

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE ATTACK ON RUSSIA: AN IMPERIAL CABINET: THE ATLANTIC CHARTER: UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.

THE ATTACK ON RUSSIA should not have scandalized our feelings, but the cynical assault did give us a shock. Our sense of outrage certainly could not have arisen from our experimental acquaintance with the Nazi mind. Hitler never ran truer to form than when he gave the command to cross the Russian frontiers. Rather, this new jolt to our minds came from the unenviable genius of the Fuehrer for surprise action. Even with all the long, black record of German treachery before us, it is still difficult for ordinary minds to perform the psychological gymnastic feats, consisting for the most part in moral somersaults, necessary to get inside the Nazi mentality. An ability to foresee the actions of a moral imbecile is no compliment to anybody. We ought to have known that if there was any hitherto untouched depth of infamy to which Hitler could descend, we might expect that he would make it a springboard for his next assault on humanity. However, Stalin and his comrades had appeared to us very much in the rôle of fellow-conspirators, and we went so far as to calculate on a certain measure of honour between two dictators who looked very like a pair of thieves. Evidently, Hitler does not feel even the constraints of an under-world code.

The assault on the Soviet Union moderates our former judgments on the conduct of the Russian leaders. It is difficult to obliterate from our memory those photographs of smiling plenipotentiaries fresh from signing the pact of non-aggression that gave the signal for the German armies to march into Poland. They seemed like a criminal gang planning rape, murder and robbery. Subsequent events contributed little if anything to a reversal of that judgment. In the attack on Poland, Stalin proved himself to be an accomplice in crime by sharing in the spoil and establishing himself on the Baltic. We recollect our horror at what had all the appearance of being a foul blow against Finland, how voices were raised in clamour for an expedition to be sent in aid of the gallant little country, how we derived satisfaction from the difficulties encountered by the Russians in that bleak campaign, and, finally, how we were confirmed in our

estimate that dictators were indistinguishable and that your Communist and your Nazi were the same bird once you had plucked their feathers. Much Russian conduct has been indefensible, especially when we recollect the sinister part of the Communist party all over the world since the present war began. But our moral indignation would come better from us if we had not played the same game. For us the hour of disillusionment came earlier. It is difficult for those who acquiesced in the conquest of Abyssinia, now liberated at the cost of so much blood, who abandoned the Czechs to the fury of the Nazis, to be over-severe with the crimes of the Russians. The policy of the Soviets was nothing other than the old, discredited strategy of appeasement.

The bloody campaign that has raged from mid-summer has unveiled a great enigma. By design, Russia had wrapped herself up in a vast covering of mystery. Diverse and contradictory reports came to hand from visitors to the Soviet Union, many of whom were ready to exploit our curiosity by giving impressions and estimates of the great Communist experiment. There were many suggestions that appeared to indicate a condition of growing weakness in the Russian régime. We heard of liquidated generals, and internal corruption. Journalists told us of magnificent machinery screeching and jamming for want of oil. The general impression was that Stalin was directed principally by counsels of fear. Others suggested that he was a cynical spectator of events, watching the development of world-chaos arising out of international destruction, until the hour should strike when he could exploit the situation for revolutionary purposes. In the end, the Communists would win the war without shedding a drop of real, red blood. But, for the most part, we have all been misled about Russia. Alone of all those in continental Europe who have hitherto dared to oppose the fury of the Nazis, the red armies have shown any competence to fight a large-scale modern war with adequate strategy. It is evident that the Russian forces are fired by an intense ardor of devotion to their cause and country. But that is not enough. They are ably and gallantly led. They have been hurled back, but there has been no collapse comparable with the débâcle that overwhelmed Holland, Belgium and France. Hitler is a cunning rascal, but he gravely miscalculated his enemy when he set out to conquer Russia. The armies of the Soviet Union give the impression of an unyielding courage and tenacious purpose that in their

own time, with the joint efforts of our own forces, will yet destroy the fury of the Nazi hordes.

The new turn of the war has brought an end to Russian isolationism. Like our own North American brand of the same illusion, the Communist dream of creating an insulated way of life has been shattered by the realistic logic of a world-conflict. The parallel is both striking and informative. Pharisaism is the ethic of the superiority-complex. It has its nobler side. Both the North American and the Communist isolationists believed that they had achieved a civilization superior to that of the wicked world lying beyond their borders. This higher attainment could be preserved only by remaining aloof from the eternal brawling that revealed the lesser breeds without the law. The Americans surveyed with contempt the decadent Europeans; the Russians hurled their jibes at the wickedness of the capitalists. Hitler is the enemy of all mankind, but through his crimes he has become an instrument of moral illumination. He has brought home to our minds that, beneath all differences of race and country, the human family is fundamentally one, with great common interests more binding than the influences that keep its members apart. The peoples of the earth were not intended to live in isolation. This is true of the Germans, of the Russians, of the British and of the Americans. In the tremendous common cause that now unites their efforts, the British, American and Russian peoples have now been compelled to get together. None of them will emerge from this great experience as they went into it. If they can carry the common purpose that animates their battle with Hitler into the constructive tasks that lie beyond the war, even the blood and tears of the terrible campaign in Russia may be changed by the alchemy of a new spiritual purpose into a new river of life for all mankind.

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**A**N IMPERIAL CABINET is proposed for an imperial war-effort. Mr. Mackenzie King has declared against it, and cites the authority of Mr. Churchill in support of his views. The opinions of such men are weighty: some would declare them to be absolute in their authority. But evidently this judgment is not shared by the people of Australia. In fact, discussion of the subject was so acute and controversial that the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth felt it was his duty to resign. The dispute was not about whether a member of the Australian Government

should go to London, but was concerned with who he should be. The Prime Minister evidently was persuaded that it was his personal duty to be at the heart of Empire in immediate consultation with His Majesty's Government in Great Britain; the Opposition thought otherwise. And the present Opposition in the Parliament of Australia, by reason of the narrow majority held by the Government, is a very powerful group. Mr. Menzies can hardly have considered the question one of minor importance, and his views must have been shared by his parliamentary colleagues. Thus the proposal of an Imperial Cabinet cannot lightly be set aside.

There is much to be said for Mr. King's views, even if his arguments in support are not all equally valid. His own place is in Canada. His journey to London was a necessary undertaking: many think it was too long delayed. His absence from the British capital would have been gravely misinterpreted there, and not less gravely here. Not only as a gesture (although the importance of that was sufficient to warrant the trip), but for his own personal information, as the leader of our war-effort, he was wisely guided in deciding to cross the Atlantic. But Mr. King is needed at home. He holds both the government and the country together. His hand ought to be directly on the wheel of state, and not by any remote control. Our domestic share in the war has reached such an importance and intensity that the personal direction of the Prime Minister must be constantly given to this tremendous task. And the tempo and extent of our war-drive must increase very rapidly. If there is any criticism to be levelled at our leader, it is concerned with his reticence and his self-effacement. In the future, the people of Canada want more rather than less of their Prime Minister.

But, if Mr. King should spend the greater part of his time in Canada, it does not follow that no other member of his Cabinet should go to represent us in London. True, the Prime Minister has a unique authority, but it is not indivisible. His rejoinder is that Canada has a High Commissioner in London, and, of course, Mr. Massey is an able and competent representative. But he is not a member of the Canadian Government. He has been absent from Canada for a long time, and he can hardly be said to have had his hand on the pulse of Canadian war-time feeling. Members of the Cabinet—especially those directly concerned with national defence and supplies—have been in London. The amazing apparatus of present-day trans-Atlantic travel makes a journey from the Canadian to the British capital

almost as easy as an over-night trip from Ottawa to Toronto. Mr. King refers to the long-distance telephone and the ease of modern communication. All this is true, but there are two points worth bearing in mind. Telephone conversations and airplane trips are marvellous contrivances for overcoming what modern scientists call spare-time. But they have their limitations. Mr. King would not want to govern Canada by a combination of the long-distance telephone and the transcontinental air services. He knows, none better, that colleagues have to meet, discuss, and share in the reaching of decisions. The second point is concerned with whether, both as a symbol and as an instrument for a new concerted imperial war effort, some united organization should not be set up.

Sooner or later we must pass from defensive to offensive action. This winter will be a decisive turning-point in the strategy of the war. By that time, we shall know the fate of Russia, on which the future offensive capacity of the Nazis so greatly depends. Mr. Churchill has warned us that we may still expect an attempted invasion of Great Britain, and if such a battle begins, it will be as terrible as it will be decisive. But we have pledged ourselves to the liberation of the European continent—the cause for which we entered the war—and that tremendous undertaking can be accomplished only on the continent itself. In that great enterprize, Canada and the other members of the British Commonwealth of Nations will have a share, not as the assistants of Great Britain, but as allies. Mr. King refers to the last war, and recalls the misunderstandings that arose through an Imperial Cabinet. But surely it is worth while also to remember that, for victory in the last great conflict, unity of command became an urgent necessity and the final pledge of success. In any case, the whole matter of imperial relations has been cleared up and advanced since 1918. British statesmen nowadays really understand that we are not to be ordered about from London, and that we have rights that demand respect. But, as indeed experience has suggested, may it not be that in the active and constant collaboration of free and independent governments there is a stronger kind of union than either the older condescension of a patronising Mother-land or the newer occasional conference of a family of nations, very conscious that they have grown up and have homes of their own?

In a sense, an Imperial Cabinet is a misnomer. There is no Imperial Government and no Imperial Parliament: therefore,

in the strict sense of the word, there can be no Imperial Cabinet. The essence of Cabinet government is its responsibility to parliament. In Great Britain the relation of the ministry to parliamentary debate is even closer than in Canada. The ministerial changes that take place so frequently reveal a subtle sensitiveness to public opinion and parliamentary pressure hardly possible in a country so wide and diversified as our own. To whom would a so-called Imperial Cabinet be responsible? However, the whole idea of a Cabinet, with its duties and responsibilities, like so many other elements in our British constitution, is an evolved creation. A Cabinet has no precise place in our scheme of government. It belongs to the very genius of our British constitution that its apparatus is created out of emergent situations. Call the organization by any name that suits it—a continually sitting Imperial Conference if it sounds better—but let the whole question be seriously faced. A successful prosecution of this war to a victorious end is the only vital cause in the world of our time. If we fail, questions of imperial relations will be easily solved, because there will be no empire left to have any relations at all. In any case, the sense of Canada's dignity as a nation would seem to demand that she should have a place right in counsels that must determine the future course of the war. We have sent our soldiers to fight on British soil, our ships to ride alongside the Royal Navy, and, not least, our airmen to battle in the British skies. We have declared, most properly, our will that these Canadians should go anywhere, at any time they may, in the best judgment of their commanders, be able best to take their share in the far-flung war. But, under whose authority? Remember Crete! The Canadian people ought to demand a share in the final determination of the war-strategy, and in the last resort that can be achieved only by a ministerial delegation actively participating in some kind of Imperial Cabinet.

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THE ATLANTIC CHARTER, to use the description accepted by one of its sponsors (Mr. Churchill in his subsequent radio address) was the bravest battle-flag run to the mast-head of the man o'war on which it was signed. The British Prime Minister was surely over-modest when he described the eight-point document as "a simple, rough and ready war-time statement of a goal". There was too much deposit of past history, and too much promise of future history, to warrant calling it a mere writing of occasion. The immediate value of the manifesto

appeared in the great world-wide radio speech, which Mr. Churchill delivered soon after his return. In the heart of his message, the speaker directed profoundly moving words of encouragement to the enslaved nations of Europe—addressing to each, one after the other, an appropriate sentence of hope and salvation. Standing, as he did, beneath the banner first hoisted by Mr. Roosevelt and himself on the Atlantic, the Prime Minister could speak with an authority greater even than that of his own personal prestige—and that is saying much—rather as displaying a great charter of civilization, of which only tyrants and rascals need to be afraid.

Fortunately, the Atlantic Charter is thrown into vivid relief by another declaration made under not dissimilar circumstances by another pair of collaborators and in a different part of the world. A week or so after the historic ocean meeting of the American and British leaders, Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini also held a conference. Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill met at sea—a kind of rendezvous not open to the Axis partners. Indeed, we have the authority of the Prime Minister for believing that he was able to cross the whole breadth of the North Atlantic ocean on a British battleship and then to get home again without molestation. Thus in many ways the total fact of the meeting—its personalities and its place—justified Mr. Churchill's description that it bore a symbolic character. The conference has received considerable publicity: at the time of its occurrence, probably it got too much attention from our glamour-boys of the modern press and radio. We remain ignorant of the main deliberations—what F. D. R. said to Winston and what Winston said in reply—but we have seen their photographs on deck and in the mess-room and at church-parade: above all, we have their united message to the world. But the conspirators from Germany and Italy contrived to dwell in a depth of darkness appropriate to their sinister designs. If they joined in a common act of worship, we should be glad to hear of it, and especially to learn the character of the deity whom they patronised with their praise and prayers. We have no visible evidence given to the world in which we may observe any mutual pledging of their common cause in banquets of cream-puffs and milk. But they did give a message to the world. Their manifesto was brief and blunt, consisting of two aims and a postscript. First, they promised an end of plutocracy and Bolshevism; and, second, they held out a hope of permanent peace for Europe on the basis of a new collaboration, and, if all reports are correct, even under

a new flag. The postscript was that the practical arrangements for new and mighty warlike efforts would show presently what was in the mind of the dictators.

The statements published from these two almost contemporaneous meetings, one from the Atlantic Ocean and the other from the eastern battle-front, strangely enough appear to have a common aim. Both speak of desiring peace, and both contemplate that desirable condition in terms of collaboration. But there they part company. For one, peace arises out of freedom to which the prelude is liberation; for the other, peace is to be enforced, and the method is conquest. The democratic powers seek no territorial expansion for themselves and no territorial alteration for other nations without consent of the peoples concerned: they give to every nation the right to determine its own form of government: they declare for freedom of opportunity to trade and of access to raw materials: they look to a general elevation of social wellbeing in all nations: they promise the destruction of the Nazi tyranny and thereafter a keeping of the peace: they affirm freedom of the seas: lastly, they look for an end of war-like methods and disarmament. The dictators seek a territorial expansion that will result in a German Europe on the basis of dictatorial institutions: they contemplate the enslavement of all European peoples, whereby raw materials and trade facilities shall supply the necessities primarily of the German people: they want economic and social security only for themselves: in place of the so-called enemies, Plutocracy and Communism, they erect the monstrous system of National Socialism with its secret police, concentration camps and the universal suppression of personal liberty: they contemplate a long régime of force aiming at the peace of a vast silence, in which human aspirations and individuality have been bludgeoned into a dumb obedience.

The elevation of these two rival battle-flags settles the issues of civilization for our time. They constitute an enforced choice. Between them, for the present, there is no third option, unless it be the ignoble decision to be indifferent. The standards only need to fly together to display their true character: one is the banner of life, liberty and civilization, the other is the skull-and-cross-bones of death, captivity and degradation. The programme of the dictators is not a subject to be discussed, but the symbol of an enemy to be destroyed.

The Atlantic Charter contains echoes of old phrases and aspirations, but it also strikes new and welcome notes. It should



hardly have been necessary to state clearly that the democratic allies seek no aggrandisement for themselves, but, keeping past history in mind, other people may well think that such a declaration needed a first place. In any case, it was a complete counterblast to the Nazi programme. Old terms that re-appeared, some in new forms, were self-determination, freedom of the seas, abandonment of the use of force, and disarmament. Mr. Churchill himself, in the radio address delivered after his return home, drew attention to the new and significant appearances which indicate how far we have travelled beyond the Versailles mentality. The first is that for a time at least, in the interests of general security, peace must be enforced. The offending nations must be restrained not for the gain of the victors, but for the good of all. The record is that along with political self-determination, there must be economic co-operation and a universal improvement of living conditions. When the day of Peace arrives, soon or late, we may hope that the still sad music of humanity will swell into a great tide of song, that will drown out the loud shouting of the self-interested who come to play for their own hands and the polite chatter of the diplomatists who come to enjoy the game.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE has come to Canada. On the first day of July a considerable number of employed people began to pay their first weekly premiums into the Unemployment Insurance Fund, the other contributors being the employers and the Dominion of Canada. In times less pre-occupied, this new step in our industrial life would have attracted a good deal of attention. Nevertheless, it does mark a new stage in our social evolution. To begin with, the unemployment insurance scheme is a practical token that the hazard of being without work is a social problem of sufficient seriousness to merit systematic attention. Moreover, it means that provision against the incidence of unemployment is not the sole concern of the individual worker: the employer and the State must share in this responsibility. And, significantly, the burden of maintaining this plan of insurance is laid on the Dominion of Canada as a whole.

Thus we take a long farewell of pioneer social conditions in Canada. Not so very many years ago, the only constructive suggestion that might be offered to an unemployed man was to go and get a job. On the whole, this solution of his problem was

adequate. We were living in economic conditions that were more or less in constant expansion. If there were depressed conditions in one locality, there was almost sure to be more activity near at hand. A young man or woman could always go west or turn south to the great booming economy of the United States of America. Canadian industry was in rapid development, crying out for workers: cities were expanding: railroads were being laid down: the future was bright with hope. Of course, there were dark patches in the picture. Periodic slumps caused temporary spells of unemployment. Our climate created an unusual amount of seasonal occupation. But, on the whole, this was accepted as normal. There were all kinds of occasional jobs then to which a man could turn. There were furnaces to be stoked in winter, harvests to be reaped in the fall. The general impression left in the mind, looking back say over a score of years, is a fluid condition of economic life wherein a man of resource and intelligence could always get something to do somewhere, and, before long, if he had the mind for it, he found himself established in a job. Only after years of bitter experience have the Canadian people come to accept any other picture as representative of their industrial life.

1929 was the fateful year. To forecast the emphasis of future chroniclers on some particular event is a familiar device of rhetorical art when the speaker or writer wants to develop some thesis in current events or recent history. Perhaps we are not sufficiently remote from the great world depression to reach any final judgment on its importance. Nevertheless, already, that economic calamity has projected shattering effects into the life of the world, and nothing will ever be the same again. It was like a catalytic agent dropped into a chemical solution: it precipitated what had already been present in the mixture. The vast capitalist system received a major shake-up. There was revealed especially a fatal lack of proper relation between the investment of money and the production of goods. Many wry smiles cross the faces of men and women in their fifties today as they look back on that strange bubble-world of economic unreality that first blew up to such dimensions on Wall Street and then collapsed in the course of a single afternoon. Some think of it as a bad dream; others recollect it as a kind of financial escapade, merry while it lasted, and well over. But that was not the whole story. The boom had a history reaching back into the war years. While North America was rejoicing in its prosperity, already a vast economic blizzard had scattered

despair over Europe. Germany, France and Great Britain had millions of sullen workmen living on relief, moving further and further to the left in their views. The deflation of 1929 was only a delayed action for us here in North America, and, if possible we have plunged even deeper into the troughs of economic despair. We still remember the bread-lines in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver: the transient youths living on trains across Canada: the ugly riots, the falling prices, the lost fortunes, the ruined homes, the defeated lives. Unemployment became a serious, protracted problem.

For Canada, the emergence of this social and economic condition in full force is the evidence of a stationary period in our development. For the present, there are few if any new worlds of economic expansion to conquer. The frontier has become stabilized, geographically and industrially. We have come to a certain maturity in our evolution, with all the characteristic diseases and set-backs of that stage in life. The pathology of industry must now occupy our attention. Problems faced in Europe thirty years ago must now be tackled, and chief among them is the recurring economic disease of periodic unemployment.

What, then, are the factors that have led to the adoption of Unemployment Insurance in Canada? First, and most important, is a new doctrine of political responsibility. The economic welfare of its citizens has now become a concern of the State. To the familiar social provisions of public protection, education, the establishment and upkeep of roads, the maintenance of law and order, and other services of communal interest, is now added concern for the individual man as an individual. This new function of State the citizen claims as a right rather than a privilege. We have passed the stage of trying to meet this problem by gratuitous relief. Second, the doctrine of trade cycles in industrial life has been accepted. Under the capitalist system, there must be periods of expansion and recession with resultant unemployment. Third, years of bitter experience and the example of other nations have pointed to the method of insurance as an attempted rationalization of apparently uncontrollable elements in economic life. Fifth, the incidence of unemployment has been established as a concern of industry as a whole, in which the employer and the employee are jointly concerned with the State itself.

In some respects, we are fortunate in the time of our adoption of unemployment insurance: in other respects, not so for-

tunate. This is a period of unusual industrial expansion, when unemployment is at a minimum in many parts of the country. The scheme gets a favourable send-off with the payment of many premiums, and a small demand for the return of benefits. We are likely to lay a sound actuarial foundation for the plan. At the same time, a new impost on the income alike of capital and labour is added to an already heavy burden of taxation. The increased income tax, the defence tax, as well as the large donations being made to war services all combine to create a certain unpopularity for this new and unfamiliar charge. However, most people are reconciled to a time of inevitable economic crisis when the war-boom is over. There must be a very sharp and sudden decline in employment at the close of hostilities. The wisest planning cannot avoid a period of dislocation, involving transfer of productive effort from one field to another, if indeed to any field at all. A strong unemployment fund will be an added buttress to social security when war-time conditions come to an end.

Unemployment insurance deals with the pathology of industry. But the new strategy of health has moved into the system of preventive medicine. What of our economic life? The war has brought us interesting experiences of price-control and the avoidance of inflation. This has been accomplished with a remarkably small amount of State interference: rather through a better understanding of economic principles. Is it too much to expect that in more settled times we may look for some resolute tackling of industrial diseases such as unemployment from the preventive point of view? But that is another and a very large question.

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