

TOPICS OF THE DAY

WAR BUSINESS: WHERE BUT IN TORONTO?: ABOLISHING THE
COMMUNIST MISSIONARY: A SHOCK TO THE FAITHFUL.

WE are accustomed to deplore the apparently negative results of pacifist associations, of disarmament conferences, and of the League of Nations in their efforts to establish a World Peace. Every pacific move is countered by a chorus of "Security" from the numerous voices of hatred, suspicion and fear that predominate in any international concert. Security implies armament for ourselves rather than for others; and a peace conference may be rated as successful if it does not appreciably advance the beginning of the next war. No wonder, therefore, if pessimistic voices are raised in the prophecy that a crisis of our so-called civilization is at hand.

There are purely economic arguments that even a child can read from the consequences of the last war. Philosophically, we may doubt the wisdom of continuing a race which seems to gain more knowledge only that it may accomplish more evil. But the most appalling of all considerations is derived from attempting to plot the curve of scientific advancement as applicable to modern warfare. If the "great" war made all others seem medieval by comparison, the next will make it fade into insignificance as man's first bungling attempt to apply his greatest technical achievements to his own annihilation. Mr. H. G. Wells has shown us the possibilities of a future war, with an objective precision which leaves but small refuge for either sentiment or old-fashioned military confidence. When one takes this in conjunction with the constant threats of war, and obvious widespread planning for it, one might be forgiven for wishing that this weary planet might find peace in a sudden disintegration into cosmic dust. There are grounds, however, for supposing that the world may continue to muddle through in the future as it has contrived to do in the past; and that each impending crisis may produce a cataclysm but not a chaos.

So far as the ghastly business of warfare and armaments is concerned, hope may be found in two remarkable and far-reaching changes: the public temper, and more particularly the temper of youth, is becoming increasingly pacifist; and the public has in recent months become well-informed as to both economic structure and political affiliations of the huge armament concerns.

Years ago, in *Major Barbara*, Mr. Shaw informed the world as to how it was being duped by the armament firms. To-day,

when he is quoted by every writer of up-to-date exposures, he can enjoy the malicious satisfaction of having said "I told you so". For years information has lain buried in parliamentary reports or in documents issued by the League of Nations, and unread by critics who deplored the League's inactivity. But now it is coming out; and it is made available to the general reading public not only in widely published books, but by constant and emphatic repetition in the daily newspapers and in the magazine press. During the past few months, three works have achieved a considerable vogue: *Cry Havoc*, by Beverley Nichols; *Merchants of Death*, by H. C. Englebrecht and F. C. Hanighen; and *Iron, Blood and Profits*, by George Seldes. The publication of Mr. Seldes's work, the latest of these three, may be regarded as in itself a tribute to popular interest in the exposure of armament alliances and business methods. Mr. Nichols was first in the field, with an almost screaming sincerity that does him infinitely more credit than the callow smartness of his early journalism, or the half-mellowed sophistication of his more recent ventures into horticulture and domesticity. No possible raising of the voice, no imaginable exercise of rhetoric can do justice to the horrors of war and of the industries and manufactures that minister to it; and it is perhaps for this reason that the most impressive indictment is that of Messrs. Englebrecht and Hanighen. Many of their facts had been presented previously by Mr. Nichols, but where he supported his facts with appeals to logic or emotion, the American collaborators are content to let an objective documentation tell its own impressive tale. They present and arrange their findings with the orderly process of research and an impersonal minimum of comment. They are scrupulously fair, and show that even the vast munition-making combines are not the prime movers in the armament race, although their profits and methods make it tempting to assume that they are.

Englebrecht and Hanighen see no easy or immediate solution. To many of us, it has come recently as a shock to learn that the manufacture of arms and munitions has been not a carefully guarded state monopoly, but a series of private enterprizes, similar for example to those devoted to the manufacture of automobiles, and their parts and accessories. The directors and employees of these firms are not ghouls, whose mouths water at the thought of ruined towns and shattered bodies. They are business men, with commodities to sell, and they develop their markets in the same commercial spirit as Mr. Ford or Mr. Chrysler. Their business is death. But to them, it is simply business. To borrow a quotation from the British journal, *Arms and Explosives*: "A firm must study

its customers and must maintain the closest possible touch with probable requirements. Some people will never understand business." Or, as Undershaft gives his creed in *Major Barbara*: "To give arms to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of persons or principles...to all faiths, all follies, all causes, and all crimes." "The value of such abstract ideas as justice and liberty", to borrow another quotation, from outside the realm of fiction, "(we) leave to the discussion of idle and metaphysical minds". When we consider their magnitude and the inter-relation of their business with politics, it is not surprising that the armament makers exercise a powerful control upon Governments. Even Undershaft's boast becomes hardly an exaggeration to one who has read the Life of Sir Basil Zaharoff, or revelations such as those of the Shearer claim for work done at Geneva in the interests of United States firms.

"The Government of your country! I am the Government of your country, I and Lazarus. Do you suppose that you and half a dozen amateurs like you, sitting in a row in that foolish gabble shop, govern Undershaft and Lazarus? No, my friend, you will do what pays us. You will make war when it suits us, and keep peace when it doesn't... When I want anything to keep my dividends up, you will discover that my want is a national need. When other people want something to keep my dividends down, you will call out the police and military. And in return you shall have the support of my newspapers, and the delight of imagining that you are a great statesman".

It becomes obvious that such an incubus is not readily to be shaken off, and the nationalization of armaments is not quite so simple as, say, the nationalization of railways. But the surprising fact is that, for reasons which are made abundantly clear, Governments do not wish to rid themselves of the international armament ring, although under private enterprize the constituent firms supply weapons and ammunition to both sides, and respect nothing but the sites of their own factories. No country is self-sufficient in munitions: some are almost non-productive. So with the old paradoxical cry of "Security" the international free trade in death must go on. All that we have to be thankful for is that the public is at last being enlightened as to the entire absence of patriotism or even nationalism from the buying and selling of death; that it is learning the reason for war-scares and propaganda for "preparedness"; that the private shareholders and the foreign holdings of armament firms are no longer veiled in secrecy. With such information, the popular enthusiasm for war must inevitably

suffer a decline; and in the present trend of public opinion, it requires no great courage to be a pacifist.

POSSIBLY it was the conjunction of a heat-wave and a paucity of news. Possibly civic patriotism was genuinely touched. But for whatever reason, the centenary apex of Toronto's perennial self-esteem was capped by an exhibition of newspaper and municipal top-loftiness that has rarely been equalled in the annals of silly-season journalism.

The *contretemps* that gave rise to a discussion which threatened Imperial consequences of the direst import was at once excusable and unfortunate. The Governor General had come to lend the centennial celebrations the honour of his official presence. Sensible of the occasion, the Mayor of Toronto had foreseen the inevitable delay if His Excellency should be conducted directly to the place of his official introduction on the steps of the City Hall. He arranged accordingly that an unofficial meeting should take place in the Mayor's office, and that the titular heads of the Dominion of Canada and of the City of Toronto should present themselves to the public gaze only when all occasions seemed to be favourable. It was a courteous thought, and deserving of a more fortunate event. But the very difficulty that it sought to avoid was precipitated. Someone had blundered; and Mayor Stewart sat in the cool of his office and wondered, while Lord Bessborough and his party waited in a heated atmosphere on the steps. When adjustments were made, after a slight delay, the Mayor appears to have shown proper contrition, and to have offered all reasonable amends in the form of regrets and apologies. His distinguished guest would appear to have missed the opportunity to vie in amenities with his host, and to have retorted, with some approach to petulance, that the Mayor should "Go back to Mary Pickford. Get back to your Pickford show".

It is true that the principle of *noblesse oblige* imposes the duty of patient forbearance upon the most distinguished of guests in even the most unfortunate of domestic accidents. The same principle, however, imposes on well regulated families a similar duty to overlook the impatience of a guest who for once may have failed in his duty. So far as Mayor Stewart is concerned, the incident would have passed off without comment, and with no more serious effect than a little temporary constraint. Toronto journalists, however, and apparently a few minor municipal zealots, saw no reason to let the matter drop. Mayor Stewart's attitude was hailed as an unparalleled masterpiece of courtesy and re-

SUNDAY. ALMOST any other man, it seems, would have told the Governor-General to jump into the Lake. The incident was magnified out of all proportion, and an immediate recall was proclaimed as the only way of avoiding trouble. It is for things like this, according to one portentous utterance, "that Empires have been lost". On the Monday, it was reported that Sunday had been occupied by a frantic exchange of telephone messages between Buckingham Palace and Rideau Hall. Transatlantic messages were exchanged, it is true, but they were between Toronto journalists who wanted news of the excitement in London, and London journalists who said that there was no excitement yet, and could Toronto furnish some more information, please. Most of the newspaper talk, which did not appear to reflect popular interest or opinion, was extremely vague as to the "consequences" that were so constantly referred to. It seemed to be felt that the King should apologize to the Mayor of Toronto, and promise instant chastisement of the erring emissary. Toronto's rights were treated as something to be determined by Toronto alone, without reference to Ottawa or Geneva.

Precisely what Toronto would do, was never made clear. But the general impression was that nothing like this had happened since the Boston tea-party. The only proposals that emerged in a state of clarity were that the office of Governor-General should be abolished; or, alternatively, that it should be held by a native-born Canadian—presumably from Toronto—with a proper sense of the fitness of things. It was clearly implied that a Mayor of Toronto would, *ex officio*, be ideally qualified for the position.

Outside journalists diverted themselves and their readers with various ludicrous excerpts from the Toronto press. Unfortunately, they accepted the unfortunate Mayor as the actual, rather than the ostensible, object of outraged Torontonian dignity. The real offence was impatience, not with the Mayor, but with Miss Mary Pickford, a local girl who had "made good" and was not too proud to come back at the centennial to delight the folks in the old home town. When the mere personal representative of a Sovereign set himself against the Dowager Queen of the Celluloid, he struck at the cultural and artistic heart of the Empire. And to make matters worse, His Excellency was supposed to be a patron of the Drama.

ATTENTION has lately been attracted to the purge in the ranks of Russian Communism. Certain weak-kneed disciples, as well as certain convicted apostates, have been solemnly excluded from the sacred circle. Inquisitors are hot on the track of heresy,

and a reduction in numbers is being dismissed as unimportant when compared with maintenance of "the faith". As in other faiths, the acid test is missionary zeal.

Surely it was well said that Communism is more like a new religion than a new theory of government. As it came to Russia, a finished product from the hands of Lenin, like the doctrines of the *Koran* from the hands of Mohammed, a missionary character was at the very heart of it. Through all the world it was to be carried, sapping the foundations of Capitalism in all countries, and destroying everywhere the superstitious beliefs by which Capitalism had been disguised. This apostolic purpose was what brought the Soviets into such bad odour abroad. They were fomenters of "world-revolution", and gloried in it. H. G. Wells amused us all long ago by accounts of his interviews with Lenin, when the Dictator expressed such surprise that the new Gospel was not spreading faster and that the old unbelief kept so tenacious a hold.

But what is this that Litvinov has done? The straiter sect of his countrymen has now had time to analyze it. What was that pledge which the arch-negotiator signed on behalf of Russia—that Communist missionary work will be abandoned? With perfect horror the group we may call "Fundamentalists" of his faith have watched this piece of shameless modernizing of the Lenin Scriptures. People often talk as if all Russia must be in ecstasy over the resumption of diplomatic relations with the United States, and as if complaints on the matter would come from Conservative Americans only. But it turns out that there are Communists who think that their side made all the concessions, suffered the whole loss of dignity, and even betrayed a sacred cause. From the Communist League of America comes a protest that Litvinov has renounced and repudiated a trust, that this accursed document signed at Washington may well prove fatal to the international working-class movement, and that for the future the holy mission with which the Soviets began is to give place to miserable nationalistic manoeuvring—as base as that of a Capitalist State! Read the following pledges:

To refrain from interference in any manner in the internal affairs of the United States.

To refrain, and to restrain all persons in Government service and all organizations of the Government or under its direct or indirect control, including any organizations in receipt of any financial assistance from it, from any act overt or covert liable in any way to injure the tranquillity, prosperity, order, or security of the whole or of any part of the United States... and in particu-

lar from...any agitation or propaganda having as its aim... the bringing about by force of a change in the political or social order of the whole or any part of the United States.

That sounds reasonable, does it not, as an understanding between "friendly" powers? Most powers do not think it needful to embody such pledges in writing: friendliness is assumed to include at least as much as this. But Soviet Russia has been different from other countries, and a special guarantee was required which—for the sake of "saving face"—was given as well as exacted. America solemnly pledged herself to initiate no attack upon the Government of the U. S. S. R. But there is a further guarantee in the bond, which has exasperated every good Communist of the Lenin School:

Not to permit the formation or residence on its territory of any organization or group—and to prevent the activity on its territory of any organization or group, or of representatives or officials of any organization or group—which has as its aim the overthrow or the preparation for overthrow of, or bringing about by force of any change in, the political or social order of the whole or any part of the United States.

If they stick to that pledge, there is indeed an end to Communist missions. But did they stick to it? Did Russia give notice to the Comintern (Third International) that it must either drop its propagandist activities in the United States or find headquarters outside Russia? Once the Third International has to stop its propagandism abroad, will not virtue have gone out of it? Will it not, like any other religion, be doomed when it ceases to be missionary? Will Stalin, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, tolerate this hollow, eviscerated Gospel for home use alone?

Memory goes back to the stalwarts of other times who could have compromised after this fashion with heretics, but refused. Ten years ago Zinoviev had a similar chance, but he had more of Communist iron in the blood than Litvinov proved to have. And back further still, a like yielding would have smoothed Russia's way at Geneva; but like Danton, she had then taken as her motto, "No weakness".

For the time the modernizers have got the upper hand, and it is well for the world that they have. But they will require very careful watching if the United States is to be secured against a covert relapse to the Lenin orthodoxy.