From the Preface to the Seventh Edition Encyclopedia Article

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Carved in stone, opposite the home of the United Nations, is an inscription taken from Isaiah: "… and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The Prophets' sense of moral justice, which was the foundation of their vision of peace as expressed in this inscription, has not yet been accepted as a basis for political behavior. Indeed, developments in recent years have cast a dark shadow over the United Nations. The passage of resolutions and the toleration of practices inconsistent with the spirit of the Charter have not only instilled doubt about the effectiveness of the organization as a political instrument but have also undermined the spirit of fairness and cooperation that once characterized the work of the specialized agencies. In the 1930s, the world witnessed the loss of moral force and then the political decline of the League of Nations. No friend of peace could wish its successor a similar fate. It is the fervent hope of the editors of this encyclopedia that political influences will not further undermine the substantive achievements of the United Nations.

The problems of peace preoccupy the minds of people everywhere. The ever-intensifying complexities of our times, while serving to increase the responsibility of a larger number of persons, often also augment the individual's feeling of helplessness. Yet, knowledge of other lands and ability to see their people as fellow human beings can enable the individual to overcome this feeling of helplessness and to act for himself and others. In this spirit this work was conceived and is offered, with the hope that it may not only find many specific uses, but may bring into focus a broader world view for the reader, and thus contribute to international understanding.

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