread view that diplomacy is a game where it pays to be shrewd, where moral laws are somehow suspended, and where it is laudable to fool your adversary. Need I tell you that such a view is wrong? Diplomacy of this kind may yield temporary and limited successes, but it will never lay

the foundation for lasting agreements or understanding. In international politics the right road is to defend to the best of your ability the interests which you are called upon to represent, but always in ways that uphold the principles which you want to see realized in the world of tomorrow. . . . Fight for your team, but remember that your adversaries of today were your friends of yesterday and will have to be your friends of tomorrow. . . .²⁴

One of Hammarskjöld's early biographers noted that he had no patience with squeamishness. Hammarskjöld once described negotiation "as a process of working out a mutually satisfactory arrangement with someone I have to live with. To negotiate with someone never meant to me I had to like him or approve of him, much less that I was willing to sell out my principles."²⁵ Similarly, he was critical of attempts to forge agreements at the UN by excluding adversaries from the decision process—as if the adversary would come along later.²⁶ He didn't mind at all the clash of views: "I feel," he once said, "that what very many people call negative sides—the talking, the conflicts, the flux of events, the uncertainties about outcomes and so on and so forth—are not negative sides but positive sides."²⁷ The UN belongs at that level—the level of debate and hoped-for resolution—and Hammarskjöld himself was at ease and effective at that level. "No institution," he once said, "can become effective unless it is forced to wrestle with the problems, the conflicts, and the tribulations of real life."²⁸

One of Hammarskjöld's most interesting negotiating partners was the Israeli prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. There was unmistakable personal sympathy, even friendship, between them. They were both men of thought and of action; both were humanists, and among other things lifelong explorers of religion and spirituality. Yet they often bitterly deadlocked on issues of peace and security. In mid-1957, when the Suez Crisis had been for the most part successfully resolved, the Israeli armed forces had not yet retreated to agreed boundaries. Characteristically intent on remaining in dialogue, Hammarskjöld sent a letter to Ben-Gurion. "I fear," he wrote, "that in our never-abandoned efforts to get nearer to the target we have in common—in your case peace for Israel, in my case perhaps just simply peace—we may have reached a dead point. . . . Such a situation requires some boldness. Indeed, it seems to me to be a situation where we must individually try to transcend our immediate duty in order to fulfill the higher duty of creative action. You know that my personal confidence in your ability in this respect has never flagged."²⁹ When I first read this letter in the archive of the National Library of Sweden, to which Hammarskjöld bequeathed his personal papers, I felt that I had learned a great thing, that there was no turning back from his challenge. The distinction between immediate duty and the higher duty of creative action is a classic, spare call to vision, to see farther and responsibly dare.

Timing was very much a part of Hammarskjöld's practice of peace—timing and respect for the gains that time can bring. "Time is . . . a great healer," he said toward the end of 1953, "and 'playing for time' is an important element in the tactics we must follow in these days of crisis, anxiety, and frustration. We all have a tendency to regard the situation as it exists at any single moment as a lasting one, forgetting that we ourselves and the societies which we form are all subject to the law of change."³⁰ Hammarskjöld's insight into process was in large part observational—he watched as he participated—but also based on a philosophical faith he had acquired as a young man from his reading in Henri Bergson, especially Bergson's study of creative evolution. There was a certain grandeur in Hammarskjöld's grasp and expressions of this faith. It was nearly a mantra, a most useful one. "Time itself is a great healer," he said on another occasion, "and situations that seem to defy solution can be lived with until that day when

the evolution of human affairs brings a more favorable opportunity.”³¹ Returning in 1956 from a pre-Suez mission to the Middle East, he told journalists that “there are quite a few situations where we must live and learn to live with provisional arrangements, because there is no solution to the long-range problem which we can find overnight. We must simply grow into the solution.”³²

Grandeur and profundity—but he could also be entertaining and he loved to keep journalists on their toes. The press became part of his practice of peace in a dual role: to marshal public opinion and to hold member nations to agreements by publicizing them. But apart from these rather grave roles, he enjoyed the contact with journalists and had friends among them. There wasn’t all that much play in his working life, but some press conferences had moments of play and wit. For example, after his return from the mission to Beijing his justification for patience in a difficult negotiation drew on the traditional Swedish kitchen: “When one prepares a soup,” he said with due solemnity, “it is sometimes part of that preparation to take the soup off the fire. That may also be the case in this special kind of field. There are times when one furthers the purpose of negotiation by not sitting at the table all the time. . . . If there is an interval of silence, even such an interval may result in a wider perspective, greater calm, and lesser heat, and in that way may serve the purposes of negotiation.”³³

Hammar skjöld understood and appreciated almost aesthetically that negotiation is a step-by-step process: in his practice, it was a conscious art. To illustrate the notion of step-by-step he would sometimes draw metaphors from wherever he happened to be. In the Middle East in the spring of 1956—a period in which he pioneered the practice of shuttle diplomacy—he must have seen in passing many examples of ancient architecture. “This particular job,” he said, referring to negotiations under way, “is a little bit like building an arch. I feel that I have now added a second stone to the first one, and that it is just as good as the first one. However, you know that in building an arch the construction is not stable until all the stones have been fitted in.”³⁴ But as he was well aware, the practice of peace cannot always be slow. On occasion he had to act, as he put it, “with the utmost flexibility and a very quick reaction, because time means so very, very much in these matters.”³⁵

Were there time enough, there are many other points we might explore in depth: for example, the search for common ground, no matter how slight, as the first thing needful in negotiation; the need Hammar skjöld recognized to keep matters in motion, never frozen; the need for perseverance and the conviction, as he often put it, that “fate is what we make it.” This last was important; he could not accept anything resembling fatalism or the abdication of direct responsibility. He knew the taste of abdication and once vividly warned against it: “We have seen how . . . the course of events may take on aspects of inexorable fatality up to the point where, out of sheer weariness, no resistance to the gravitation into open conflict any longer seems possible. This is a constantly repeated pattern of tragedy.”³⁶

Were there time enough, we could look closely at Hammar skjöld’s strikingly original valuation of what he called maturity of mind. I know of no other prominent leader of his time or ours who has had this characteristic so deeply marked on his or her compass of values. “We all recognize it,” he said, “when we have the privilege of seeing its fruits. It is reflected in an absence of fear, in recognition of the fact that fate is what we make it. It finds expression in an absence of attempts to be anything more than we are, or different from what we are, in recognition of the fact that we are on solid ground only when we accept giving to our fellow men neither more nor less than what is really ours. . . . It is by striving for such maturity that we may grow into good international servants.”³⁷

And were all this not enough, we could speak at length of his immense faith in the United Nations as the best hope of humanity. “Despite the inevitable setbacks and disappointments,” he said in 1957, “the diplomatic processes of the United Nations tend to wear away many differences and to bring us in the long run to solutions in the common interest. These processes should be used more frequently in this spirit.”³⁸ He wasn’t blind, however, to the Organization’s weaknesses. Renewing his commitment to it in summer 1955, when the UN celebrated the tenth anniversary of its founding, he wrote in his private journal truly haunting words: “You are dedicated to this task,” he wrote, “—as the sacrifice in a still barbarian cult, because of the Divine intention behind it. It is a feeble creation of men’s hands—but you must give your all to this dream, for that alone anchors it in reality.”³⁹

We might also explore at length—though time won’t permit—Hammarskjöld’s prudence in the practice of peace. In that regard, he said that “dramatic appeals and initiatives would of course help to concentrate attention on the United Nations, but if not well backed by an efficient follow-up, they would bounce back as revealing weakness and shallow pretensions. By a down to earth approach, testing our possibilities to the extreme but not exceeding them, I hope that the United Nations will become increasingly audible in the inner councils of the nations.”⁴⁰ His words here reveal something of his nature, of his thought and feeling worlds. Initially pragmatic and straightforward, he ends on words—the inner councils of the nations—that might well be found in the biblical books of Kings.

Negotiation is concentrated, purposeful exchange between parties with issues to resolve. Dialogue, about which Hammarskjöld cared enormously, is a category with greater latitude: it is the day-to-day fabric of life, including life at the UN. It occurs when we turn to one another, and mean to turn to one another. Dialogue had long been central for Hammarskjöld. An entry in his journal for 1955 records that “a closed mind is a weakness, and he who approaches persons or painting or poetry without the youthful ambition to learn a new language and so gain access to someone else’s perspective on life, let him beware.”⁴¹ Some years later, after discovering the writings of the Israeli philosopher and social thinker Martin Buber and developing a brotherly friendship with him, he spoke again of dialogue in what I take to be classic, again quite spare words. “Dialogue is badly needed,” he said at a 1960 press conference, “but dialogue requires quite a few things: objectivity, a willingness to listen, and considerable restraint. Those are all human qualities. No one of them is very remarkable, but they are all called for. . . .”⁴² This too was Hammarskjöld: his words and attitudes were often of Scandinavian design, deliberately simple but quite perfect.

There are two further aspects of Dag Hammarskjöld’s practice of peace with which we owe it to ourselves to engage, albeit briefly. Consider the following entry from his journal, written in Beirut, April 1956, when he was on mission to reinstate adherence to existing armistice agreements.

Understand—through the stillness,
act—out of the stillness,
prevail—in the stillness.⁴³

This is Hammarskjöld? Yes. The words reflect an internal dimension of the man, and an internal dimension of his practice of peace. He is calling to himself—reminding himself—to be as empty of personal clutter as possible, and as peacefully receptive as possible, so that whatever is needed in the diplomatic sphere can naturally fall into place through the intrinsic logic of the situation. We are familiar in our generation with what has come to be called “mindfulness,” a practice of personal awareness rooted initially in the Buddhism of Burma; like yoga, it has become a fairly

strong point of reference in today's Western culture. It was not so in the 1950s. Hammarskjöld was nearly alone in understanding that diplomacy and the practice of peace are, or can be, acts of mature awareness and empathy, of self-possession joined paradoxically with a capacity to experience the problems and possibilities of others as if they were one's own. From this perspective, diplomacy is a personal discipline before it is a social discipline. This is just what we heard Hammarskjöld say to his UN colleagues toward the beginning of his tenure as secretary-general: "To build for man a world without fear, *we* must be without fear. . . . And how can we fight for liberty if we are not free in our own minds?"

In 1958, Hammarskjöld was himself surprised by his spontaneous reply to a journalist working for the UN internal newsletter—so surprised that he wrote about it a few days later to one of his colleagues in the Swedish Academy. "The other day I was forced by a journalist," he wrote, "to try to formulate my views on the main requirements of somebody who wishes to contribute to the development of peace and reason. I found no better formulation than this: 'He must push his awareness to the utmost limit without losing his inner quiet, he must be able to see with the eyes of others from within their personality without losing his own.'"⁴⁴ A difficult practice, one might say; that is true. But in the last major speech of his interrupted life, at Oxford in spring 1961, he made an assertion that closely coheres with what we have just heard. "The international civil servant," he said, "must keep himself under the strictest observation."⁴⁵ In 1950, well before he joined the UN, he wrote much the same in the privacy of his journal: "A grace to pray for," he wrote, "—that our self-interest, which is inescapable, shall never cripple the capacity for conscious self-scrutiny with a sense of humor, which alone can save us."⁴⁶ From start to finish, conscious self-scrutiny was fundamental.

In Dag Hammarskjöld's approach, the practice of peace reveals itself to be a *way* in several senses of the word: first, a way of doing things well, and then, a practical way forward through the labyrinth of human conflict; but also a *Way* in the spiritual sense of a recurrent concern to clarify one's mind and heart and thereby serve the good as fully as possible. The spiritual discipline of the way as he lived it is, I'm sure, not for everyone; it needs a certain temperament, though Hammarskjöld's is by no means the only version of that temperament. I'm equally sure that we would err to ignore Hammarskjöld's practice of peace, as if he were strictly an historical figure confined to his era, rather than a permanent colleague from whom there is still much to learn. I regard him as a permanent colleague. Retirement is out of the question.

There is remarkable firmness in his approach to the grave world problems of his time—we have seen much of that firmness. And for that reason I want to conclude by evoking something of his sensibility—of how he felt about things. It was often with friends in the Swedish Academy that he spoke or wrote most freely. "Last Sunday I escaped the city," he wrote in late winter 1958 to the author and fellow Academician Eyvind Johnson. He had taken the day off at his country home north of New York City. "The thrushes," he continued, "have just arrived but the stream of migratory birds has not yet broken up, I saw them in the hundreds. Going back in the twilight, a flight of starlings swept north over the Hudson: wave after wave like whirling ash in the strong wind. The timeless—forever repeated—will we some time put an end also to this in our immense inability to solve the problems of human coexistence?"⁴⁷

A month later he wrote again to his friend. The birds were unforgotten. "We have had a troubled and unsteady spring," he began. "The flight of starlings I told you about must have been too early. Also in another sense than external. You can feel the threat against the future stronger and stronger but, paradoxically enough, parallel to that . . . an irrational conviction that we shall

be able to break through the causal chain of fear, clumsiness, self-assertion and plain common stupidity.”⁴⁸

May this be so.



Dedicated to the memory of my invaluable collaborator, Daniel von Sydow

Abbreviations in the endnotes

DH Dag Hammarskjöld

KB Kungliga biblioteket (National Library of Sweden)

Markings Dag Hammarskjöld. *Markings*. Translated by Leif Sjöberg and W. H. Auden. New York: Knopf, 1964.

PP II Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, ed. *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Vol. 2, Dag Hammarskjöld 1953–1956*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

PP III Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, ed., *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Vol. 3, Dag Hammarskjöld 1956–1957*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973.

PP IV Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, ed. *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Vol. 4, Dag Hammarskjöld 1958–1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

PP V Andrew W. Cordier and Wilder Foote, ed. *Public Papers of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations. Vol. 5, Dag Hammarskjöld 1960–1961*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975.

¹ Bengt Sundkler. *Nathan Söderblom: His Life and Work*. Lund: Gleerups, 1968, 41.

² PP II, Address Before Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Evanston, Illinois, 20 August 1954, 355.

³ PP II, Address at Commencement Exercises of Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, 13 June 1954, 305.

⁴ Beatrix Kempf. *Woman for Peace: The Life of Bertha von Suttner*. London: Oswald Wolf, 1972, 55 – 56.

⁵ Bertha von Suttner. *Die Waffen Nieder!* Dresden: Pierson, 1889 (“*Ground Arms!*” *The Story of a Life*. Chicago: McClurg, 1892).

⁶ Brigitte Hamann. *Bertha von Suttner: A Life for Peace*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996, 192 (trans. slightly revised). See also Ragnar Sohlman and Henrik Schuck. *Nobel: Dynamite and Peace*. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1929, 227. A comprehensive study of Alfred Nobel in English is Kenne Fant, *Alfred Nobel: A Biography*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1991. An important recent addition to the Nobel bibliography is . Edelgard Biedermann, ed. *Correspondance entre Alfred Nobel et Bertha von Suttner*. Paris (?): Editions Turquoise, 2015.

⁷ Sohlman and Schuck, 231.

⁸ Bertha von Suttner. *The Records of an Eventful Life*, vol. 1. Boston and London: Ginn and Company, 1910, 141.

⁹ Von Suttner, vol. 1, 210 (trans. slightly revised).

¹⁰ PP II, Speech at National Press Club Luncheon, Washington, D.C., 14 April 1954, 283.

¹¹ PP II, From Address at Luncheon at the Empire Club, Toronto, Canada, 25 February 1954, 264.

¹² PP II, From New Year’s Message as Broadcast Over United Nations Radio, New York, 31 December 1953, 209.

¹³ PP II, Address at Luncheon Given by the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 11 September 1953, 85.

¹⁴ PP II, Transcript of Press Conference, New York, 14 January 1955, 448.

¹⁵ PP II, Address at a Public Meeting Organized by the United Nations Association at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 17 December 1953, 201.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

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- ¹⁷ DH letter to Per Lind, 16 March 1957, KB.
- ¹⁸ *Markings* 1955, 112.
- ¹⁹ PP II, From Statement before New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum, New York, 26 March 1955, 466.
- ²⁰ A. M. Rosenthal, "Dag Hammarskjöld Sizes Up His U.N. Job," *New York Times*, 18 August 1953, NYTimes.com archive.
- ²¹ See Brian Urquhart. *Hammarskjöld*. New York: Knopf, 1972.
- ²² Press release: Talk by the S-G at the City Hall on Friday, 23 October 1953, United Nations Archive.
- ²³ PP IV, "The Element of Privacy in Peacemaking," Address at Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 5 February 1958, 25.
- ²⁴ PP II, From Statement before New York Herald Tribune Youth Forum, New York, 26 March 1955, 464 – 65.
- ²⁵ Joseph P. Lash. *Dag Hammarskjöld: Custodian of the Brushfire Peace*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961, 148.
- ²⁶ See PP II, Address at University of California Convocation, Berkeley, California, 13 May 1954, 298 – 99.
- ²⁷ PP II, From Transcript of Press Conference, New York, 22 December 1955, 631.
- ²⁸ PP II, Address at a Public Meeting Organized by the United Nations Association at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 17 December 1953, 203.
- ²⁹ DH letter to David Ben-Gurion, 19 April 1957, KB.
- ³⁰ PP II, Address at Dinner in His Honor Given by the American Association for the United Nations in Cooperation with the New York University Institute for Review of United Nations Affairs, New York, 14 September 1953, 95.
- ³¹ PP II, From Address at Luncheon at the Empire Club, Toronto, Canada, 25 February 1954, 265.
- ³² PP III, From Press Conference Transcript, New York, 5 April 1956, 76.
- ³³ PP II, From Transcript of Press Conference, New York, 19 April 1955, 479.
- ³⁴ Urquhart, 145.
- ³⁵ PP II, From Transcripts of Background Press Conferences, New York, 20 April 1954, 289.
- ³⁶ PP III, Address at Celebration of the 180th Anniversary of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, Williamsburg, Virginia, 15 May 1956, 141.
- ³⁷ PP II, "International Service"--Address at Johns Hopkins University Commencement Exercises, Baltimore, Maryland, 14 June 1955, 503 – 04.
- ³⁸ PP III, "The Promise of the UN—Hammarskjöld Answers Ten Questions," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, 15 September 1957, 658.
- ³⁹ *Markings* 1955, 110.
- ⁴⁰ PP II, Remarks at the United Nations Press Club, New York, 9 April 1954, 280.
- ⁴¹ *Markings* 1955, 114.
- ⁴² PP IV, From Transcripts of Press Conferences, New York, 19 May 1960, 606.
- ⁴³ *Markings* 1956, 127.
- ⁴⁴ DH letter to Eyvind Johnson, 31 January 1958, KB.
- ⁴⁵ PP V, "The International Civil Servant in Law and in Fact," Lecture Delivered in Congregation at Oxford University, 30 May 1961, 488.
- ⁴⁶ *Markings* 1950, 43.
- ⁴⁷ DH letter to Eyvind Johnson, 12 March 1957, KB.
- ⁴⁸ DH letter to Eyvind Johnson, 24 April 1958, KB.