

TOPICS OF THE DAY*

THE EUROPEAN SITUATION: AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: OUR PENAL SYSTEM: SCIENCE AND WAR.

THE EUROPEAN SITUATION has moved into clearer delineation, and with clarity, our hope for a peaceful settlement grows more tenuous. There is really one ultimate issue on which the conflict of forces turns. On one side there is a group of peoples, roughly capable of being designated democratic, whose interest is in peace, settlement and orderly progress towards a world-order of civilisation. They are sick of war and its wasteful ineffectiveness, and seek wearily for relief from the emotional tension of armed threats, to find an atmosphere in which there will be an opportunity for co-operation and sane settlement of disputes. Over against them there is another group, ruled by dictatorial régimes, not so large or even so powerful, but interested only in their own expansion. For talk of peace and conciliation, they have nothing but contempt. Overtures of friendship are regarded as signs of weakness. Concessions are incitements to further demands. Inflated with their own sense of national destiny, they are determined to keep the world in perpetual turmoil, and, if necessary, to drench it in blood, if only they can realize their ambition.

This is the only ideological conflict that matters for the moment. Unfortunately, so far as we can see, it is incapable of resolution except by the dreadful language of force. The opposing groups are not thinking in the same set of terms, and move in different categories of human value. A great gulf separates them, across which threat can be answered only by threat. The only question at the moment is whether the democratic powers can speak in terms of sufficient strength to the threatening nations, and especially to the people of Germany, so that they will desist from their menace and realise that their claims to unlimited self-assertion are intolerable in a civilized world. Unfortunately, through their policies of rigid censorship, the peoples of countries like Italy and Germany can hear nothing but the propagandist views of their own leaders. Even if the dictators can be brought to a temporary halt in their designs, there can be no diminution in the armed preparedness of other peoples; there is every reason to fear that the dread-

*It will be obvious to the reader that this article was written before recent events in Central Europe reaches their climax. It was in type too late for author's amendment, and must be read with this in mind.—EDITOR.

ful day is only postponed, and the question that remains is for how long?

The British people have gone a very long way in their avowed policy of conciliation and appeasement. They have been willing to appear in the worst conceivable light, at home and abroad, to avert the dreadful calamity of war. The Government has faced a turbulent House of Commons, with Ministers of State returning feeble and foolish answers to clamorous questions. They have reversed their entire foreign policy, and cast off the most popular member of the Cabinet. They have placed themselves in the position of apparent surrender to reactionary groups, so as to give every opportunity for attack and misrepresentation. At last, with patience not so much exhausted as misunderstood, the British Government has been compelled to move from the rôle of mediation to that of warning. Nothing could be plainer than the fact that when France has gone as near to mobilization as she can without a declaration of war, the British battle-fleet has gone to its stations in the North Sea.

The first movement into this new attitude of firmness came about through a realisation of complete failure in the British attempt to conciliate Italy. The Fascist word has proved to be completely unreliable. After the humiliating series of frustrations in the question of withdrawal from Spain, we now know exactly where we stand with regard to Italian ambition. Mussolini looks west, but he also looks east. At the very moment when Britain has a tragic situation in Palestine on her hands, Italy has instituted a new pogrom against the Jewish people. In moments of greater freedom from anxiety, we might have emotional leisure to enjoy the spectacle of observing the opposite ends of the Rome-Berlin axis as they engage in a reconciliation of their rival race-myths. Meanwhile the Fascists fish in every troubled water that offers hope of landing new catches in their imperial basket. In Spain, they are the defenders of Catholicism against the hateful rule of the godless. In the Orient, they appear as the guardians of Islam against the combined duplicity of the Christians and the Jews. In Europe, they have an uneasy affinity with the neo-pagans of Germany. It is now very apparent that all we have gained through the resignation of Mr. Eden has been a very temporary slackening of the international tension, which has afforded the British people more time to get ready for an even graver controversy.

The future of world-peace hangs uneasily on the decision of Herr Hitler. This amazing personality has only to say the word and war is inevitable. He has contrived so to impress himself upon the whole German people that he is regarded with the adulation of a demi-god. He has become the personal embodiment of their national ambitions and hopes. In him they see all that went down to humiliated defeat in 1918 rising into a new and glorious future. At last, through his capacity for leadership the old German dream has been realised and "Deutschland über alles" can be sung with a realistic fervour hitherto impossible. We cannot avoid being impressed by the extraordinary capacity of this leader to rouse a whole people into disciplined unity, but at the same time his is an unenviable responsibility.

Our present hope is in the precarious factor of time. At last, some impression appears to have been made on the German leader and his ally in Rome that the democratic peoples of the world cannot allow wanton dictatorship to become an instrument of international policy. If an attempt is made to overwhelm Czecho-Slovakia, the fateful issue will have been reached. Surrender will be treachery. France and Britain are unmistakably lined up in their determination to resist such impudent aggression, and we have reason to believe that the adherence of the United States of America would not be long delayed. Only an attitude of foolhardy bravado on the part of Germany can blind her to the fearful consequences of any new act of wanton hostility.

Even amidst the gravity of these dreadful issues, there is a certain satisfaction that, at long last, we have come to a point when they can be clearly faced. Things have often to get worse before they can get better. Those of us who have not abandoned entirely our hopes for the emergence of a new civilization must be even more vigilant than ever for the signs of its coming. If we pass through this immediate crisis without catastrophe, there must be no delay in the exploration of new ways whereby the new language of firmness becomes translated into attempts for new understanding. The strong can sometimes agree more quickly than the weak. When two rival ideologies realize that they cannot be reconciled, then is the hour for a new beginning to the discussion. To the strategy that will bring us nearer that fresh start, the best statesmanship of Europe may well direct its energies.

American international relations, particularly as they affect the vital community of interest between the United States and Canada, became world-news during the month of August. The occasion was one of those happily recurrent events when a spectacular representation is provided for the essential harmony that exists between the two North American nations. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Mackenzie King were participating together in the opening of a new international bridge between Ontario and the State of New York, and the President was subsequently admitted as an honorary graduate of Queen's University. In the speech with which Mr. Roosevelt graced the occasion, he uttered words which immediately echoed and re-echoed round the whole world. With forthright directness, the President asserted that the United States of America "would not stand idly by" if any threat of aggression were made on her sister-nation to the north. It was a sobering and heartening utterance, that may have introduced a decisive element into the strange balance or unbalance of forces which controls the immediate fate of the world.

It has been said on more than one occasion since Mr. Roosevelt delivered his Kingston speech that the President was not really adding anything new to our understanding of the Canadian-United States situation. There has been at least a tacit assumption that the famous Munroe doctrine extended to the Dominion of Canada. In any case, sheer self-interest demands that the foreign policy of the United States shall never permit an unfriendly occupation of Canadian soil. This fact has been known and recognized fully among us. But is it known and realized even in the foreign-offices of countries like Italy and Germany? At all events, the cogent factor in the Presidential speech lay not so much in what he said as in the time of its utterance. The enunciation of a known truth at a strategic moment can easily be something more weighty than a mere repetition. As a matter of fact, Mr. Roosevelt made his statement in a context of hearty, unequivocal adherence to the principles of international liberty and democracy. His remarks about tyrannical and oppressive régimes were obviously directed at the totalitarian powers that are afflicting the world with their unrestrained policies of aggression. A clear and unmistakable signal was run to the North American mast-head.

The Presidential declaration was multiplied in its effectiveness by the speech delivered almost simultaneously by his

Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull. On more than one occasion, the world has heard from Mr. Hull where he stands on the great issues of the day, and we must recollect that he speaks with all the responsibility of a federal minister. He has told his own people that isolationism is a short-sighted attitude. On this particular occasion, he pointed out the impossibility of moral neutrality, and he left us in no doubt as to which side the United States supports. He is for the rule of law and order in international relations. In the choice between force and reason as a method of foreign policy there can be no evasion, even for peoples on this side of the Atlantic.

If we take these two speeches together, they form an announcement to the world, first of all, that in the modern alignment of democratic over against dictatorial powers, the North American peoples stand solidly together for mutual support of the democratic principle. The united economic and military power of these two nations is enormous. If they should place themselves behind any combination of peoples, determined to resist the unbridled ambitions of annexationists, they could place a victorious issue beyond all doubt. Here, then, was a new weight thrown into the scales, tilting the balance beyond all question to the side of sanity and freedom. If the dictators shut their eyes to this unmistakable portent, they are more foolish than even their recurrent madness of policy would suggest.

The speeches of the United States leaders went beyond mere words. There was something very suggestive in the circumstances of their delivery. The American Republic is a great and powerful nation, with a vast population and as conscious of destiny as any people on the face of the earth. To the north, just across a long, unfortified frontier there is the Canadian people, dwelling in a relatively unpopulated territory of boundless potential wealth. These two peoples are one in origin as in destiny. Let us suppose the United States to fall into the mental attitude of Germany. We hear Washington proclaiming the essential unity of North American life, and lamenting the intolerable spectacle of its division. The whole apparatus of propaganda is set in motion to keep the Canadian people continuously aware of their aggrieved situation under British tyranny. Night after night the multi-coloured network of the radio pours the tale of discontent into Canadian parlours. One fine morning, the Stars and Stripes floats over the Vice-regal Lodge in Ottawa, and the long-deferred destiny of Americanism is achieved. Such is the National Socialist

manner transferred to this side of the Atlantic. Instead, we hear of nothing but co-operation and mutual service. The spectacle should not be forgotten in an unhappy world.

Mr. Hull went further in his proposals. The Secretary of State realizes very clearly that there are genuine grievances in the world. The nations that are so full of menace to our peace are not merely to be scolded and told to mend their manners. They really have something to howl about. The principal causes of disturbance are economic in their character. Alongside the creation and maintenance of an apparatus of international conciliation, some concerted effort ought to be undertaken for the achievement of economic co-operation. The nationalism that has become a political ideal and a policy in foreign affairs is not merely emotional in its character. It reflects itself in fiscal arrangements. In a world never better equipped for inter-relations of trade, nation after nation is pursuing the ideal of economic self-sufficiency. So long as this condition persists, international tensions will remain with us.

Can the idealistic sentiments of Kingston and Washington bear the test of practical affairs? The issue has already emerged in connection with a common economic interest of Canada and the United States—the marketing of an enormous crop in a world market where supply is likely considerably to outrun demand. Mr. Wallace of the United States Department of Agriculture proposes co-operation, but Canada is not very sure about the policy. There are difficulties, but a cut-throat competition in unloading a vast production of wheat and other cereals in a world that can fix its own price will not achieve any good purpose for anybody. Here is a real test for international goodwill and co-operation between the North American countries.

OUR PENAL SYSTEM has received a thorough-going condemnation at the hands of a Royal Commission presided over by Mr. Justice Archambault. The Commission's Report came before Parliament almost at the very end of last session and, consequently, its findings were not discussed as fully as might be desirable. Of course, confronting an indictment and condemnation so formidable there was not much to say, except possibly by way of contrition and repentance. Certainly, the findings of the Commission must have aroused shame in the mind of every sensitive citizen.

The Report has revealed that widespread apprehension about the evil state of our Canadian penitentiaries has been only too well founded. A succession of incidents, major and minor, has stirred up uneasy feelings about our way of dealing with a section of the population which is very much out of sight, and, we fear, equally much out of mind. We have had riots and disturbances, and statements by individual prisoners, all suggestive of a rather inhuman and unenlightened system at work behind the austere walls of the penal institutions. Finally, there came the inevitable appointment of the Archambault Commission, and now we have the Report.

Our penal system has been revealed not so much wilfully cruel and sadistic as directed from an obsolete point-of-view. Its object has been punishment rather than amendment. The prisoner has been regarded as an anti-social being, who must be made to feel, above all, that the way of transgressors is hard. For this purpose a severely retributive justice has decreed that the main objective should be to exclude him from the society of his fellows, and while he is behind the bars, he must be subjected to a rigorous discipline. Little or no thought seems to have been devoted to the main question, what is to happen to the unfortunate wretch when the time comes for his return to society. Indeed, not a great deal of consideration has been directed even to what happens while he is expiating his crime. According to the Report, much of the prisoner's time has been spent in sheer indolence, without even the pre-occupations of wholesome work. The picture suggested is that of caged wild beasts, where the animals are always to be regarded with suspicion, and to be treated with the rough and stern methods which alone they are fitted by nature to understand.

The system has reflected its character only too well in its administrators. Major-General D. M. Ormond, the Superintendent of Penitentiaries, is represented as an official whose attitude and ideals have constituted a personal incarnation of the penal philosophy that has informed our method of dealing with criminals. Discipline of the martinet type has characterised his régime. This attitude has communicated itself to the whole prison administration, and has expressed itself in a multiplication of petty regulations with corresponding punishments for their non-observance. Prisoners have been exposed to the continual irritation of minor tyrannies, from which there has been no appeal. Corporal punishment and solitary confinement have been awarded far more freely than is warranted. The

Report reveals a dreadful condition of affairs in the Tim Buck incident. We are informed, over the signature of a Canadian Justice of high standing, that shots were deliberately fired into the Communist leader's cell while he was imprisoned. The fact is that the world of Canadian penitentiaries has been a region apart, detached, uninspected, left in the hands of a tyrannical régime without control and without redress. We may be heartily glad that there is now a prospect of bringing this unhappy condition to a most desirable conclusion.

The most formidable part of the indictment is concerned with our callous lack of interest in young and weak-minded offenders. Apparently, there has been no attempt made to segregate young persons or those convicted for the first time from hardened criminals. The Report leads the reader to infer that lunatic prisoners are confined in the same institutions with those who are sane. Similarly, women have had no special kind of treatment. Considerations of economy, if more enlightened moral persuasions have failed to operate, would have suggested that it is a short-sighted policy which actually tends to perpetuate the criminal type. Our penitentiaries have become schools of crime, where convicted men spend their period of confinement in sullen brooding, exposed to harsh repression, where the whole suggestion of the régime tends to make them regard themselves as a race apart, hopeless, degraded and rebellious. No education, no attempt at moral reclamation, no after care—even the ministrations of religion that have been provided come under the condemnation of the report.

The best that can be said for the system that has been in operation is that it is a hang-over, like so many things Canadian, from the rough-and-ready pioneer outlook. Canada, like all countries in process of rapid settlement, has had its own quota of rascals. Emigrants came west for a wide variety of reasons, and not a few were outlaws and fugitives from justice. To secure law and order in the frontier has generally required methods that are both swift and direct, without much opportunity or leisure for reflection on questions of moral reclamation. Bad men had to be dealt with on stern lines, and the sooner you were rid of them the better for all concerned. It is easy to see how this way of thinking projects itself on a civilization that has developed beyond the pioneer stage. Only after a long period of time has elapsed, do we realise that changed conditions require changed methods. Clearly, the time has come for a comprehensive and thorough-going alteration in our penal system.

The Commission has suggested reforms both in administration and in outlook, which are mutually implicated in each other. General Ormond has been removed from his position. In place of a single authoritarian control, a Prison Commission is proposed. The House of Commons accepted this idea, but the Senate, on the plea that there was lack of proper time for consideration, rejected it. The main thing is that prison administration should be subject to continuous review. Centralization of the penal system under Dominion control is advocated. This is a most important suggestion. If the whole method of dealing with convicted offenders in Canada could be brought under a comprehensive review, even more disquieting disclosures would emerge. We cannot forget the dreadful document presented to the Government of Nova Scotia some years ago by a Royal Commission set up to investigate the question of jail-administration throughout the province. Actually in Nova Scotia (and the condition is not different in some other provinces), County Judges have sent prisoners to penitentiaries rather than to local jails, and have awarded sufficiently long terms of imprisonment to secure this end. The reason given was that the condition of jails was so deplorable, particularly for the commitment of young offenders. If our penitentiaries are condemned in such unrelieved terms, what would the Commissioners have said about our provincial prisons?

Penal administration requires men of peculiar outlook and training. The Report advocates the establishment of a distinct service, where men are properly selected and indoctrinated with an enlightened, humanitarian way of thinking. Evidently, the probation system is practically non-existent. The guidance of young offenders when they are released on ticket-of-leave is a vital element in any method that makes the re-instatement of the criminal to decent citizenship its major aim.

It is evident that the Commission has been much impressed by the newer British methods of prison administration. There, the results are overwhelmingly in favour of the more humane outlook that has prevailed for some years. The number of prisoners and prisons has been considerably reduced. While the Borstal system has met with some criticism, nobody would advocate a return to the old method of letting young and old criminals mingle freely together. The policy of endeavouring to run the penitentiaries with some show of resemblance to a civilized community rather than a colony of moral lepers has shown that a period of imprisonment can combine the necessary functions of visiting the results of anti-social conduct on an

offender and of endeavouring to send him back to society to sin no more. If the Commission's Report can become a guide to a new and enlightened administration in our Canadian penitentiaries, we shall have removed another blot from our record as a civilized country.

SCIENCE AND WAR was the subject of a digressive conclusion to the presidential address delivered by Lord Rayleigh to the British Association for the Advancement of Learning at its Cambridge meeting. The main theme of the address was the highly interesting subject of how science apparently contradicts the conclusions of ordinary sense perception. However, the learned president, doubtless under the constraint of a felt duty, went on to deal at considerable length with the widespread impression that the horror involved in modern warfare is a direct result of scientific discovery and invention, and that Minerva and Mars are yoked in an unholy alliance.

The distinguished scientist had not much difficulty in refuting the contention that the scientific discoveries, whose application has undoubtedly increased the menace of war, were originally pursued for warlike purposes. He cited several examples. The invention of the aeroplane is probably the most striking and far-reaching contribution of science to modern war. Already we have had terrible evidence of the new frightfulness that has been added to military operations through the ability to swoop in sudden attack, with comparative immunity to the attackers, over great cities, and to induce panic in a helpless civilian population. In Great Britain to-day, the scheme of Air Raid Protection is one of the major considerations in the organisation of civilian life to meet the possible event of hostile attack. And yet, Lord Rayleigh was able to point out that when the original bold experimenters began to take their first flights in heavier-than-air machines, it was certainly not the image of the giant bomber droning over darkened cities that appeared before their minds. Indeed, as late as 1908, eminent military and naval authorities were speaking about the incapacity of the aeroplane to make any difference to war. As the president pointed out, it was almost for the sheer exhilaration of flying that the original attempts to conquer the air were made. Similarly, the making of poison-gases was not undertaken, in the first instance, for employment in war. Chlorine and its effects on the human body were known long before the second battle of Ypres. Lord Rayleigh asserted that he had

heard of mustard-gas, so-called, which is really a liquid, before the dawn of the present century.

The presidential address went on to point out that in so far as advance in civilization has been marked by new discovery of the utilities latent in our natural environment, new effectiveness in war has been their inevitable accompaniment. It is universally recognised that the skill to work with metals provides signposts for marking off the different eras in the earlier history of mankind. Who would suggest that the uses of iron were originally discovered for military ends? Nevertheless, the substitution of metal spear-head for the flint-headed arrow, and the sword for the stone-bludgeon, must have been marks of a new advance in the frightfulness of war. Thus, Lord Rayleigh was able to maintain once more the proposition that not science, but the use made of its applications, has introduced the new and terrifying elements into methods of hostile aggression. He showed that over against the devotion of scientific methods to the destructive purposes of war, the human lot had been immeasurably ameliorated through the researches of scientists. Even in warfare, if science has invented swift and terrible methods of death, it has also introduced corresponding possibilities of recovery for the sick and the maimed. As Mr. Julian Huxley has suggested on more than one occasion, pure scientific research has no interest in its applications. So far as its utility is concerned, it is morally neutral. The horror of scientific warfare can not be attributed to the scientist, but to aggressive people who employ his results.

Nevertheless, the scientist cannot escape from the implications of his researches by adopting an attitude of lofty, intellectual detachment. The laboratory is not a world apart. For a social being, his left hand must take some cognisance of what his right hand is doing. Mr. C. E. M. Joad is the last modern to be described as the possessor of a reactionary mind. And yet, he has recently drawn attention to the type of new social environment created by the mechanical devices that scientific invention has placed at our disposal. He is so alarmed by their subversion of fundamental human interests that he proposes some kind of investigation should be made into the effects of new discoveries before they are released to the world. Thus he repeats the suggestion made some time ago by an English bishop, that to afford time whereby we may adapt ourselves to our rapidly changing environment, a moratorium on scientific invention might be declared.

Almost in the concluding sentences of his address, Lord Rayleigh indicated that the British Association is preparing to give some attention to the social effects of a scientific civilization. Evidently, a new section of the famous institution over which he presides is to be constituted for the express purpose of studying the wider applications of science, especially in its relations to the social environment. The sympathetic interest and co-operation of the corresponding American Association has been secured.

This is a most important departure in the work of the British Association. The application of science to war is very much before our minds at present, but such effects are only a very limited portion of the continuous alteration that is being made in the entire social life of mankind. Rapidity of intercommunication has unified the world. The mechanization of industry has raised tremendous problems of employment. New methods of transportation have created potential world-markets. The social re-adjustments to be made have, so far, baffled our meagre attempts to deal with the new human situation that has been created. For the most part we have left the question to the methods of *laissez-faire*, which has largely meant the payment of starvation doles to unemployed workers. Capital and markets have followed along the new trails blazed by scientific invention, but the workers have been left behind in vast depressed areas, which are by no means entirely located in urban communities. Agriculture, fishing and mining have all become mechanized, and compete in a world-wide market. Certainly the El Dorado seen afar off by the enthusiasm of the nineteenth century scientists as the result of their methods and researches has not yet been reached.

It is not likely that the problems such as those raised by the effect of scientific invention on methods of war will be solved by any cessation of scientific work. The ultimate solution must lie in the region of morals, and moral questions are never settled by running away from them. Science has created a new intellectual and social environment for human life, but it has not fundamentally altered the ultimate conditions of civilisation. What arouses us to the point of exasperation is that new apparatus of human well-being and progress seems to be placed within our reach through the mastery of our physical conditions by scientific genius, and yet we seem unable to reap the fruits because of our moral obtuseness. Our hands are not yet steadied to carry the fulness of our cup.

J. S. T.