

*León Tolstói*

RUSSO-JAPANESE  
WAR



# **The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)**

**León Tolstói**

**Fundación Ediciones Clío**

Maracaibo – Venezuela 2025

# The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)



@Fundación Ediciones Clío  
May 2025

Original title  
The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)

Digital Edition

**Edition:** Jorge Fymark Vidovic López

**Translation:** Spanish to English: Jorge Fymark Vidovic López  
Russian to Spanish: contributor Carmen de Burgos Seguí

Maracaibo, Venezuela

**Legal Deposit:** 9798284727096

ISBN: ZU: 2025000160

**Cover design:** Janibeth Maldonado

**Layout:** Dorys L. Acosta C.



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The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) / León Tolstói (autor) / This book is the result of a translation from Spanish to English by Jorge Fymark Vidovic López and from Russian to Spanish by contributor Carmen de Burgos Seguí. The Spanish version can be found on Amazon JDP: <https://amzn.eu/d/fgda6wz> and at the link to the Miguel de Cervantes Virtual Library.

Maracaibo (Venezuela). Fundación Ediciones Clío. 2025.

pp. 89, 22,86 cm

Depósito Legal:

ISBN:

1. Japanese War. 2. León Tolstói. 3. Russia. 4. Japan

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## About the author

**León Tolstói** (1828-1910) was a Russian novelist, philosopher and thinker, considered one of the greatest writers of world literature. Born into an aristocratic family, Tolstói enjoyed a privileged education, although he abandoned his university studies. After serving in the army during the Crimean War, he began to question social and political structures, which marked his literary work and thought. His legacy includes masterpieces such as *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, in which he portrays the complexity of Russian life and humanity's ethical dilemmas. Deeply influenced by Christianity and the search for spiritual truth, Tolstói embraced a philosophy of nonviolence and simple living, advocated in writings such as *The Kingdom of God Is in You*. His ideas inspired leaders like Gandhi and cemented his reputation as an advocate for justice and peace.

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**León Tolstói**

## **The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Summary**

In "**The Russo -Japanese War**", León Tolstói offers a scathing and forceful critique of war, describing it as a manifestation of irrationality and human suffering. Tolstói denounces the hypocrisy of leaders and thinkers who justify violence under the pretexts of patriotism, progress or moral superiority. He points out that no cause can justify the loss of a single life, highlighting the disconnect between those who declare war and the masses forced to fight and die. With phrases such as "there is no war, only one, that is worth the sacrifice of a single human life", he underlines the moral absurdity of organized violence. Tolstói exposes how war brutalizes society and retards its ethical evolution, affirming that the most essential duty is to abolish it. The work advocates for peace and individual conscience, highlighting the need to reject blind obedience that perpetuates destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> The text comes from the press pamphlet "The Russo-Japanese War" by León Tolstói, translated by Carmen de Burgos Seguí and published by F. Sempere y Cía. in Valencia. Reference: Tolstói, L. (1904). The Russo-Japanese War (C. de Burgos Seguí, Trad.). F. Sempere y Cía. Source: <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/la-guerra-ruso-japonesa-1070427/>

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## Prologue

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) represented a pivotal moment in the history of imperialism and the redefinition of power in East Asia. This conflict arose as a result of tensions between the Russian Empire and the Japanese Empire over control of Manchuria and Korea, strategically valuable regions both for their natural resources and for their geopolitical location.

The rivalry between the two nations for influence in Northeast Asia was not only aimed at territorial expansion, but also symbolized the struggle to establish supremacy in the region. Korea, in particular, became a key focus of interest, due to its strategic location between China and Japan, making it a vital access point for control of the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea. For Russia, the domination of Manchuria and Korea represented the consolidation of its power in the Pacific, securing its warm-waters port. For Japan, stopping Russian expansion was crucial to preserving its own national security.

The growing tension between the two empires culminated in an inevitable military conflict, in which Japan, with surprising tactical and military capability, demonstrated the effectiveness of its modernization, while Russia underestimated both its rival and the complexity of fighting in a theater of war so far from its continental heartland. In this way, the Russo-Japanese War marked a before and after in the panorama of global imperialism, transforming not only the power structure in Asia, but also the Western powers' perception of the actors involved.

The impact of the Russo-Japanese War was profound internationally. For the first time in modern history, an Asian nation defeated a European power, significantly altering the world's perception of the balance of power. Japan not only consolidated its hegemony in East Asia, but also defied the expectations of Western powers regarding

European supremacy in global affairs. Steinberg (2005)<sup>3</sup> points out that this war initiated (inaugurated) a new era in international relations, where non-European empires began to emerge as relevant actors on the global stage, eroding the vision of a world dominated exclusively by Western powers.

The conflict culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Portsmouth promoted by Theodore Roosevelt. Internally, the effects of the war were devastating for Russia. The defeat exacerbated political and social tensions, and was one of the triggers for the Revolution of 1905.

In short, the Russo-Japanese War was not only a military confrontation, but a catalyst for profound changes in the geopolitical order and in the internal politics of the nations involved. Russia's defeat was a prelude to the fall of tsarism, while Japan's victory symbolized the rise of a new kind of non-Western imperialism. The analyses of authors such as Carr (1950) and Steinberg (2005)<sup>4</sup> agree that this conflict reflects the tensions inherent in imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century and anticipates the changes that were to come in the following decades. Beyond the victories and defeats, this war reminds us that the price of armed conflict is ultimately human suffering and the erosion of morality (Steinberg, 2005; Carr, 1950).<sup>5</sup>

In the previous sense; in "The Current War", León Tolstói exposes a profound critique of war, focusing on the irrationality and inhumanity of the war. Tolstói points out the incongruity of justifying violence under the pretexts of patriotism, honor, or progress, emphasizing that no cause is worthy of the sacrifice of a human life. The work emphasizes how war dulls the moral conscience of men, who, subjected to a state and social machinery, accept violence as something inevitable. Tolstói condemns both political and military leaders and intellectuals who support and justify wars from the comfort of their offices, while sending others to the battlefield.

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<sup>3</sup> Steinberg, J. (2005). *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*.

<sup>4</sup> Steinberg, J. (2005). *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*.

<sup>5</sup> Carr, E. H. (1950). *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*. Mac

In a key passage, the author rhetorically asks: "Do you have the right to order war, or to follow it, or to advise it, or to promote it, or to accept it and serve it?... No; under no pretext do you have that right, because there is no war, not just one, that is worth the sacrifice of a single human life or the expense of a single kopeck".

Tolstói highlights the hypocrisy and betrayal of religious and ethical principles that should guide humanity, criticizing how men behave "like madmen, like blind machines, rolling, roaring, and destroying at random". The work not only denounces war as an aberration, but also points out its degrading impact on society, stating that it fosters injustice and retards the moral development of humanity.

This analysis and reflection reveal a vision of war as a spectacle of collective madness, where reason is supplanted by blind obedience and senseless exaltation. Ultimately, Tolstói advocates individual conscience and the higher duty to humanity and peace above any nationalistic notion or political interest.

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## THE CURRENT WAR<sup>6</sup>

León Tolstói

How can one be indifferent to such a conflict? How can we not feel interest in this war, and no matter what other war may break out?... There is no greater cause for distress than these battles between men.

Let's talk about struggles between peoples, conflicts between races, the consequences that the victory of one or the other may bring... But what does all this matter? I do not distinguish races. I am always for man, whether he is Russian or Japanese. I am for the worker, for the oppressed, for the unfortunate, who belong to all races. And whatever happens, what will he gain from this clash of peoples?

This war painfully shows how far men forget the notion of their duty.

Do your duty! Do they only know what these words mean?... Above the duties that men have to the family, the country and society, there is their duty to God, and if the word is repugnant, to the All, with a great T. This All, which I call God, is above individual controversies. Whatever I do, I can do nothing that does not belong to a whole, for I am but a part of a great harmony. The consciousness I have of the relation of my being to this harmony is what is usually called the religious spirit, and it is this consciousness that dictates our duties.

But men forget these essential notions. Do they ever read the book of books, the Gospel, with their hearts?... They persist in remaining in the state of barbarism. And we see them, because of this, deliberately

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<sup>6</sup> The text is taken from a press release entitled "The Russo-Japanese War" by León Tolstói, translated from Russian into Spanish by journalist Carmen de Burgos Seguí. The article was published by F. Sempere y Cía. in Valencia. Reference: Tolstoy, L. (1904). The Russo-Japanese War (C. de Burgos Seguí, Trans.).

engaging in shameful wars, without saying to themselves that the first duty, the most essential duty of thinking beings, is to abolish war.

But men go like madmen, like blind machines, rolling, roaring and destroying at random.

The sense of responsibility is nowhere to be seen. And each one carries the weight of his own faults on his neighbor.

If I were emperor, minister, journalist, soldier, I would ask myself: Do you have the right to order war, or to follow it, or to advise it, or to promote it, or to accept it and serve it?... No; Whatever happens, under no pretext and for whatever reason, you do not have that right, for there is no war, not so single, that it is worth the sacrifice of a single human life or the expense of a single kopeck. Emperor, minister, journalist, soldier, you are a man; nothing but a man. You have been cast upon the earth for a higher purpose and to fulfill a mission which you will not fulfill entirely, since you are weak, but towards the fulfillment of which you must march without rest. You fail in this mission and deny your destiny if you order violence, if you provoke it or prepare it or excuse it or lend yourself to its fulfillment. There is no higher law in life than the repugnance inspired by murder.

And when I say this to myself, even if I were emperor, minister, journalist or soldier; rather than accept the smallest part of responsibility, however small, in the fact of war, I would rebel, keeping, with the consciousness of my duty, the will to fulfill it.

If the war depended on me, I would abandon Petersburg, Moscow, Yasnaya to the Japanese. Polyana, where my home is, everything they demanded... But alas! Who thinks about duty now? Who thinks about reason now? There is one thing sadder still, if this is possible, than the spectacle of war; and it is the spectacle of the bankruptcy of human reason.

I know well that many excuse war as favorable to human progress, and say that, by means of it, men who enjoy the privilege of an advanced



civilization, take advantage of its attractive force to drag those who come backward.

This is how we reason today, as at least many people of so-called wisdom reason, and this reasoning is convenient for justifying all enterprises, both good and evil.

I admit, however, this reasoning. I consent to accept that civilization carries within it an active and educating force. But I ask: where does civilization reside? Why do you want me to place it in Europe? For the Europeans, who have created many artificial needs against their natural wills, are occupying their genius in satisfying them! Because they have invented iron roads, the telegraph and countless other things... For all these acquisitions of the so-called civilization seem to me to be inventions of barbarism. They serve and flatter the baser instincts of man. Unlike those who believe that they confer a certain moral superiority on him, I see, on the contrary, that the use that man makes of his intelligence is almost always in favor of evil, not good.

It will be said to me that civilized man does not create only instruments of war, but instruments for material comfort; and I will be told, above all, that they create the machines that help man in his hard work. The latter is true; But why is there hard work, if not because man has created violent needs for himself? Limit your needs and you will spare a multitude of your fellow men mortal and innumerable fatigues.

What use are the tapestry that covers the table on which I write, the ornaments of the room in which I am, and all the comfort that surrounds me? Would I not be able to continue to subsist if I were deprived of all this?... And yet it is to provide me with this superfluous well-being that men and more men, whole generations, have suffered and suffered, going through all kinds of pains. Why? Because I am "a civilized man". Human happiness and true freedom consist in taming appetites; and modern inventions, by sharpening and exciting these appetites, do nothing but perpetuate slavery.

There are those who say that, in the present war, since one or the other people must be the victor, justice demands that Japan be the vanquished, since the Japanese were the first to attack.

Are those who speak like this really sure that Japan was the aggressor?

Which is the real culprit, the one who fires the first cannon shot or the one who has exasperated the adversary before, driving him to desperate violence?

Between Russia and Japan, who will be able to determine the scale and limits of mutual deception?

I am ready to admit that if Russia, without any right, has occupied Manchuria, without any right too, Japan intends to intervene in it, and I also recognize that the Mikado has no acceptable reason to get involved in a matter that interests only Russia and China... But there is Korea, and it is for Korea that the Japanese have taken up the fight. If the Russians had not shown a desire to enter this country, if there had not existed beneath the present events (judging by what I have been told) certain stories of agricultural acquisitions, held by the Russian court, it is very probable that Japan would not have dared to begin. And if all that preceded the active period of hostilities were known in detail, it would undoubtedly be seen that there is room for a more equitable distribution of responsibilities, not touching the least part of Russia.

But all considerations about the why and how of this war are secondary to me. Only one fact interests me: will this war advance or delay the hour of human peace? It will undoubtedly retard it, and this is what must constitute our affliction. The rest should not matter to us. I know of many Russians who, aspiring to freedom and writhing under the odious weight of the regime, support this thesis. They say that the final defeat of the Russian armies would attack neither the prestige nor the vital forces of Russia's immense population, but, on the contrary, would result in the weakness and decay of the present regime. They add that, even if the war were to end happily, it would produce, by repercussions, an inflaming of the indolent masses of the people, and

that in either case it is necessary to be vigilant in order to reap the benefits of the war.

Here is poor reasoning, a simple method worthy of contempt. From evil can only arise evil, and for the philosopher, war will never be a necessary condition of peace. Russia is but a part of the inhabited universe. Above it is humanity; above humanity is the principle of life; and it is the attack that is made against the principle of life and the eternal law that must be considered.

Viewed from this height, what can we care about the very particular fate of Russia? Are we going to subordinate to it the essential interests of life and the inprescriptible moral duties? Shall we forget, for the sake of Russia, that every battle that is fought at one point in the universe awakens terrible repercussions upon the whole universe, and that, far beyond where bullets and shells reach, it spreads over the whole earth the contagion of death?

All the reasoning in favor of the present war is puerile. When I hear what many blind Russians say, I think of a murderer who, having coldly deliberated to injure anyone, hesitated at the last moment and called off the blow for fear of staining the victim's suit.

Humanity and civilization will suffer just as much if the Russians triumph as if the Japanese triumph

Many people say that Japan is a barbaric people and that its civilization is apparent; something like a holiday decoration. They add that the only thing they have taken from Europe are their cannons, their battleships, their military and political organizations, weapons, in short, to fight better. Are the Japanese really as they are painted? I do not believe them that way and I would like them to give me proof to the contrary. They are as they are; Here is everything, with the same qualities and defects common to other men. Do you say that they have taken from Western civilization what is worse about it? Ah, it is quite possible. There is an author that I see frequently; it is Pascal. And Pascal has written this: "One does not imitate the chastity of Alexander the

Conqueror, but one seeks to imitate him in his conquests". Similarly, it is very likely that Japan has so far imitated Europe only in its defects. But at least it keeps its own characters and pursues its evolution as we pursue ours. Be assured that its turn will come, and then it will be developed and perfected according to the general law.

And why should the Japanese be an inferior people, as some claim? I consider them to be in more or less the same situation as the Russians were under Catherine II. They have just emerged from barbarism and emancipated themselves from servitude. They continue their march and become aware of what they are and what they are worth. Is there anything more legitimate? By what right can the West oppose obstacles? On what lawful pretext can its development be prevented?... But this is not why they dare to censure them. They are attacked from the side and prey on their weaknesses. Hence it is mocked, for the lack of better arguments, that dukes, marquises, and barons are appointed in Japan. Beautiful justice! Were nobles known among us before Peter the Great? To whom does the Russian nobility owe its existence if not to this emperor? I am a count, and why am I a count? Because the first one in my family was. And why should not a talented Japanese, like Mr. Ito, be as much a Marquis as I am a Count?...

In the absence of other reasons, it is alleged that the yellow race is lagging far behind the white race, and it is added that the sympathy of the white must be on the side of the white combatant. This is simply unreasonable. He wonders where the progress of the yellow race lies, looking at China, whose evolution seems to have stalled after thousands of years.

But we Europeans know the Asian world very poorly. Who has studied it, who has penetrated it, exciting its conscience? I see that the Chinese and the Hindus are not warlike peoples; that they despise war and those who make it; that their Buddha stipulates as an essential rule the prohibition of killing, even if it is an insect. This is something: this represents a true superiority over us. I see that they don't kill. I see, in the accounts of the travelers, that they are loyal in their business, that

they respect their word and never lie. Here's another thing that's not very common in Europe.

I impartially acknowledge that in many things they are barbarians and that they practice torture against their fellow men. How can this be explained?... But its philosophers have formulated eternal thoughts.

Remember Confucius and Buddha. Are there thinkers, moralists, and apostles in the history of mankind who are more generous and nobler than these? Well, they were both yellow.

And if the Japanese are cruel, aren't we too? Has anyone counted the atrocities inscribed on the liabilities of this world that pretends to be civilized? A lady friend of mine has told me of a horrible event that occurred in Manchuria. It was during the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway. One day I don't know what attack on the works of the line is discovered. The culprits are unknown and leave no trace. The authority opens information that does not work. But since it is not tolerable for the authorities that a punishable act should go unpunished, and since it is necessary for them to punish anyone, forty Chinese from the surrounding area are arrested at random. They are given sticks and pickaxes, and they are forced to dig a large pit. When the pit is finished, they are placed in a line along its edges. Then, at a signal, a troop of Cossacks rushes upon them, and with their feet, with their fists, with swords, with blows of butt and whip, they make them fall into the hole, and dead or wounded, without noticing that most of them are still alive, they are covered with earth until the ditch is filled and the ground is leveled... Perhaps turnips and beets will now grow there and will serve to nourish our armies. Behold our civilization!

How can we say, then, that civilization will gain anything from the triumph of Russia or Japan? Where is civilization? Are you with the Yellows? Are you with the whites? Where can you see his acts? Where are your results in Europe? Is it that the world is moving forward or is it going backwards?... There are hours when one feels agony when this question is proposed.

The European peoples appear in all their barbarity when they try to colonize those they consider savages. France, Germany, Russia, Italy, England itself in the Transvaal affair; all nations do the same. Where can we find a thought of true civilization in the colonizing work of Europe?

Modern inventions prove nothing in favor of the development of human morality. I am not very sensitive to the iron roads, the telegraph, the telephone, and all those conquests, by which man thinks he demonstrates progress, and which testify in him nothing but a refined selfishness.

We were amazed at the Pyramids, asking ourselves strangely: "For what purpose were these prodigious piles of stones made?"

Well; all those inventions of civilization are our Pyramids. Perhaps in a few thousand years a people will come who, upon finding their remains, will say to themselves: "What people were those so singular that they imagined that going quickly from one point to another was an essential function of life?" And those people will be right. I have never understood the usefulness of travel.

Travel, when it does not have an immediate purpose of work, only serves to waste men's time. It is not true that they influence thought. The true thinker is a plant that grows among the wild rocks. It is nourished by itself and is the product of its own substance. Epictetus, Socrates, and Plato did not ride a railroad. Spinoza lived in his hole; Descartes by his stove and Kant was a loner. Thought is the supreme work of work, and work is neither possible nor fruitful except in silence and withdrawal.

Some wonder with horror what the fate of Russia would be if the men wrested from work by military mobilization refused to take up arms and wage war.

I declare that this would be a great victory for civilization and humanity. My conscience tells me that killing, whatever form it takes and the pretext that conceals it, is execrable; that war is a monstrous

shame, a bloodthirsty aberration, and that everyone who prepares war is worthy of condemnation.

No; There is nothing more shameful than that compulsory military service, which enlists all men against their will at the age of tenderness for the work of criminals. The world has never seen anything like it! In the barbarous times of Genghis-khan only those who were fond of butchery were killed. People enjoyed the right to stay in their homes, to cultivate their land, to live in peace, to dream, to do good.

The modern world, your civilized world, is more ferocious than Genghis-khan. He puts a rifle in every man's hands; he gives every man the order to kill; and if the man throws down his weapon and refuses to be a murderer, he is treated as if he were a criminal. How to accept this? How can consciences not rebel? How can the world not pay attention to the scandal of this murderous tyranny?... And what to do, what to try, while this state of affairs lasts? How can souls be ennobled while they bend under such servitude? This produces immense distress. Oh, no; No more commitments to military service. Every man, whoever he may be, if he has the notion of his duty and the respect of his conscience, must first of all and at all costs refuse such servitude.

If in normal life it is proposed to anyone to take a knife and murder the first stranger who passes by on the street, he will not do it, because morally it will be impossible for him. If Christian duty were at the bottom of consciences, it would be equally impossible for every man to take up a rifle and use it against his fellow men who have done him no harm.

Ah! It is necessary for me to be sincere. I do not feel, deep down, completely free from the notion of patriotism. Out of atavism, out of education, the remnants of a selfish sentimentality persist in me, against my will. I must bring my reason into play and remember my essential duty, and it is then that I tell myself, without any reservation of my conscience, that there is no reason in the world that is superior to the reason of humanity.

In striving to make men love peace and harmony, I have never dreamed that these exhortations can produce immediate fruit. I have never believed that the world can be conquered at one stroke by universal brotherhood. Moreover, if the world were already on the road to peace, my effort would be childish and in vain.

The present war is nothing but a manifestation of the homicidal madness of men.

It should afflict all beings of conscience and duty without surprising them much.

The marvellous miracle would be if it were given to us to witness the definitive reconciliation between men.

**León Tolstói**  
**Yasnaya-Polyana, September 1904.<sup>7</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup> This is the place where Tolstói lived, his estate in Russia and the year corresponds to the context of the Russo-Japanese War, which took place between 1904 and 1905.



## **MEN, AWAKE!**

**Behold, your hour has come, and the power of darkness**

**Saint Luke, XXII, 53**



# I

It is your iniquities that have separated you from your God, and it is your sins that made him turn his face because he would not listen to you. For your hands are stained with blood, and your fingers with iniquities; your lips have uttered a lie, and your tongue has spoken wicked things. There is no one who rebukes for justice and no one who punishes for the truth; futility is paid attention to and vain things are said; work is conceived and torment is engendered. His works are works of iniquity, and his hands carry out acts of violence. Their feet run to evil and hasten to shed innocent blood; his thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; ruin and desolation are in his way. They do not know the path of peace, there is no justice in their way; its paths are secluded paths; Of all those who walk through them, none knows peace. This is why judgment has departed from us, and justice does not come to us; we waited for the light, and darkness arises; We desire splendor, and we move forward in darkness. We grope like the blind along the wall; we grope like those who have no eyes; We have stumbled in the middle of the day as well as at night, and we have been in places of desolation like the dead (Isaiah, LIX).

War is more revered than ever. An artist skilled in this, a brilliant assassin, Moltke, one day replied to the peace delegates the following strange words:

"War is holy, of divine institution; it is one of the sacred laws of the world. It sustains in men all the great, noble sentiments, honor, disinterestedness, virtue, courage, and prevents them, in a word, from falling into repugnant materialism".

Thus, to gather in herds of four hundred thousand men, to walk day and night without rest, to think of nothing, not to read anything, to be of no use to anyone, to rot in his filth, to lie in the mud, to live like the brute in continual stupidity, to plunder the cities, to burn the villages, to

ruin the villages, and then to find another agglomeration of human flesh, to fall upon it forming lakes of blood, plains of piled flesh, heaps of corpses, to lose arms or legs, to be killed without profit to any born child, while your old parents and your children perish of hunger; this is what is called not falling into the most repugnant materialism (Guy de Maupassant).

We will limit ourselves to recalling that the different States of Europe have accumulated a debt of one hundred and thirty billion, one hundred and ten thousand of them for a century, and that this colossal debt comes almost exclusively from the war expenditures that maintain in time of peace, more than four million men, which may become nineteen in time of war; and that two-thirds of their balance sheets are absorbed by the service of the debt and the support of the land and sea armies. (G. de Molinari).

War again, again useless suffering for all, caused by nothing! Once again the lie, once again the brutalization, the bestiality of human beings!

Men, hundreds of thousands of men, separated by ten thousand versts of distance, and who are, on the one hand, Buddhists, whose law forbids not only the murder of men, but also that of criminals, and, on the other hand, Christians, who profess the faith of brotherhood and love. These men, like wild beasts, pursue one another by land and by sea, to kill each other, to mutilate each other in the cruellest way.

What is this? Is it a dream or reality?...

In the presence of this, one wants to believe that it is a dream and wishes to wake up. But no, it's not a dream, it's the terrible reality.

Speak to a poor, ignorant, deluded Japanese who has been led to believe that Buddhism does not consist in compassion for every living thing, but consists in making sacrifices to idols, or to a poor boy from Nizhni-Novgorod, without enlightenment, who has been taught that Christianity consists in the worship of the Christ, of the Mother of God, of the Saints and of their images, and, strictly speaking, it will be understandable that these unfortunates, led by secular violence and

deception to consider the greatest crime in the world good, that is, the murder of their fellow men, can commit this shameful act without believing themselves guilty.

But, how can men who think themselves enlightened propagate war, contribute to its establishment, take part in it, and what is still more terrible, without exposing themselves to the dangers of war, push and send into battle many unhappy deceived brethren?

These people, wrongly called enlightened (even without speaking of the Christian law, if they profess it at all, cannot ignore all that was and is written, all that was said and remained said of cruelty, uselessness, and barbarity of war).

If these people are called enlightened, it is precisely because they know all that. Most have written or spoken about the matter.

Without mentioning The Hague Conference, which was received with general approval, and the books, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and speeches in which the possibility of settling international differences by means of an international tribunal is considered, enlightened men cannot ignore that the general armaments of States, one against another, must inevitably drag them into endless wars. or general bankruptcy; or both. They cannot ignore that, in addition to the mad, senseless expenditure of millions of rubles, i.e., the labor of men, for the maintenance of the war and its preparations, thousands of men perish in the war itself, the most energetic, the strongest, and at the best age for productive work. The wars of the last century cost the lives of fourteen million men.

Enlightened people cannot ignore that the pretexts for wars are always such that they are not worth spending a single human life, not even a hundredth part of the means currently spent on war. The struggle for the emancipation of black people cost the United States far more than it could have cost to buy all black in the South.

They all know the main thing: that wars provoke in man the lowest, grossest passions, deprave and brutalize him. Everyone knows the

futility of the pretexts that Joseph de Maistre, Moltke, and others invoked in favor of wars. Almost all of them base themselves on the sophistry that in every human calamity there may be an advantageous side, or on the arbitrary assertion that there have always been wars, and always will be, as if the evil actions of men could be justified by the advantages and utility they procure, or because they were committed at all times.

All men who call themselves enlightened know this. And suddenly war breaks out! And all this is instantly forgotten, and even the men who, the day before, demonstrated the cruelty, the uselessness, and the folly of wars, today do not use their thoughts, their words, and their writings, but in the means of killing men, of squandering, of annihilating the greatest amount of human labor, of stirring up as much as possible the passions and hatred in those peaceful and industrious men who by their labor feed. They clothe and support those same men—called enlightened—who, in turn, compel them to commit terrible acts contrary to their conscience, to the good, and to religion.

## II

The unreason of modern wars is called dynastic interest, nationality, European equilibrium, honor. This ultimate motive of honor is perhaps the most extravagant of all, because there is not a people in the world that is not stained with all crimes and covered with all shame. There is not one who has not suffered all the humiliations that fortune can impose on a miserable flock of men. However, if there is still an honour in the villages, it is a strange means of sustaining it to make war, that is, to commit all the crimes for which a citizen dishonours himself: arson, robbery, rape, murder... (Anatolio France).

The savage instinct of warrior murder has very deep roots in the human brain, because it has been carefully cultivated and fostered for a thousand years. We are pleased to hope that a humanity better than ours will succeed in correcting itself from this original vice. But what will he think then of this civilization, wrongly called refined, and of which we are so proud? Pretty much what we think of ancient Mexico and its warlike and bestial cannibalism (C. Letourneau).

Repeatedly, one prince annoys another for fear that the latter will offend him first. War is often waged because the enemy is too strong; and often because it is too weak. Sometimes our neighbors want what we have, or possess what we lack; and then we come to blows, until they seize our goods or abandon theirs to us (Jonathan Swift).

Something incomprehensible and impossible is happening because of its cruelty, its falsehood and its absurdity. The Emperor of Russia, the same one who invited all peoples to peace, publicly declares that, in spite of all his cares (which are expressed by the grabbing of foreign lands and the increase of troops for the defense of the captured lands), in view of the attack of the Japanese, he orders that what they did to the Russians be done to the Japanese. that is, to kill them. And proclaiming

this call to murder, he invokes God and asks his blessing for the most horrible crime.

A similar proclamation against Russia has been issued by the Emperor of Japan. The learned Russian jurisconsults Muravief and Martens try to show that there is no contradiction between the people's appeal for a general peace which they made earlier and the provocation to war for the grabbing of foreign lands.

And the diplomats publish, in the refined French language, circulars, in which they demonstrate carefully and in detail (even though they know that no one believes them) that the government does not change its mind until after all attempts to re-establish peaceful relations (in reality attempts to deceive other peoples), and finds it necessary to resort to the only means of reasonably resolving the question. that is, murder. And so do Japanese diplomats.

Like them, Japanese scholars and philosophers justify the murder of white men.

The journalists, with visible joy, do not hesitate even in the face of the most obvious and grossest lie, and prove in various ways that the Russians are right, that they are strong and good in every way, and that the Japanese do wrong, are weak and bad in every respect, and that those who are or may be hostile to the Russians (the Americans and the English) are equally bad. The Japanese and their supporters say the same about the Russians.

Not to speak of the military, who, by trade, are ready to murder, the multitude of so-called enlightened people, who are not impelled to do so by anything or anyone (teachers, clerks, students, noblemen, merchants) express the most hostile and most contemptuous feelings against the Japanese, the English, the Americans, for whom until the day before they had sympathy or indifference. and without any necessity, they show the most stupid and servile feelings towards the emperor, who is at least indifferent to them, they give him assurances



of their infinite fidelity and declare themselves ready to sacrifice their lives for him.

And the unfortunate sovereign, the acknowledged pastor of a people of one hundred and thirty million, always deceived and forced to contradict himself, believes them, thanks them, and blesses them so that they will murder the army which he calls his own, and which will defend lands which he calls his own with even fewer rights.

They all give each other ugly iconic religious images, in which not only no enlightened person believes, but which the enlightened villager himself begins to despise. Everyone bows to these images, kisses them and makes emphatic and deceitful speeches that no one believes. The rich sacrifice a small part of their wealth, immorally gained in the work of murder, in the manufacture of the mechanisms of death, and the poor, from whom they draw two billion rubles every year, think it necessary to do the same and thus they give their pence. The government excites and alienates the crowd of vagabonds and scoundrels who, walking through the streets with the portrait of the Tsar, shout "Hurrah!" and, under the cover of the word patriotism, they produce so many kinds of disorders. And throughout Russia, from the imperial palace to the last village, the pastors of the so-called Christian Church invoke God (that God who commands us to love the enemy, God of love) to help in the diabolical work, to help in the murder of men. And hundreds, thousands of humans, wearing uniforms and with various deadly mechanisms (which can be called cannon fodder), driven mad by prayers, sermons, images, newspapers, with anguish in their hearts, but apparently brave, leave parents and children, and go there where, risking their lives, they commit the most terrible act: the murder of men whom they do not know and who have done them no harm. And behind them go the doctors and the Sisters of Charity, supposing, no one knows why, that they are not called upon to cure simple and peaceful people in their homes, but to lend their assistants to those who are engaged in murder.

And the people who remain in their homes rejoice at the news of the murder of men, and when they know that many Japanese have been killed, they thank someone, whom they call God.

And all this is appreciated, not only as a manifestation of lofty feelings, but those who abstain from such manifestations, if they try to make others understand the truth, are looked upon as traitors; they are threatened or insulted, attacked by the brutalized crowd of men who, to defend their madness and cruelty, have no other weapon than gross violence.

### III

The peoples, excited against each other by reciprocal insults, wish each other humiliation, ruin. They rejoice when calamities, hunger, misery, and defeat, wound the enemy country. The murder of thousands of men, instead of compassion, provokes in them an enthusiastic joy; The cities are lit up and the whole country rejoices. Thus the heart of man is endured and his worst passions are awakened. The human being renounces the feeling of sympathy and humanity (Channing).

When reaching the age of military service, it is necessary to follow the unmotivated orders of a presumptuous or ignorant person. It is necessary to admit that what is nobler and greater is to renounce having a will in order to become the passive instrument of the will of another; to stab and be stabbed, to suffer hunger, thirst, rain, cold; to be mutilated without ever knowing why, with no other compensation than a glass of brandy on the day of battle; the promise of something impalpable and fictitious that a journalist gives or denies with his pen in his well-heated office, glory and immortality after death. A shot is heard, the independent man falls wounded; his companions finish him off by trampling on him as he walks; he is buried half alive, and since then, he can enjoy immortality. His comrades, his relatives, forget him. That for which he gave his happiness, his sufferings, his life, he never knew it... And finally, a few years later, they go to look for his whitened bones, and with them ivory black or English bitumen is made to polish the boots of their general (Alfonso Karr).

... But I learned discipline, namely, that the corporal is always right when he talks to the soldier, and the sergeant when he talks to the corporal, and the second lieutenant when he speaks to the first sergeant, and so on until I came to the Marshal of France, even though they all said that two and two are five, and that the moon shone in the middle of the day. This hardly enters the head, but something will help this a

lot; and that something is an edict placed in the blocks of the barracks that is read from time to time to clarify ideas. This edict assumes everything that a soldier can desire, such as, for example, to return to his village, to refuse to serve, to resist the chief, and tells him that this deserves death, or five years in shackles at least (Erckmann-Chatrian).

It seems that there never existed Voltaire, Montaigne, Pascal, Swift, Spinoza, or other writers who forcefully denounced the insanity, the uselessness of war, and described its cruelty, its immorality, its savagery. It could be said that Christ and his sermon on the brotherhood of men, and the love of God and men, never existed.

Remembering all this, one looks around, and, seeing what is happening, feels horror, not only at the atrocities of war, but at the most terrible of all: at the impotent nature of human reason.

Thus, the only thing that distinguishes man from the animal, which constitutes his particularity –reason- is something useless. Not only useless, but something harmful that makes all activity more difficult, like the bride who detaches herself from the horse's head, gets entangled in his feet and does nothing but annoy him.

Understandably that a pagan, a Greek, a Roman, and even a Christian of the Middle Ages, who did not know the Gospel and blindly believed in all the prescriptions of the Church, could war, and, in so doing, take pride in the title of warrior. But how can a believing Christian, even if he is an unbeliever, but is imbued with the Christian ideal, with the brotherhood of men, and with the love with which the works of the philosophers, moralists, and artists of our time are animated? To take a rifle or stand next to a cannon to fire on the crowd of his fellow men with the desire to kill them as soon as possible?

The Assyrians, the Romans, and the Greeks asked to believe that, by war, they acted not only according to their conscience, but even carried out a pious work. But, whether we like it or not, we Christians, however distorted the general spirit of Christianity may be, cannot help but rise to the highest degree of reason in that it is impossible for us not to feel

with all our being the insanity, the cruelty of war, which is contradictory to what we believe to be good and just.

That is why we cannot wage war with security, firmness, and calmness, we have the consciousness of our criminality, the anguished feeling of the murderer who, after killing his victim, recognizing, in the depths of his soul, the atrocity of the work he has begun, tries to stun himself, to excite himself in order to put himself in a position to finish his horrible work. This unnatural, feverish, mad excitement, which preys on the upper leisure classes of Russian society, is only the indication of the consciousness of the criminality of the work accomplished. All the shameless and false statements about fidelity to the sovereign, adoration for him, and desire to sacrifice one's own life to him (one must say that of others and not one's own), all the promises of breasts that are offered to the defense of the country, all the thanksgivings, all the preparations of cloth and bandages, all the groups of Sisters of Charity, all the donations for the fleet and the Red Cross, given to that government whose immediate power consists, according to him, in possibility to extract from the people as much money as they need, to have the fleet and the necessary means to help the wounded once war has been declared; all the Slavonic prayers, as senseless and sacrilegious as they are pompous, which the newspapers of each city communicate as something important, all the demonstrations, those thousands of voices calling for the national anthem, all the lies of bad and shameless newspapers, which are not afraid of being unmasked because they are all one, all the bewilderment, the brutality in which Russian society finds itself today, and which is gradually transmitted to the masses, all this is but the indication of the consciousness that one has of the criminality of the horrible work that is being carried out.

Natural sense tells men that what they do must not be done. But equal to the murderer who has begun by killing his victim and can no longer stop, for the Russians, the fact that the work has begun seems to them the obvious proof of the law of war. The war has begun; that is why it is necessary to continue it. In this way the fact is presented to the

simplest and most ignorant men, who act under the influence of small passions. Educated people reason in the same way, trying to prove that man does not have his free will and that, even when he understands that the task begun is not good, he cannot stop, and men, bewildered, brutalized, continue the terrible work!

## IV

It is wonderful to see how far an insignificant dispute can, thanks to diplomacy and the newspapers, be transformed into a holy war. When, in 1856, England and France declared war on Russia, it was for such an intimate reason, that even if one searches for it carefully in the archives, it is difficult to discover it... The death of five hundred thousand people, the expenditure of five or six billions, these are the consequences of such a dark conflict. Deep down, however, there was a reason for that. But how unconfessable! Napoleon III wanted, by the English alliance and by a successful war, to consolidate his dynasty and his power of criminal origin. The Russians intended to invade Constantinople. The English wanted to ensure the triumph of their trade and prevent the supremacy of Russia in the East. In one form or another, always the same spirit of conquest, of violence (Carlos Richet).

Can anything be more amusing than that a man has the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of the ocean, and his prince has had a quarrel with mine, and nothing has ever happened between him and me? (Pascal).

The inhabitants of the terrestrial planet are still in such a state of intelligence, of stupidity, that in the newspapers of the most civilized countries they are simply and indisputably referred to, as a matter of course, the diplomatic agreements that the heads of state make with each other, the alliances against a supposed enemy, the preparations for war. Peoples allow their leaders to dispose of them as a herd, and to lead them to the slaughterhouse, without even suspecting that the life of each individual is personal property... The inhabitants of this unique planet have been educated in the idea that there are nations, borders, flags. He has such a weak feeling of humanity that this feeling disappears entirely in every people before that of the fatherland. It is very true that, if the spirits who think that they wanted to understand each other, this

situation would change; because, individually, no one wants war... And there are, in addition, political gears that make a whole legion of parasites live (Camilo Flammarión).

Ask a soldier, a corporal, a sergeant, a second lieutenant who has abandoned his parents, his wife and his children, why he is about to kill men he does not know.

First of all, the question will amaze you.

He is a soldier, he has taken an oath and obeys his superiors.

And if he is told that war, that is, the murder of men, does not agree with the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," he will reply:

"But what to do if our people are attacked?" It's because of the tsar, it's because of the Orthodox religion that I fight.

One answered my question:

"But what if sacred things are attacked?"

- What are those?

"The flag".

And if it is a question of explaining to such a soldier that God's commandment is more important than the flag and even than the whole world, he will be silent, or angry and denounce the one who speaks like this to his bosses.

Ask an officer, a general, why he is going to war. He will answer that he is a military man and the military are necessary for the defense of the homeland. And the fact that murder does not accord with the spirit of the Christian law will not trouble him in the least, because either he does not believe in this law, or if he believes it, it is not the law itself, but the explanations that we have of this law. The main thing is that he, as a soldier, instead of the precise question, "What shall I do?" should always put the general question of government and country, saying, "Now that the country is in danger, it is necessary to act and not to reason".



Ask the diplomat, who with his lies prepares wars, why he does this.

He will answer that the object of his activity is to establish peace among peoples, and that this fact can be achieved, not by means of ideal, unrealizable theories, but by diplomatic activity and preparation for war. And just as the soldier, instead of sticking to the question of his own life, will plead the general question, he will talk about the interests of Russia, about the bad faith of other countries, about the European balance, and not about his life and his activity.

Ask the journalist why he stirs men up to war by his writings. And he will answer that wars, in general, are necessary, and especially the current war. And they will support their opinions in vague and patriotic phrases; and in the same way as the military and the diplomat, when you ask them why they, journalists, living men, act in such a way, they will tell you about the interests of the peoples, of the State, of civilization and of the white race.

In the same way, those who prepare it explain their participation in the war. Perhaps they will agree that war would be desirable to be abolished; but also that this is now impossible, and that for the moment they, Russians, who occupy a certain position (marshal of the nobility, member of such a corporation, doctor, individual of the Red Cross) are called upon to act and not to reason.

"It is not the time to reason and think about oneself when there is a great work to be done", they will say so satisfied.

And this is what the apparent instigator of the whole work, the Tsar, will say in turn. He too, like the soldier, will be amazed at the verse questioned about the present necessity of war. He will not even admit the idea that it can be interrupted. He will say that he cannot fail to carry out what all the people demand of him; that recognizes that war is a great calamity, that is ready to use all means to make it disappear, but that, in the present case, it could not fail to declare it, nor can it stop it. "It is necessary for the good and greatness of Russia!"

All these people, to the question: "Why is it that so-and-so, John, Peter, Nicholas, who recognizes the obligation of the Christian law, which forbids the murder of one's neighbor and even demands that he be loved, that he be served, allow himself to take part in war, that is, in violence, pillage and murder?" they will answer that they act in such a way or in the name of the homeland and religion or in the name of the future good of humanity; in general, in the name of something abstract or undefined.

Moreover, all these men are always so occupied with the preparations for war, or with the arrangements to be made and the discussions on the subject, that, apart from this, they think only of resting from their labors, and have no time to occupy themselves with reasoning about their own lives, finding their reasonings sterile.

## V

Thought recedes in the face of a catastrophe that appears high in the sky, as the end of the progress of our age. And yet, it is necessary to get used to it. For twenty years, all the forces of the sabre have been exhausted in the invention of mechanisms of destruction, and soon a few cannon shots will be enough to wipe out an entire army. Not a few miles of poor devils whose blood was bought has been put under arms, as in former times, but whole peoples, who go to slaughter one another. To dispose them to murder, their hatred is stirred up, persuading them that they are hated. And men of gentle character allow themselves to be caught and are about to hurl themselves upon each other, with ferocity of wild animals, furious armies of peaceful citizens, to whom an inept order puts the rifle in their hands, God knows by what ridiculous incident of frontiers or by what mercantile colonial interests! They will march like lambs to the slaughter, knowing that they are going to it, knowing that they are abandoning their wives, knowing that their children will be hungry, anxious and intoxicated by the sonorous and deceptive words sung in their ears. They will march without rebelling, passive and resigned, even though they are mass and strength, although they could, if they knew how to understand each other, establish good sense and fraternity, instead of the savage practices of diplomacy. They will march trampling the fields they sowed, burning the cities they built, with songs of enthusiasm, shouts of joy, festive music (Eduardo Rod).

But before that, the eyewitness had climbed the bridge of the Variag. The spectacle was frightful. None of those present had ever seen carnage like it. Everywhere there was blood, pieces of flesh, trunks without heads, hands, a smell of blood that made the most hardened nauseous. The battle sentry box on the bridge had suffered greatly. A howitzer had exploded at its summit, killing an officer who, rangefinder in hand, was giving instructions to aim the pieces. There was nothing

left of the unfortunate man but a crunchy hand on the instrument. Of the four men who were with the commander, two were torn to pieces, the other two seriously wounded. As for the commander, he had died of a shell blast, which hit him next to the temple (A witness to the last naval combat).

I have read in the *Roeskia Viedosti* that Russia's advantage consists in the fact that it possesses inexhaustible human material. For the children whose father has died, for the woman whose husband is killed, and for the mother whose child is taken away forever, this material is soon exhausted (*Letter from a Russian mother*).

War has always distorted the historical development of humanity, violating the law and maintaining progress. It is true that certain wars have been followed by advantageous results for the general civilization; But the harmful consequences of these same wars have always outweighed their good results. What makes it possible for some to be deceived in this regard is that only a part of these harmful consequences are apparent; the others, whose gravity is usually greater, are indirect, and have therefore long escaped human intelligence. If we grant the advocates of war the simple word "yet", we authorize them to say that the discussion between them and us is a matter of mere opportunity, of personal appreciation; because this discussion is then reduced to believing that "war has become useless" since they believe it to be "still useful". Under such conditions, they will willingly grant us that it may become useless, and even harmful... tomorrow, when some formidable bloodshed has been done to the people to satisfy their personal ambitions. For such was at all times, and such still is, the only function of war: to procure for a small number of men power, honors, riches, at the expense of the masses, whose natural credulity and prejudices, maintained and created by themselves, are exploited by those (Captain Gastón Moch).

The men of our Christian world and of our time are like those who have lost their right path. The further he advances, the more he becomes convinced that he is not going where he wants to go; and the more he

doubts the safety of the road, the more quickly and locally he runs along it, comforting himself at the thought that it must lead him somewhere. But after a certain time, he sees that the path he is following will lead him nowhere, except to an abyss that is already opening before him.

The Christian humanity of our time finds itself in a similar situation.

It is quite evident that, if we continue to live as we do now, individuals and states, guided by the good of themselves and of the fatherland, if, as now, we try to secure these goods by violence, the means of violence of one individual against another, of one state against another, will increase. 1° We will be ruined more and more by employing the greater part of our production in armaments. 2° By putting to death in wars the best men; from the physical point of view, we will degenerate more and more, and we will lower ourselves morally.

If we don't change our lives, this will happen; it is a sure thing, as certain as that lines that are not parallel will eventually meet.

But it is not that this is theoretically certain. In our time this is done securely, practically, not only by reason, but also by feeling.

The abyss on which we walk already swallows us up, and the simplest and most ignorant men, who do not philosophize, cannot fail to see that, by arming ourselves more and more against each other, destroying one another by wars, like spiders in a glass, we can only arrive at mutual destruction.

A frank, serious, reasonable man cannot help but feel some consolation in thinking that things can be repaired, as was once thought, by the universal monarchy of Rome, of Charlemagne, of Napoleon, by the spiritual power of the popes of the Middle Ages, by the Holy Alliance, by the political balance of the European concert, by the tribunals of international arbitration, or, as some think, by the increase in military forces and the recently invented destructive mechanisms.

But it is impossible to establish a universal monarchy or a republic with the European states, because the various peoples will never want to unite in a single state.

Establish an international tribunal to settle international disputes! And who will enforce the decisions of that court against a plaintiff who has millions of soldiers under arms?

Disarmament? No one wants to or can start it.

Invent even more terrible means of destruction: balloons with bombs, asphyxiating gases, shells that men throw at each other? Whatever is invented, all states will provide themselves with the same destructive weapons, and just as cannon fodder after the period of bladed weapons, it was under bullets, grenades, bombs, rapid-fire cannons, shrapnel, mines, so it will go under bombs dropped from balloons and filled with asphyxiating gases.

Nothing proves better than the speeches of Muravief and Professor Martens that the Japanese war is not contrary to The Hague Conference; Nothing proves better than such discourses, to what extent, in our world, the work of the transmission of thought, the word, has been deformed, and to what extent we have lost the capacity for clear, intelligent reasoning. Thought and words are used, not to serve as a guide to human activity, but to justify all criminal activity. The last war of the Boers and the present war with the Japanese, which can be transformed into general carnage at any moment, have proved this indisputably.

All antimilitarist reasoning will not contribute to the disappearance of war. They are like an eloquent, expressive reasoning, addressed to the dogs that are fighting, to convince them that it is more advantageous for them to divide the piece of meat which is the object of the battle, than to lose this meat, which he will seize from any other dog, without taking part in the fight.

We run into the abyss, we can't stop and we fall into it. Every reasonable man who reflects on the situation in which mankind finds

itself today, and on the one towards which it is inevitably going, must see that there is no way out of this situation, that no institution can be invented, no establishment can be invented to save us from the loss towards which we are inevitably running.

Not to speak of the insoluble and increasingly complicated economic danger, the mutual relations of states that arm themselves against each other and are ready to declare war on each other, show quite clearly the inevitable loss to which the whole of so-called civilized humanity is led.

What to do, then? ...





## VI

It must be said for the glory of humanity. The XIX century is tending to enter a new path: it has understood that there must also be laws and tribunals for peoples, and that crimes from nation to nation, even if on a larger scale, are no less odious than those committed from individual to individual (Quételet).

All men have the same origin, all must be subject to the same law, and all are destined for the same end. That is why you must have one religion, one object in your acts, why you must fight under one banner. Acts, tears and martyrdom are the common language of all humanity and that everyone understands (Mazzini).

No; and I invoke to this end the testimony of the protests of conscience of every man who has seen the blood of his fellow citizen's flow, or caused to flow; there is not a single head capable of carrying such a heavy burden of so many crimes. Not even as many heads as combatants took part in the battle would be enough. To be responsible for the law of blood that they execute, it would be fair if, at least, they had understood it well. But the best institutions will not be themselves but very temporary; for, I say again, armies and war will have only a time; for in spite of the words of a sophist, whom I have already fought on another occasion, it is not true that, even against the foreigner, war is divine; It is not true that the earth is greedy for blood. War is cursed by God and by the very men who make it, who feel a secret horror of it, and the earth cries out to heaven only to ask for the fresh water of its flowers and the pure dew of its clouds (Alfredo de Vigny).

Man is not made to command, just as he is not made to obey. With these two inverse customs, the races are inversely spoiled. Here stupidity, there, insolence; nowhere true human dignity (Considerant).

If my soldiers were to begin to think, none of them would remain in the army (Frederick II).

Two thousand years ago John the Baptist said it, and after him Jesus Christ said to men:

"The time has come, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Amend yourselves and believe in the Gospel. But if you do not make amends, you will all perish like them".

But men did not obey him, and the loss he foretold is near; and we, the men of today, cannot ignore it. We are already perishing, and therefore it is impossible for us to desire that means of salvation, old for the time, but new for us. We cannot fail to see that besides all the misfortunes that flow from our evil and irrational life, nothing but the preparations for war and the inevitable wars that follow them must fatally destroy us.

We cannot fail to see that all the means proposed to get rid of these evils, invented by men, are and must be ineffective, and that the misery of peoples who arm themselves against one another cannot fail to grow.

That is why Christ's words refer more than ever to us and to our time.

Christ has said, "Amend yourselves!"

That is, each one stops at his or her begun activity and asks: "What am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going?" And, after having answered this, each one decides whether his actions are in accordance with his destiny.

Only it is necessary that every man in our world and in our time (that is, the man who knows the essence of the Christian life) should pause for a moment in his activity and forget what others believe him to be. And even if he is emperor, soldier, minister, journalist, he seriously asks himself what he is, what his destiny lies in, and then he will question the usefulness, the legality and the reason for his activity.

Every man of our time and of the Christian world must say to himself: "Before I am emperor, soldier, minister, journalist, I am a man, that is, a limited being, sent by a superior Will to an infinite world, in time and space, to remain there for a moment, and then die, that is, disappear. That is why the personal, social, and even human object which I can procure for myself, or those which men may propose to me, given the brevity of my life and the eternity of the Life of the universe, are minimal and must be subordinated to that higher end, for the attainment of which I was sent into this world. This final object, because I am limited, is inaccessible to me; but it exists (as the object of all that exists must exist), and my role is to be God's worker in the accomplishment of his work".

And after having thus understood his destiny, every man in our world and in our time, from the emperor to the soldier, cannot look otherwise at the duties that he himself or other men imposed on him.

The emperor must say to himself: "Before I saw myself crowned, before I was recognized as emperor, before I undertook to fulfill my duties as head of state, in the mere fact that I live, I had to fulfill what that superior Will that sent me into the world wanted of me. Such demands I not only recognize, but I even feel them in my heart. This consists, as expressed in the Christian law which I profess, in submitting to the Will of God and in fulfilling what He wants of me: that I love my neighbor, that I serve him, that I act towards him as I would like to be done to me. Directing men, ordering violence, tortures, and, most terrible, wars, do I do what is to be done? Men tell me that I must act in this way; and God says that I must proceed otherwise. That is why it is in vain that I am told that I, the head of state, must demand violence, the collection of taxes, tortures, and above all wars, that is to say, the murder of my neighbor; I don't want to, nor can I do it".

And that is what the soldier must also say, who is inculcated that he must kill men; and the minister, who believes it is his duty to prepare the war, and the journalist, who is responsible for stirring it up, and every man who asks himself what it is and what its destiny is.

And just as the head of state ceases to direct the war, the soldier will cease to war, the minister to prepare the means of fighting, the journalists to provoke combat; and then, without any new institution, adaptation, equilibrium, or tribunals, that dead-end situation, in which men are placed, not only with respect to war, but with all the calamities that they impose on themselves, will destroy itself.

Strange as this may seem, the surest deliverance, the most obvious of all calamities, and at the same time the most horrible, namely, war, would be measures extinguished, not by external generals, but by this simple appeal to the conscience of each individual, which Christ proposed nineteen hundred years ago. That every man asks himself who he is, why he lives, what he should do and what he should not do.

## VII

Man can be considered as an animal among the animals that live on earth; he can consider himself as a member of the family, of society, of the town in which he lives; it can, and even must at all (because reason inevitably drags it into it) considering it as part of the infinite world that lives in infinite time. That is why the reasonable man always establishes, in addition to his relation to the nearest phenomena of life, his relation to the whole infinite world in "time and space, and therefore incomprehensible to him, by looking at it as a single unit. And this establishment of man's relation to that incomprehensible of which he feels himself a part, and which serves as his guide in his actions, is what is called Religion. This is why religion has always been, and cannot cease to be, one necessity, the absolute condition of the life of the reasonable man and of thinking humanity. True religion is the relationship established by man between the life of the reasonable man and that of thinking humanity (León Tolstói).

Religion (objectively) is the recognition of all our duties by commandments from God. There is only one true religion, even though there are many different beliefs (Kant).

The evil that afflicts the men of our time comes from the fact that most of them are devoid of the only thing that serves as a reasonable guide to human activity: religion. But it is not this religion which consists in faith, in dogmas, in the feeling of which procures a pleasant, consoling, exciting distraction, but the religion which establishes man's relations with everything, with God, and which, therefore, gives the superior, general direction of all human activity, without which men place themselves on a level with animals and even lower than them.

This evil, which leads men to their inevitable loss, manifests itself in our time with a particular force, because the men of our age, after having

lost the reasonable guidance of life and having spent all their efforts in the discoveries and improvement of the applied sciences, have created for themselves an enormous power over the forces of nature, and having no guide to apply this power in a reasonable manner, they have employed it in the satisfaction of their baunder, grosser wants.

And men deprived of religion, who possess enormous power over the forces of nature, are like children to whom nitroglycerin is given as a plaything.

If we look at the power enjoyed by the men of our time and their manner of employing it, we feel that, because of the degree of moral development, men have no right either to enjoy the iron roads, steam, electricity, the telephone, photography, the wireless telegraph, or even to profit by the simple work of iron and steel. for not to employ these advantages except in the satisfaction of their desires for distraction, in disorder, in mutual destruction.

What to do, then? Reject all the progress of science, all the power acquired by humanity? Forget how much you learned? This is impossible.

However, bad the use made of such acquisitions of intelligence, they are nevertheless acquisitions of which man cannot forget.

To change the unions of peoples, which were formed over the centuries, and to establish new ones? Disseminate science? All this has been rehearsed and carried out with great zeal. All these so-called means of improvement are the main cause of self-forgetfulness, of consciousness, and therefore of inevitable loss.

The borders of States change, institutions change, the sciences spread; but men, with other frontiers, with other constitutions, with a prosperous science, remain the same brutes, always ready to tear themselves to pieces, or the same slaves while they are guided, not by religious conscience and reason, but by passions and foreign influences.

Man cannot choose. He must be the slave of another more shameless and more evil slave, or the slave of God, because man has only one means of being free: to unite his will to that of God.

Men deprived of religion, those who deny it, those who recognize by religion those grotesque external forms of dogma, and who are guided only by their passions, by fear, by human laws, and especially by mutual hypnotism, cannot cease to be brutes or slaves, and no external effort can be extracted from this state. for religion alone makes man free.

And most of the men of our time are exempt from religion.





## VIII

... The branch cut by its knot is completely separated from the tree; the man who quarrels with a man tears himself away from all humanity. But the branch is cut off by a strange hand, while man turns away from his neighbor because of his own hatred and anger, ignoring that in this way he distances himself from all humanity. But the divinity who called men as brothers to the common life, gave them the faculty of reconciliation after the dispute (Marcus Aurelius).

It is necessary to put aside the religion that took Jesus as its objective. And when you have put your finger on the state of consciousness, which is the primitive cell, on the beginning of the everlasting gospel, you will have to stick to it. Just as the poor bells of a village festival, or the miserable candles of a procession extinguishing before the great wonder of the sun, the small local miracles, weak and doubtful, will be extinguished before the law of the world of spirits, before the incomprehensible spectacle of human history shaped by the omnipotent playwright called God (Amiel).

I affirm that the following proposition does not need any proof. Everything that man thinks he is doing to please God (except the good life), is nothing but religious error and superstition (Kant).

In reality, there is only one way to worship God, which is to fulfill one's duties and conduct oneself according to the laws of reason (Lichtemberger).

"In order that the evil that afflicts us may disappear", say those impelled by various human activities, "it would be necessary, not for some men, but for all men to come to an agreement, and when this is done, all should equally understand that the destiny of their lives is in the fulfillment of the will of God and the love of neighbor".

Is this possible? Not only is it possible, but it is impossible for it not to be so. It is impossible for men not to come to themselves, that is, for every man not to ask himself what he is, why he lives, why man, as long as he is reasonable, cannot live without knowing why he lives. And this question has always been addressed, and always, according to the development of his intelligence, he has answered with his religious doctrine.

Well, in our time, the inner contradiction in which men find themselves provokes this question with special persistence and demands the answer. And the men of our time cannot answer, except by recognizing the law of life in love for men and their service. This answer was expressed nineteen hundred years ago in the religion of Christ, and most of mankind recognize it.

Such an answer lives hidden in the conscience of all Christians of our time. But it is not openly expressed and does not guide our life, because, on the one hand, men who enjoy the greatest authority, those whom they call wise, having the erroneous belief that religion is a provisional stage of the development of humanity that has already passed, and that men can live without religion, they inspire this error in the men of the people who are beginning to be educated. And, on the other hand, because men who have power consciously, and sometimes unconsciously (being themselves in the error that the religion of the Church is the Christian religion), try to sustain and provoke in the people the grossest superstitions, giving them as the Christian religion.

That these two lies are destroyed, and that the true religion, which lives hidden in each of the men of our time, will be shown and made obligatory.

In order for this to be accomplished, it is necessary that, on the one hand, the wise understand that universal brotherhood and the precept of doing to others what we would not have done to us, are not of those fortuitous reasons of man that can be some to other considerations of any kind, but that it is an indisputable proposition. superior to all other considerations, which follows from the immutable relationship between

man and the infinite (God), and which is religion, all religion, always obligatory, therefore.

On the other hand, that men who, consciously or unconsciously, under the cloak of Christianity, propose gross superstitions, understand that all the dogmas, mysteries, and rites which they uphold and propagate, are not only indifferent, as they think, but are harmful in the highest degree, because they conceal from men the only religious truth, which is expressed in the fulfillment of the will of God. in the brotherhood of men, in love of neighbor, and who do not fail to see that the precept, "Do unto others as thou wouldst have done unto thee", is not one of the prescriptions of the Christian religion, but the whole religion practiced, as it is said in the Gospel.

Let those who bewilder the people with ecclesiastical superstitions cease to do so, and understand that, in Christianity, what is important and obligatory is not baptism, communion, dogmas, etc., but the love of God and neighbor, the fulfillment of the precept: "Do unto others as you would have done unto yourself", and that in this is the whole law of the prophets.

Let false Christians understand this, let children and the ignorant be taught these simple, clear, and necessary truths, as they are now taught complicated, confused, and useless propositions, and all men will understand in the same way the meaning of life and recognize the same duties that flow from it.



## IX

I was called into service on October 15, 1895. When I was ordered to take out a number, I refused to do so. The officials looked at me; Then they talked to each other, and finally asked me why I didn't want to get the ball out.

"Because I wil no take an oath", I replied

"nor I won't even pick up a rifle in my hands".

They told me that we would see that, that, for now, what I should do was to take ball, and I refused to do it again.

Then, the order was given to the *estaroſta* of our district to draw the ball for me.

The *estaroſta* draws the number 674. I was registered. The head of the recruitment brought me before him, asking me:

"Who taught you all that, and why don't you want to swear?"

I answer that I have learned it for myself by reading the Gospel.

"I do not think", he says, "that you have been able to understand the Gospel, because everything in it is incomprehensible; to understand this, it is necessary to have studied a lot.

To this, I replied that Christ did not teach things only to the wise, since the simplest men understood his doctrine well.

He then gives orders for a soldier to lead me to a detachment. With the soldier I went to the kitchen, where we were fed. Then I was asked again why I should not take the oath.

"Because it reads," I said, in the Gospel:

"Thou shalt not swear".

He admires himself; then they ask me:

"Does it say that, in fact, in the Gospel?"

Here, look for it.

I have found it, and I have begun to read it; everyone listened to me.

"Even if that be true", they told me, "it is not possible, however, to refuse to take an oath, for one might be tormented".

"He who loses his earthly life", I have said, "will inherit eternal life..."

The 20th I have been placed in the ranks with the other fifths, and the rule of service has been explained to us.

I have told them that I will not do anything they ask me. I have been asked why and I have answered:

"For I am a Christian, and my hands shall bear no arms, neither shall I defend myself against the enemy, for Christ commandeth that enemies should be loved."

"Are you", I have been told, "the only Christian?" We all are here.

"I know nothing about the others; but I know for myself that Christ has said to do what I do.

The boss has said:

"If you don't work, I'll make you rot in a dungeon".

To which I have replied:

"Do with me what you will, I will not serve..."

I was examined by a commission to-day, and a general said to the officers:

"What conviction does that young man invoke to refuse to serve? Millions of men serve, and he refuses to do so!" Whip him well, and you will see how he changes his mind (*Letter from a refractory villager*).

\* \* \*

Olkhorik was embarked. On the ship everyone made their devotions; only he refused to pray. The soldiers asked him why, and he explained. A soldier, Cirilo Sereda, took part in the conversation. He opened the Gospel and began to read the second chapter of Matthew. After reading he said:

"There you have it. Christ forbids oaths, tribunals, war, and among us there is all that, which is well regarded by us".

- The soldiers who surrounded him noticed that Sereda was not wearing the cross around his neck, and asked him:

"Where is your cross?"

"In my chest", he said.

"Why don't you wear it?"

"Because I love Christ, which prevents me from wearing the instrument of his torture around my neck".

Two corporals came in at that moment and began to talk to Sereda.

"Why have you recently done your devotions and now you don't carry your cross?" They asked him.

"Because then he was ignorant, he did not see the light, and now he began to read the Gospel, and he saw that a Christian should not do all that".

"Then you'll do what Olkhorik did?" Won't you do?

"No", Sereda replied.

I asked him why, and he said:

"Because I am a Christian, and Christians must not arm themselves against men".

Sereda was arrested and, with Olkhorik, deported to Jakutsk province, where the two are currently held.

\* \* \*

On January 27, 1894, a certain Drojgin, a former teacher of a village in the province of Kursk, died of pneumonia in the infirmary of the Voronega prison. His body was thrown into the common grave of the prison, as were those of the criminals. And yet he was one of the holiest, purest, most righteous men who could ever live.

In August 1891 he was called up for military service. But, considering that all men are brothers, and that violence and murder are the greatest sin, contrary to his conscience and to the will of God, he refused to serve and to take up arms. Recognizing also that it was a sin to abdicate his will for the benefit of men who could demand evil acts from him, he agreed to take an oath. The men, whose life is based on violence and murder, began by locking him up in a cell in Kharkof, and then sending him to the disciplinary battalion of Voronega, where for fifteen months he suffered hunger, cold and imprisonment. Finally, when, as a result of suffering and privation, he became consumptive, he was declared unfit for service, and it was decided to send him to civil prison, where he was to suffer nine months of confinement. But during his journey from the battalion to the prison he froze heavily, and the guards, out of the open, did not give him warm clothes. In addition, they waited a long time in the street, at the door, and Drojgin contracted pneumonia that killed him twenty-two days later.

On the eve of his death, Drojgin told the doctor:

"Even if I have not lived long, I die with the consciousness of having acted according to my convictions. The others can doubtless judge of this better than I can... But I think the reason assists me," he concluded affirmatively (Excerpt from the book *Life and Death of Drojgin*).

Put on all the weapons of God, so that you may be able to resist the attacks of the devil. It is not against flesh and blood that we are to fight, but against principles, against powers, against the rulers of darkness in this world, against evil spirits, powerful in the heavenly places. That is



why I say to you to take up the weapons of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and that you may have mastered all things, and that you may stand firm. Be steadfast, therefore, having the truth for your belt, and putting on the heart of righteousness. "St. Paul" (Epistle to the Ephesians).

"But how can I act immediately?" - I will be told. In our country, in Russia, now that the enemies are upon us, killing our own, threatening us, how should the soldier, the officer, the general, the emperor, or the simple individual act? Can the enemies be allowed to raze our crops, seize the product of our labors, take prisoner and kill the children of our country? What to do now that things have begun?

But before the war begins, whoever it may be, what has begun first of all is a life, and my life's work has nothing in common with the recognition of the rights of the Chinese, the Japanese, or the Russians over Port-Arthur. My life's work is to fulfill the will of the one who sent me into this world. And I know this will. It consists of the following: I must love my neighbor and serve him. Why, then, according to temporary, accidental, senseless, and cruel exigencies, should I betray the eternal and immutable law of my whole life? If God exists, when I die (which can happen at any moment) he will not ask me if he will defend Yunan-Po, its timber yards, or Port-Arthur, or the organization called the Russian state that he did not entrust to me. But you will ask me what I made of the life she gave me, if I used it in what it was destined for, and for which I was entrusted. You will ask me if I fulfilled your law.

So to the question, "What is to be done now that the war has begun?" I, a man who understands his fate, can give no answer other than this:

Under any circumstances, whether or not the war has begun, whether thousands of Japanese and Russians have died or not, and not only Port-Arthur, but St. Petersburg and Moscow have been taken, I can do no other way than as God requires of me. And this is why I cannot directly or indirectly, neither with my help, nor with my approval, nor with excitement, take part in the war; *I can't, I don't want to, I won't*

*take part in it.* Whether it will be immediately or in a short time that I will cease to do what is contrary to the will of God, I do not know nor do I want to know. But I believe that, in compliance with God's will, nothing but good things can come about for me and for others.

You say in horror: What would become of us Russians if we stopped fighting and gave the Japanese what they want from us? But if it is right that, in order to save mankind from brutalization, from mutual destruction, there is nothing but the re-establishment among men of the true religion, which demands that one love and serve one's neighbor (there can be no disagreement in this), then every war, every hour of this war and my participation in this war, what it achieves is to make the realization of the only possible salvation more difficult and more distant. So, even if he were to place himself in his very doubtful point of view, even then, he would cede to the Japanese all that they wanted from the Russians, regardless of the indisputable good of the cessation of pillage and murder, would be to approach the only means of salvation of mankind, while, with the continuation of the war, whatever its outcome, we will move further and further away from that one saving medium.

But if so -it will be objected to this- wars cannot cease until all men, or most men, have refused to take part in them?... The refusal of a single man, soldier or king, will cause him to lose his life in vain, useless no matter whom. If the Russian emperor were now to refuse to continue the war, he would be dethroned, perhaps killed for getting rid of him. If an ordinary man refused to serve, he would be sent to a disciplinary battalion, perhaps he would be shot.

"Why, then, without any use lose his life, which can be useful to society?" This is what people often say who do not think about the destiny of their lives, and for this reason do not understand it. But in another way the man who understands his destiny, that is, the religious man, thinks and reasons. This man guides his activity not according to the imaginary consequences of his actions, but by consideration of the destiny of his life.

The factory worker goes to such a factory and does the work that is indicated to him, without considering what the results of his work will be. In the same way does the soldier who obeys the will of his commanders. And so does the religious man who fulfills what God has prescribed for him, without discussing what will come out of his work. This is why the religious man does not ask himself whether few or many people act like him and what can happen to him if he does what he should do. Let him whistle that, save life or death, nothing will stand, and that both are in the hands of God, whom he obeys.

The religious man acts in this way and not in any other way, not because he wants to act in this way or because it is advantageous for him or for others, but because, believing that his life depends on the will of God, he cannot act differently.

This is the particular character of the activity of the religious man. And this is why men cannot escape the calamities they create for themselves only to the extent that they are guided in this life, not by advantages, not by reasoning, but by religious conscience.



## X

It can be rightly said that the kingdom of God appears when the beginning of the transformation of the religion of the Church into a universal religion takes root everywhere, even if the complete realization of this kingdom is infinitely far from us, because in that principle, as in the embryo that develops and multiplies at once, everything that should illuminate the world and possess it is already contained. In the life of the universe, thousands of years are like a day. We must work patiently at that realization, and wait for it (Kant).

When I speak to you of God, do not think that I am speaking to you of any object of gold or silver. You feel the God of whom I speak in your soul, you bear him in yourself, and with your impure thoughts and your ugly acts stain his image in your soul. Before the idol of that which you respect as God, free yourself from carrying out an inconvenient act, and before the image of that God who is in you, who sees and hears everything, you do not blush even when he abandons you to your impure ideas and actions. If we only remembered that God is in us and watches over our actions and thoughts, we would cease to sin, and God would never come out of us. Let us therefore remember God, think of him and speak of him as often as possible (Epithet).

But what are we to do with the enemies that attack us?

"Love your enemies, and you shall not have them", it is said in the doctrine of the twelve apostles.

And these are not empty words, although the prescription to love one's enemies is nothing but an allegory that should not be taken literally.

This answer is the indication of a very clear and well-defined activity and its consequences. To love their enemies, the Japanese, the Chinese, those yellow men, against whom some drunken people try to excite our

anger, means not to stop killing them in order to have the right to poison them with opium, as the English have done; not to stop killing them in order to take away their lands, as the French, the Russians and the Germans have done; not burying them alive to punish them for having damaged a road; not to bind them by their braids, and to drown them in the river *Amor*, as the Russians have done.

"The disciple is not superior to the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher". To love yellow men, whom we call enemies, means not to teach them under the name of Christianity the inept superstitions of original sin, redemption, resurrection, etc., not to teach them the art of deceiving and killing men, but justice, disinterestedness, mercy, love, and this not in words, but by the example of our good life.

And what have we done and what do we do to them? If, indeed, we loved our enemies, if we at least began now to love our enemies the Japanese, we would have no enemies.

That is why, strange as this may seem to men engaged in military plans and preparations, with diplomatic considerations, with administrative, financial, economic measures, with revolutionary projects, and with various useless knowledge, with which they have thought to free mankind from its calamities, the liberation of men not only from these calamities, of wars, but of all the misfortunes that men inflict on themselves, will be due, not to emperors or kings by the formation of alliances of peace, not to the realization of socialist projects, not to victories and defeats of sea and land, not to libraries, not to the universities, not to those idle intellectual exercises, which are now called sciences, but to the fact that there will be more and more simple men like the Dukhobors, the Drojgin, and the Olkhoviks, of Russia; the Nazarenes, from Austria; the Goutadiér, from France; the Terreys, of Holland, and the others who have proposed as their object, not the external change of life, but the most exact fulfillment of the will of those sent to this world, putting all their strength into the realization of this fulfillment.

These men alone, fulfilling in their souls the kingdom of God, will establish, without directly aspiring to this end, the external kingdom of God that every human soul desires. Salvation will come in this way and not in any other. That is why those who lead men inspire them with religious and patriotic superstitions, excite them to hatred and murder of their fellow-men, and in order to free men from servility and oppression, they solicit them for violent external transformations, or they turn men away from what is necessary to them and remove them from the possibility of salvation.

The evil that afflicts the men of the Christian world arises from the fact that they are temporarily deprived of religion. Some, convinced of the incompatibility between existing religion and the degree of development of intellectual and scientific humanity in our time, have decided that no religion is necessary. They live without it and profess the uselessness of any religion.

Others, clinging to the depraved form of the Christian religion, under which it is now taught, likewise live without religion, and profess vain, outward forms, which cannot serve as a guide to men in their existence.

And yet, the religion that responds to the demands of our time exists; all men know it; It lives hidden in the hearts of the individuals of the Christian world.

That is why, in order for this religion to become visible, obligatory for all, it is necessary that educated men, the leaders of the masses, understand that religion is necessary to men, that without religion men cannot live the good life, and that what they call science cannot replace religion.

And the men who dispose of power and sustain the old forms of religion have understood that what they hold and propagate as religion is not only not religion, but is the obstacle that opposes men to adopt that true religion which they already know, and which alone can free them from their evils.

So that the only sure means of salvation of men is not to do that which prevents men from adopting the true religion which lives in their conscience.



## XI

A strange thing has happened in the country that is horrifying. The prophets prophesy falsehoods, and the sacrificers rule by means of them; and my people experience pleasure in it. What then will you do when the end comes? (Jeremiah).

He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they do not see with their eyes, they do not understand with their hearts, they do not convert, and they do not heal them (Juan).

The most beautiful weapon is always an unblessed weapon, and this is why man reasonably distrusts it. He wants, above all, tranquility. He wins, but he does not rejoice. To rejoice in victory is to rejoice in the murder of men. He who rejoices in the murder of men cannot achieve his object (Lao-Tzu).

If a traveller were to distinguish on a distant island man whose houses were surrounded by laden people, and around the weapons which the sentinels paraded day and night, he could not but believe that the island was inhabited by brigands. Is this not what is happening in European countries? How little influence religion has over men, or how far we are from true religion! (Lichtemberger).

I was finishing this article when news was received of the loss of six hundred innocent lives off Port-Arthur.

It would be natural that the useless sufferings and death of these unfortunates, who died in vain, should give pause to those who are the cause of everything. I do not speak of Makarof and other officers, all of whom know what they are doing, and do it willingly, for advantage, for ambition, disguised under the guise of patriotism. I speak of the unfortunates who have been taken from the various peoples of Russia.

Torn away, with the help of religious deception and by fear of punishment, from their honest and reasonable life; useful to their jobs and to their families, they are taken to the other end of the world and placed on a cruel and inept machine of murder. There they are torn to pieces or drowned by the inept machine, in a distant sea, without any necessity or utility compensating for the torments, the efforts, the sufferings and the death of which they have been victims.

In 1830, during the Polish war, Aide-de-Camp Vilekhinsky, Khlopitzki's envoy to St. Petersburg, in his conversation with Marshal Dibitch about the latter's condition of allowing Russian troops to enter Poland, replied:

"Mr. Marshal, I think it is quite impossible for the Polish nation to accept that".

"Well, you can believe me; The emperor will make no concessions".

"I foresee, then, that, unfortunately, there will be war, that much blood will be shed, and many will die".

"Don't believe it; at most ten thousand men on each side, and nothing more".

"Ten thousand men, and nothing more", said Dibitch in his German accent, absolutely convinced that he, with another man as cruel and as strange as he was to Russian and Polish life, the Emperor Nicholas, had the right to lead or not to the death of tens, hundreds of thousands of Russians and Poles.

When you read this, do not think that what I am telling could not have happened. It seems foolish and terrible. And yet, it happened; Sixty thousand lives, sixty thousand heads of families perished by the will of those men.

The same thing is happening today. In order not to let the Japanese into Manchuria and drive them out of Korea, they will be fewer, in all probability, not ten, but fifty thousand men or more.

I do not know whether Nicholas II and Kuropatkine have said, as Dibitch once did, that to achieve what is proposed, only fifty thousand Russian lives will be necessary; but they think it and cannot help thinking it, because the work they perform speaks for itself. This incessant wave of unfortunate Russian villagers, driven by thousands to the Far East, are those "no more than fifty thousand living Russians" whom Nicholas Romanov and Alexei Kuropatkine have decided to have killed, in order to sustain the bestialities, the plundering, the vileness of all kinds which have been carried out in China and Korea by immoral and ambitious men. who now, sitting quietly in their palace, expect new profits from the murder of fifty thousand innocent men, of those unfortunate Russian workers, deceived, who acquired nothing in exchange for their sufferings and their death.

For a foreign land, to which the Russians have no right, which was wrongly taken from its true owners, and which, in reality, is not necessary for the Russians, and, moreover, because of the dubious business of some living-men who want to make money by speculating on the forests of Korea, millions are now spent on transfers; that is to say, the greater part of the labor of the entire Russian people is filled with debts to future generations of this people, its best workers are torn from work and tens of thousands of its children are mercilessly led to death.

The loss of these unfortunates is already beginning. But all this is still little. The war is so badly conducted by those who have organized it, so ill-prepared for it, that, as one newspaper says, the main probability of Russia's salvation lies in the fact that it has "inexhaustible human material".

This is what those who send tens of thousands of Russians to their deaths count on. It is clearly said: "The failures of our navy will be compensated for on land".

In good Russian, this means that if the leaders have misconducted affairs by sea and have lost through negligence not only the thousands

of rubles of the people, but also thousands of lives, we will make up for it by leading to the death of a few thousand more men by land.

Grasshoppers cross rivers in the following way: the lower layers drown until they form a bridge, over which the others pass. This is what is being done today with the Russian people. The lower layer is already beginning to drown, showing the way to thousands of others, who will perish in the same way.

Now, are the initiators, the organizers, the provocateurs of this horrible work, beginning to understand their sin? No way. They are convinced that they have fulfilled and are fulfilling their duty, and they are proud of this activity.

There is talk of the loss of the valiant Makarof, who (all agree on this point) was a skilful slayer of men. Feel the loss of the ship, of the wonderful killing machine that cost so many millions of rubles.

Ask yourself where an assassin of such skill as Makarof can be found. New and more perfected deadly machines are invented, and all the culprits of this horrible work, from the Tsar to the last journalist, call in unison for new follies, new cruelties, the increase of brutality and hatred of humanity.

"Makarof was not the only one in Russia, and every admiral who takes his place will follow in his footsteps and continue the plan and ideas of Makarof, who has died fighting honorably". This is how Novoye Vrémiya writes.

"Let us pray to God for those who sacrificed their lives for the holy country, without doubting for a second that our country will give us new sons so glorious for the next struggle, and will find an inexhaustible reservoir of strength for the worthy completion of the work". Thus write the St. Petersburg Bulletins.

"The enlightened nation will draw no other conclusion from defeat, however extraordinary it may be for it: it is necessary to widen still

further and continue the struggle. Let us, then, find in ourselves new strength; new heroes will appear", Russ writes, etc.

And murder and crimes of all kinds are to be pursued with greater ferocity. Ecstasy inspires the martial spirit of the volunteers, who, suddenly surprising fifty men, slaughter them, occupy the village and kill the inhabitants, hanging or shooting the spies, that is, the men considered as such, who were doing nothing more than fulfilling a task that we ourselves judged necessary and carried out incessantly.

Solemn telegrams announce these crimes to the supreme leader, the emperor, who alienates his troops and sends them his blessing for similar acts. Of course, it is clear from this that there is such a way of getting out of this situation, a single way, which is the one I indicate, and the one indicated by Christ:

"Seek the kingdom of God and his Truth, for the rest, that is, all the material goods to which man can aspire, will be realized by itself".

The material good is not attained when man aspires to that good; on the contrary, such an aspiration distances man from what he seeks. Only when man, without thinking of the material good, aspires to the most complete fulfillment of what he believes to be obligatory before God, before the principle and law of life, does he incidentally attain the material good.

So the true salvation of men is in the fulfillment of God's will for each man individually.

In that is the main, unique destiny of each individual and, at the same time, that is the only means for each man; to act apart from other men.

That is why all our efforts must tend to that, nothing more than that, exclusively to that.

**April 1904.**



## XII

I had just sent the last page of my work on the war, when the terrible news arrived of the new crime committed against the Russian people by those light-hearted men, drunk with power, who have appropriated the right to dispose of their fate. Again, dressed in various costumes, covered with decorations, the rude servants of the serfs, the generals of different classes, out of desire to distinguish themselves, or to be able to add to their motley uniform one more star or a sash, by necessity or by negligence, these small, miserable men have again caused many of these honest workers to perish in atrocious sufferings, good, hardworking, who feed them. And again this crime not only does not make those who commit it reflect or repent, but only requests are heard or read for means to mutilate and kill as many men as possible, ruining more Russian and Japanese families.

And this is not all. In order to prepare men for another similar crime, the executors of such works not only fail to recognize what is evident to the eyes of all, namely, that for the Russians, even from their patriotic, military point of view, the defeat has been shameful, but they will even try to prove to credulous men that these unfortunate Russian workers, that those men who have had their throats cut and mutilated for many miles have been carried out simply because one general did not understand what another general said, that those men have performed a heroic act by the fact that those who could not flee were killed, and those who could escape were left alive.

And the fact that one of those horrible, immoral, cruel men, who call themselves generals and admirals, should have put to death many peaceful Japanese, is likewise described as a great heroic act which should rejoice the Russians. And in all the newspapers there is a terrible call for murder.

“Let the 2,000 Russian soldiers killed on the Yalou with the Revitzan and the other lost ships serve as a lesson to our navy so that they will know the energy with which they will push their cruises towards the coasts of Japan! Since he has sent his soldiers to shed Russian blood, let him expect no grace from us. We cannot be sentimental; that was a sin; it is necessary to strike terrible blows, the memory of which will make the perfidious hearts of the Japanese tremble”.

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The time has come for cruise ships to show themselves on the high seas and reduce the cities of Japan to ashes, to run like a plague along those magnificent shores. No more sentimentality!

And the horrible work is continued with looting, violence, theft, and above all the most terrible lie: the deformation of religious doctrines, both Christian and Buddhist.

The emperor continues to pass reviews, give thanks, reward, encourage, publish decrees on the call up of reservists. The faithful subjects place their goods and their lives at the feet of the monarch, whom they call the adored one; but these are only words. And yet, in order to outdo each other by deeds and not just by phrases, they tear parents and breadwinners from families, and prepare them for the expedition to the butchery.

As for journalists, the more serious the situation of the Russians, the more shamelessly they lie, transforming shameful defeats into victories, knowing that they will not be contradicted by anyone, and pocketing the money from the subscription and the sale with great tranquility.

The more money is spent on war, the more bosses and businessmen squander, who know that no one will denounce them and that everyone will steal. The soldiers, educated for murder, who spent dozens of years in the school of savagery, rudeness, idleness, rejoice that, in addition to the increase in salary, the death of the other officers makes them rise little by little.



Christian pastors continue to call men to the greatest crime; they continue to commit the sacrilege of invoking God's help for war, and not only do they not censure, but they even justify and glorify the pastor who, with the cross in his hand, encourages men in the very places of crime.

And the same thing happens in Japan. The drunken Japanese, who imitate all that is wrong with Europe, increasing their zeal for their victories, rush to crime. The Mikado also makes magazines; it also gives rewards. Their generals praise each other in the same way, they imagine that, having learned to kill, they have acquired instruction.

The unfortunate working people, torn from useful work and their families, groan like the Russians. In the same way, journalists lie and rejoice in the exaggeration of the truth, and probably also (since where murder is a virtue, vices flourish), the various bosses and lifers make money.

And Japanese theologians and religious pastors who in turn do not forget the deception in matters of religion and sacrilege, distort the doctrine of Buddha and admit, even justify, murder, by forbidden Buddha.

The Buddhist sage Soyen Shaku, who directs eight hundred convents, explains that Buddha forbade murder, but said that he would not be at ease until all beings were united in the infinite, loving heart, and that, in order to put everything in order, it is necessary to make war and kill men. And everything is verified as if the Christian doctrine and the Buddhist doctrine, on the unity of the human spirit, on the brotherhood of men, on love, on compassion, on the inviolability of human life, had never existed. Men illuminated by the light of truth, Japanese and Russian, worse than wild animals, throw themselves against each other with the sole desire to destroy as many lives as possible. Thousands of unfortunates groan and stir convulsively in terrible suffering, and die in Japanese and Russian hospitals, wondering with admiration why they have been injured.

Others, rot by the thousands, underground or above land, or drown in the sea, where they float and decompose. And tens of thousands of women, fathers, mothers, children, weep for their heads of families, dead in vain.

But all this is not enough: victims and more victims prepare themselves still. The main care of the murderous leaders is, on the part of the Russians, to procure sufficient cannon fodder, the 3,000 men a day destined for death.

The Japanese do the same. They are constantly jumping into the river so that the last ones can pass over the drowned.

When will all this end? When, finally, will deceived men come to their senses and say: "You, kings, Mikado, ministers, metropolitans, priests, generals, journalists, businessmen, whatever name is given to you, you ruthless ones can go? if you want, under the bullets, because we are not going anymore. Leave us alone, let us till and sow?"

How natural it would be to say this now that, in our country, in Russia, hundreds of thousands of mothers, wives and children whose men have been taken from them, the reservists (as they are called), most of whom know how to read, have knowledge of what the Far East is, they are aware that war is being waged, not because of a necessary work for the Russians, but for a foreign land that certain businessmen need to build iron roads in it and become rich! They know, or can also know, that they will be killed as a lamb is killed, because the Japanese have more sophisticated killing machines than ours, since the Russian authorities who send them to their deaths do not have the foresight to procure the weapons at the disposal of the Japanese in time.

Knowing all this, he would naturally exclaim: "You who stirred up this strife; you for whom war is necessary and who justify it, can go under Japanese bullets; We will not go, for not only do we not need what you want, but it even seems unnecessary to us".

But they don't say it. They depart and will depart; they cannot stop doing so as long as they fear what kills the body and not what kills the soul.

"Shall I be killed or maimed at Yunan-Po, where I am sent? Reasoning, I do not know; perhaps he will emerge unscathed, full of decorations, of glory, like those sailors who are now celebrated throughout Russia, because the Japanese casualties did not fall on them, but on the others. And if I refuse to obey, I will surely be locked up in jail, deported to Yakutsk, and perhaps killed immediately".

And with despair in their souls, they depart and abandon the good, reasonable life, and their wives and children.

Yesterday I met a reservist, accompanied by his mother and his wife. The three of them were in a wagon. He was slightly drunk. The woman's face was covered in tears.

"Farewell, Leon Nicolaievitch", he said; "I'm going to the Far East".

"What! Are you going to fight? "

"You have to fight".

"No one should fight". He thought for a moment and said:

"But, what is to be done? Where to go?"

I saw that he had understood me. He had understood that the work for which he was sent to fight is evil.

Where to go? This is the exact expression of the state of soul that is translated in the official world and that of journalists by the words: "For religion, for the Tsar and for the fatherland".

Those who leave the starving family and go to suffering and death say what they feel: "Where to go?" And those who remain safe in their luxurious palaces, say that all Russians are ready to sacrifice their lives for the adored monarch, for the glory and greatness of Russia.

From a villager whom I know, I have received two letters.

**Here is the first one:**

"Dear Leon Nicolaievitch, I know what to expect. Today I received the notice of call to service. Tomorrow I have to present myself to the Foreign Ministry. And immediately I must leave for the Far East, to fight under Japanese bullets. Of my pain and of my family I say nothing to you, because you will understand the horror of my situation and the terrors of war. All this makes you suffer for a long time and more than enough, he understands. How much I have longed to see and speak to you in these last days! I had written him a long letter in which I explained the sufferings of my soul, but I had not had time to copy it when I received this notice. What will my wife and my four little ones do now? You are too old, and you will certainly not be able to take an interest in mine; but you can ask one of your friends, who, on his walks, visits my orphaned family. I pray with all my heart that, if my wife cannot bear the sufferings of her abandonment with the children, and decides to seek your help and advice, you will receive and console her. Even if she doesn't know you personally, she believes your word, which is much better. I have not been able to help responding to the call; but I tell you beforehand that because of me not a single family will be an orphan."

"Oh, God! How horrible, cruel and painful it is to abandon everything that life does, everything that interests you!"

**Here is the second letter:**

"Dear Leon Nicolaievitch, but one day of service has elapsed, and I have already lived an eternity of the most terrible sufferings. From eight in the morning to nine at night we have been piled up in the courtyard of the barracks like a herd of animals. Three times the comedy of the inspection of the body has been repeated, and all those who have shown themselves ill have not been able to get even ten minutes of attention and have been branded as "useful". When all the "useful," two thousand men, were sorted and lined up from the chancellery to the barracks, in the street, in an expanse of a versta, there was a multitude of fathers, mothers, women with their children in their arms... And if you had seen

and heard how they clung to their fathers, their husbands, to their children, and they crawled around his neck, sobbing in despair... I, in general, control myself, contain my feelings; but it was stronger than me, and I have also cried... (In the language of the newspapers this is expressed thus: Patriotic ardor is unusual".

"To what is the comparison of this immense sorrow that is going to spread over a third of the whole world? And we are now but cannon fodder, which will soon be given as a sacrifice to the God of vengeance and fear!".

This man does not yet believe that it is less terrible to lose the body than to lose the body and the soul. Here's why you can't refuse to serve.

But when you leave your family, promise yourself beforehand that, because of him, not a single family will be orphaned. He believes in the main divine law, or in the law of all religions. "Do unto others as you would have done unto thee".

And in our time, not only in the Christian world, but also in the Buddhist, Mohammedan, Brahminian, etc., worlds, there are thousands and millions of such men.

There are true heroes, not those who are honored today because, wanting to kill others, they were not killed, but true heroes, who are currently in the prisons of Jakutzk for not having wanted to enter the ranks of the murderers and preferred martyrdom to abandoning the Law of Christ. There are stories, like the one who writes to me, that will go to the bathroom, but they will not kill.

But even that majority that leaves without reflecting, because they do not think about what they are doing, even those men, in the depths of their souls, feel that they are carrying out an evil act by obeying the authorities who take them away from work, from their family, and send them to useless murder, contrary to their soul and their religion.

But they leave because they are so bound up in every way that they do not know where to go. And those who remain at home not only feel it, but even express it.

Yesterday I met a group of villagers on the road returning from Tula. One of them, who was walking next to the cart, was reading a small leaf. I asked him:

"Is it a telegram?"

He has stopped.

"It's yesterday's telegram", he told me; "But I also have today's".

He took it out of his pocket, we stopped and I read it

"What happened yesterday at the station?" The man began to say, answering a question of mine. "That was horrible!" Among women and children there were more than a thousand souls. Everyone was howling. The train was rounded; not only did he let him go. Even strangers cried watching what was happening. A woman from Tula let out an "ah!" and fell dead, leaving behind five children. They have been distributed in the asylums, but in spite of everything they have taken the father... And what do we need in Manchuria? Our land is enough for us! And how many people have died, how much money has been spent!

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Today's ideas of war are very different from what they once were, even as recently as 1877.

What is happening today never happened. The newspapers write that, on the arrival of the Tsar, who now remember Russia to hypnotize the men who are sent to assassination, the people manifest an indescribable enthusiasm.

But, in reality, something else happens. It is said that three reserves have hanged themselves, that two have committed suicide by another procedure. A woman, whose husband has been called up to the ranks,

has taken her children to the chancellery and abandoned them there. Another hanged herself in the house of the head of recruitment.

Everyone is upset, excited, gloomy. The words: "For religion, for the Tsar, for the fatherland!" do not sound to man as in former times. Another war, that of conscience, injustice and sin, that of the work to which all men are called, draws peoples further and further along.

The great struggle of our age is not that which is now going on between the Japanese and the Russians, nor that which may break out between the white and yellow races; it is not the struggle that is conducted with mines, bombs and bullets; It is the spiritual struggle, which takes place daily between the increasingly enlightened consciousness of humanity, ready to manifest itself, and the darkness and oppression, which surround and crush it.

Christ himself suffered in his time because of waiting, and he said: "I came to sow fire in the earth. What can I desire, then, if it is already lit?"

What Christ longed for is realized. The fire is lit; let us not oppose its extension; Let's make it easier.

**May 13, 1904.**





## XIII

I would never finish my work if I were to keep adding everything that confirms my main idea.

Yesterday I received the news that several Japanese battleships have been scuttled. In what are called the upper echelons of Russian society, noble, rich, intelligent, without any remorse of conscience, rejoice at this loss of thousands of human lives.

Today I received from a sailor, from a man who is in the lowest echelon of society, the following letter (signed with name and surname):

"Dear Leon Nicolaievitch, I greet you in a low voice, and with love I send you my respect and my greetings. Very dear Leon Nicolaievitch, I have read your works, which I liked, and I was very pleased to read them.

Since in our country we have war. At present, write to me, I beg you, whether or not it is pleasing to God that the authorities force us to kill. I beg you, Leon Nikolaievitch, tell me, if you will do me a favor, whether or not there is truth in the world.

Here, in the church, ceremonies are held, and the priest names the beloved army of Christ. Is it true or not that God loves war?

I beg you, Leon Nicolaievitch, to write to me, if you have no books in which I can see whether or not the truth exists. Send me books, I'll pay for them anything. I beg you not to forget my demand; if there are no books of that kind, send me a letter, and I will be satisfied.

I eagerly await your reply. And see you soon. I am alive and well, I wish you the same, from God the Lord, I wish you good health and much successes in your endeavors".

The address follows: Port-Arthur, the name of the ship on which the sailor serves, his name and surname.

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I cannot answer in words this good, serious, and truly enlightened man. He is in Port-Arthur, a town with which there is no communication either by mail or by telegraph. However, there are other means of communication for both of them. This means is God, in whom we both believe and we both know that war displeases Him. The doubt that has arisen in his soul is already the solution of the question.

And this doubt has arisen and lives today in the souls of thousands and thousands of men, not only Russians and Japanese, but of all unfortunate beings who are forced by violence to take part in the work most contrary to human nature.

The hypothesis with which he stuns himself and tries to stun men soon passes, and his action weakens more and more. The doubt: *"Is it pleasing to God or not that my bosses force me to kill?"* it becomes stronger and stronger, it cannot be destroyed by anything and it spreads by the moment.

And this doubt is the spark of that fire that God raised in the earth and that begins to burn it.

To know it, to feel it, is a great joy.

**Yasnaya Polyana, May 31, 1894.**

## Reference

The text comes from the press brochure "The Russo-Japanese War" by León Tolstói, translated by Carmen de Burgos Seguí and published by the publishing house F. Sempere y Cía. in Valencia. Reference: Tolstói, L. (1904). 'The Russo-Japanese War (C. de Burgos Seguí, Trans.). F. Sempere y Cía.

**Source:** <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/la-guerra-ruso-japonesa-1070427/>



The Russo-Japanese War  
Digital publication of



Maracaibo, Venezuela

May 2025



# Fundación Ediciones Clío

**Fundación Ediciones Clío** is an academic institution that seeks the promotion of science, culture and the integral formation of communities with the intention of disseminating scientific, humanistic, pedagogical and cultural content in order to form individually and collectively interested individuals and institutions. Our main vision is to help in the generation of scientific, technological and cultural capacities as useful tools in the resolution of society's problems. To achieve this goal, we offer a bibliographic repository with scientific, humanistic, educational and cultural content that can be downloaded free of charge by users who wish to consult our website and social networks where you will find books, scientific journals and other content of educational interest to users.

In "The Russo-Japanese War", León Tolstói offers a scathing and forceful critique of war, describing it as a manifestation of irrationality and human suffering. Tolstói denounces the hypocrisy of leaders and thinkers who justify violence under the pretexts of patriotism, progress or moral superiority. He points out that no cause can justify the loss of a single life, highlighting the disconnect between those who declare war and the masses forced to fight and die. With phrases such as "there is no war, only one, that is worth the sacrifice of a single human life", he underlines the moral absurdity of organized violence. Tolstói exposes how war brutalizes society and retards its ethical evolution, affirming that the most essential duty is to abolish it. The work advocates for peace and individual conscience, highlighting the need to reject blind obedience that perpetuates destruction.