

Tombstone blues again

Saturday, November 11 is Remembrance Day. How can our generation, who have never fought a war, observe this day?

Perhaps we should just commemorate the day in the spirit of its name - Remembrance. But what should we remember? We can never allow ourselves to forget the horrible reality of modern warfare. The days when there was such a thing as an "innocent civilian" in a war, belong to the era before we had a Remembrance Day. Total war has been with us since World War I. Let us hope that, in the case of war, our generation can find out the stove is hot, without touching it by ourselves. We should remember that the two great wars were fought largely by young people like ourselves, whose hopes and dreams were just as great. Those generations have been devastated in more ways than we can ever know. The sheer masses of suffering humanity they saw day after day have destroyed many hearts and minds. To have your best friend mutilated right beside you and to have to run for your own life, leaving him behind. These are the real memories that our veterans choose to forget, killing the pain with a laugh and an annual reunion at the local Legion hall.

But in remembering the sacrifices of our own forebearers, we must not forget that the youth of all countries involved was sacrificed for reasons not all understood. Let us not make November 11 into a glorification of war. The people who fought the wars did not cause them. War is a tragedy and there is nothing at all glorious about "winning" or "losing". We all lose. Nor must we remember the atrocities the "other side" committed.

The guilt of the war, the program the degradation of the human being is on us all. This is not just a philosophical statement. We are quick to remember Nazi concentration camps. (which none of us should ever forget) but slow to recall things like Canada's concentration camps for Japanese - Canadian citizens.

Nor should we forge that, however "distant" and "foreign," wars and rumors of war are today they are very present to us. Perhaps today we can see better, that the peace our predecessors fought to achieve can only be real when it is based on real justice. We should remember that those

who gave their lives in all sincerity for peace were betrayed by those who caused the war.

Another thing which the second world war has given us to remember is the terrible birth of nuclear weapons. We can never forget that fellow human beings are still suffering the original and genetic effects of the rain of DEATH DROPPED ON Nagasaki and Hiroshima. We can take a lesson in human compassion from those victims who have forgiven those who decided to use so criminal a weapon on them.

We must do justice to their spirit in doing everything we can to eliminate the insane race of death, that has developed so far since then, that it dwarfs their

suffering. The idea of nuclear disarmament is not just a nice, token, liberal idea. IT IS

IMPERATIVE TO OUR VERY SURVIVAL! We actually have the potential to wipe ourselves out several times. Any talk of "deterrent", "clean bombs", "strategic weapons" and the great conflicts between the super-powers is simply insane. When we think of who has their fingers on those buttons which keep the mushroom cloud hanging over all our heads, like the angel of death, none of us should sleep easy. There can be no "reason", no "cause" that makes sense for justifying nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are

our civilization's death wish; they are a crime against humanity by their very existence.

If we wish to commemorate Remembrance Day 1978, in a way that has meaning for us, let us make it a day for peace. If it is your inclination, pray for peace. If not, at least consider the things we have said in a quiet moment. Perhaps most meaningful would be to make peace with someone. Love someone. Listen to someone. Although modern war seems impersonal and mechanistic, only by starting at the very human level of trying to understand each other can we ever pray, in anything but rain, for peace in our time.

