

And you must disabuse yourselves of all your preconceived ideas. That has been another trouble with most of our discussions. We all have what the French call "back thoughts", - ideas and reasons that we do not let come to the front in any discussion. A soldier or a sailor cannot discuss disarmament without realizing that it may mean his losing his job. A man who has his mind fixed on national defence cannot discuss disarmament without remembering that he is partly at least responsible for the safety of his country under all conditions.

Disarmament is not even a complete project. It is only part of a project. It is the part on which we have fixed our attention, focussed our attention because it is the most obvious. The real goal at which we are aiming, the goal which we cannot see for the fog of selfishness and ill-feeling and tradition that blinds our eyes, the real goal, is a completely new philosophy. The human race at the present time regards war as a normal condition of things. I do not mean to say that we regard battle, suffering and death, or even the pride of victory, as being the ideal employments and ends and conditions of humanity, but we do regard war as something which is only in suspense. How, for instance would any of you define peace; how does anyone define peace? Nine people out of ten, ninety-nine out of a hundred, will say, "Peace is when there is no war." That is a totally wrong way to look at the matter but it is the way that we do look at it. It is just as wrong as if we defined life by saying that a man is alive when he is not dead.

War is just as present a fact for most of humanity as the lava in an active volcano is to the people who live on its flanks. The volcano may be silent for a year, for ten years, for a century, but the frightful cauldron is boiling away all the time and on the appointed day comes the bursting of the crater, the crash and roar and flames, the river of molten rock flowing across the land, overwhelming all that is in its path, leaving terror, death and destruction in its track.