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## TOPICS OF THE DAY

MELLOW LIGHT OF VICTORY: FUTURE OF WESTERN EUROPE:  
ENGLAND'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A NEW SOCIAL ORDER.

THE war now goes well for the cause of democratic freedom. If the shining shores of peace are not yet in sight, the dark clouds of the mediaeval barbarism, which the evil trinity of Fascist powers had brought back to hang as a pall over the whole of our planet, are slowly lifting, and there is now a definite assurance that their sinister design to dominate the rest of mankind has been frustrated. The task now before the fighting forces of democracy is to batter them into the unconditional surrender upon which our leaders properly insist, and it has been greatly facilitated by the surprising final collapse of the Axis armies in Tunisia, which ranks with the repulse from Stalingrad as one of the greatest military disasters ever suffered by Germany. Apart from the capture of nearly a quarter of a million prisoners of war, the gains of the Tunisian victory are enormous. Not only has it expelled the enemy finally from the continent of Africa, but by making reasonably safe the sea route through the Mediterranean it shortens greatly our communications with the Far East and also with ports on the Persian Gulf through which Russia gets supplies, and it will relieve the severe strain upon the shipping facilities of the United Nations. Its moral effect upon the attitude of neutral Mediterranean Powers like Spain and Turkey is already discernible, and it has set free nearly a million seasoned troops, whom Rommel's skilful campaigns had kept tied up between Syria and Morocco. The stage has been set for a well planned offensive against the outer bastions of the fortress into which the Nazis have transformed the western mainland of Europe. At this time of writing, what Mr. Churchill has described as "amphibious operations of peculiar complexity and hazard on a large scale" have been started by the United Nations. Their outcome may well determine the duration of the war, and the effective coordination of the different types of fighting power, which a variety of nations contributed on our side to the North American campaign, is an encouraging augury for further decisive successes. Meanwhile the government and people of Italy have been cowering in nerve-stricken terror in anticipation of the blows about to descend upon them, and even if the large German garrison now planted in Italy manages to organize a stiff delaying resistance to the Allied

invasion, it is highly probable that before winter arrives again, the whole Italian peninsula and the adjacent islands will be safely under the control of the liberating armies of democracy. Then the final assault upon the narrowed inner defences of Germany can begin. Hopes, however, are apparently cherished that a sustained aerial bombardment of key cities in Germany may produce such devastation of her industrial machine and weaken the national morale to such a degree that much bloodshed may be averted by a repetition of the debacle which overtook Kaiser Wilhelm II's *Reich* in the fall of 1918.

Another heartening development, coincident with the North Africa victory, is the notable progress which has been made for the establishment of political cooperation among the United Nations on a firmer basis. The dispute which suddenly flared up between the Russian and Polish Governments, and the continuance of acute dissensions between the French elements who are committed to battle for the liberation of their country, revealed disturbing fissures in the democratic front, which were a source of great elation in Berlin. Their composure was one of the urgent problems which confronted Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill during their recent conferences at Washington. Fortunately it is now possible to record the removal of some of the obstacles which have prevented the achievement of political solidarity on the democratic side.

The Poles have yielded to pressure to abandon foolish and intransigent demands which none of their allies could support, and the Russians have responded with conciliatory gestures, which have eased the strain in their mutual relation. Furthermore, Stalin by decreeing the dissolution of the Comintern has taken a weapon out of the hands of reactionary elements in the western democracies, who for their own selfish ends sought to keep alive suspicions about the *bona fides* of Russia and her aspiration to infect the whole world with Communist ideology. Then, while it would be an exaggeration to describe Generals De Gaulle and Giraud as modern parallels of Damon and Pythias, they have reconciled their differences sufficiently for the formation under their joint chairmanship of a French National Committee of Liberation, which has named eleven Commissioners, a majority of them De Gaullists, to administer the government of the French Empire. If this experiment is successful, the next step should be the establishment of a French Government-in-Exile, which could win formal recognition from its Allies and by its emergence wean away the sorely tried people of France

itself from any respect which they may still possess for the authority of the now hopelessly enslaved Vichy Government. Furthermore, on the other side of the Atlantic a timely revolution in Argentina has driven out of office the notoriously pro-Fascist Government of Ramon Castillo and, if the new administration still seems to speak with uncertain voice about its foreign policy, it is obviously not going to range itself on a losing side, but will be disposed to collaborate with the other South American Republics, which are helping our cause in various ways.

Another source of encouragement is the change which is visible in the trends of American public opinion. When Mr. Eden was in Washington, there was a spate of unfriendly comment in the American press about the danger of Britain selling out to Russia, and it later developed into a vigorous campaign of propaganda, coming to a head in an unpleasant debate in the Senate, which demanded a drastic change in American strategy on the ground that, since the European dictators have been effectually cornered in their lairs, the United States in her own interests should concentrate all her energies upon the swift defeat of Japan, lest Britain, having provided for her own security, withdraw from the struggle in the Pacific. Both the British stake in Asia and the position of Australia and New Zealand make such an idea fantastic, but the campaign persisted until Mr. Churchill in his address to the Congress of the United States effectively countered this insidious crusade by repeating in unequivocal language his earlier pledge that Britain after Hitler was suppressed would continue to cooperate with all her power and resources in the war against Japan until her war-lords also made unconditional surrender.

Anti-British and anti-Russian elements have made common cause with the simon-pure isolationists in this campaign for a revision of strategy. The main attack of papers like the *Chicago Tribune* and the Hearst chain is now being directed against Russia; they are asking why should the United States cooperate if Russia will not, and arguing that since Russian policy is strictly nationalist, the United States should forswear all "globaloney" nonsense and adopt the same line of strict self-interest. But Mr. Walter Lippmann in his new book *United States Foreign Policy* delivers a shrewd thrust at the American opponents of Russia by pointing out that after the American Revolution ended in 1784, Imperialist Russia regarded the infant United States as such a dangerously radical community that it refused to recognize

her and receive any diplomatic representative from her until 1809.

Mr. Lippmann's book is a very valuable critique of isolationism as a policy for the United States, but it will not be such an effective instrument of propaganda for international collaboration as Mr. Wendell Willkie's *One World*, which is a best seller and numbers its readers by the millions. Another best seller is the book by Mr. Joseph Davies, *Mission to Moscow*. It has been made into an arresting film, whose avowed object is to spread the conviction that Russia is, in the words of Mr. Willkie, "a darned effective country", that she pursued in the pre-war era a consistent foreign policy, and that she is fully worthy of American friendship and help. Moreover it is estimated that now in the United States there are over 200 organizations working on programmes of peace and reconstruction, and that virtually all the schemes which they evolve include proposals for some supranational authority and wholehearted American backing for it.

It is indeed a very hopeful sign that the American advocates of effective international cooperation are meeting boldly the onslaught of the isolationists, and there is available considerable proof that their efforts to educate public opinion and mobilize it for post-war collaboration with other nations is meeting with distinct success. For example, a poll taken of a cross-section of its readers by a woman's magazine with a nation-wide circulation revealed that over 90 per cent of the women voting favored American support for some supranational authority which would be armed with real power to enforce its will and decisions. Equally significant is the result of a test poll taken by the magazine *Fortune*, which disclosed that about 80 per cent of the people voting were satisfied with President Roosevelt's management of the war and foreign policy, and that 64 per cent of them were prepared to vote for his reelection for a fourth term if the war had not ended in November, 1944. So for the moment the isolationists of the United States seem to be fighting a losing battle, and if they can be kept in the position of a growling helpless minority, the prospects of a satisfactory peace settlement will be greatly improved. Unfortunately the isolationist spirit still has a strong foothold in Canada, and the same sort of educational campaign as has curbed its influence in the United States seems desirable on this side of the border.

DR. BENES, the able and experienced head of the exiled Government of Czechoslovakia, in the series of admirable and temperate speeches which he has been delivering during his tour of North America, has been outlining his ideas about the reconstruction of war-torn Europe. He forecasts expansion of the projected federation between his own country and Poland, for which provisional plans have been worked out, into an Eastern European Confederation linked in close relationship with Russia, and as one of the chief architects and supporters of the now moribund League of Nations he looks forward to its resurrection in a form which will make it a more effective instrument for preserving peace. But his primary concern is political reconstruction, and any political edifices which he helps to erect may prove to be fragile and insecure unless they are given a sound economic foundation calculated to ensure prosperity for those who live in them.

So the nature of the materials which will be left for the rebuilding of Europe's prosperity is a very pertinent question. The prime tragedy of the First World War was the halt that it caused in a wonderful surging tide of prosperity and modernization which had been changing the face of Europe. This arresting picture of the European scene at the close of the first decade of this century is given by the late Stefan Zweig in his autobiography, posthumously published:

"I never loved the old earth more than in those last years before the First World War, never hoped more ardently for European unity, never had more faith in its future than then, when we thought we saw a new dawning . . .

Forty years of peace had strengthened the economic organism of the nations, technical science had given wings to the rhythm of life, and scientific discoveries had made the spirit of that generation proud; there was sudden upsurge which could be felt in almost identical measure in all countries of Europe. The cities grew more beautiful and more populous from year to year. Vienna, Milan, Paris, London and Amsterdam on each fresh visit evoked new astonishment and pleasure. The streets became broader and more showy, the public buildings more impressive, the shops more luxurious and tasteful. Everything manifested the increase and spread of wealth. There was progress everywhere. Whoever ventured won. Whoever bought a rare book or a painting saw it increase in value; the more daring and the larger a scale on which an enterprise was founded, the more certain a profit. A wondrous unconcernedness had thus spread over the world, for what could interrupt this rapid ascent, restrict the plan, which constantly drew force from its own soaring? Never had Europe been stronger, richer, more beautiful or more confident of an even

better future. None but a few shrivelled graybeards bemoaned in the ancient manner "the good old days." Not only the cities, the people too, looked handsomer and healthier because of sports, better nutrition, shorter working hours and a closer tie with nature."

But this dawn of new vigor and hope for Europe proved false, and in the summer of 1914 most of the bright colors in the picture painted by Stefan Zweig were blotted out by the terrible bloodbath of the First World War. For more than four years it held Europe in its baneful grip, and the peace, which turned out to have been merely an armistice, left ugly scars on its face and also poisons in its veins, which soon broke into festering sores and after a score of unquiet troubled years brought back the pestilence. It is true that during the armistice most of Europe made a superficial recovery from the economic and social wounds which had been inflicted upon her, without regaining complete health; but now that this unhappy continent has once more become the central arena of another World War, the prospect of any restoration of the happy state of affairs which Stefan Zweig depicted is much darker than it was in 1918.

Mr. Peter Drucker in a recent appraisal of the post-war prospects of Europe points out that, quite apart from the dreadful ravages wrought by war and Nazi terrorism, the problem of reviving its prosperity has been enormously complicated by other changes produced by the two wars. The basis of this prosperity was the international, political, economic predominance of the European continent over a large part of the outside world, from which it was able to levy tribute in various forms. Ownership of colonial territory and its exploitation provided only a fractional source of Western Europe's income and prestige. It supplied a steady demand from all over the world for well-trained engineers and chemists, teachers, accountants, bank managers, harbor masters, trained actuaries and other technical experts, and they earned high salaries and comfortable pensions. Moreover there was performed in this territory a vast amount of work for the outside world in the shape of wholesale trade, insurance business, commodity brokerage, international shipping, financial exchanges and the designing of machines and tools. Indeed Mr. Drucker estimates that one fifth of the population of Western Europe has been dependent upon Europe's privileged position as the world's technician, business organizer and clerk, and that this fifth probably included a majority of the middle

classes, especially the independent business and professional men.

But since 1914 the rapid development, accelerated by the two wars, of countries like China, Turkey, our two Antipodean Dominions, and the South American Republics, which not long ago were economically colonies of Europe, has greatly diminished, if it has not completely wiped out, the economic and political predominance which was the foundation of a delicate social structure and made a great contribution to the income of a large and independent middle class. This middle class with its economic and political independence, its social standing and cultured tastes and its traditionally liberal and international outlook, was the fine flower of Europe's population and the guardian of its spiritual, intellectual and artistic heritage. If it is doomed to disappear or to be reduced to trivial numbers, the consequences for the whole world may be calamitous. There will loom up the danger of a widespread collapse of a complicated social and economic fabric which has taken centuries to build, and the solution of the desperate problem which would be presented might involve wholesale migration to non-European countries and the re-training of vast numbers of people for new occupations. The social disintegration of western Europe must somehow or other be averted, if a stable world order is to be created, and with this problem the nations of America must concern themselves.

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**A** WIDESPREAD feeling that Britain in the decades between the two World Wars was sadly misgoverned and well nigh brought to complete ruin by Ministries composed mainly of human products of the so called "English public schools" has brought these institutions under a running fire of criticism, and a highly controversial debate about their future has been in progress. The controversy affects Scotland very slightly, as the few public schools within her bounds attract less than a thousand pupils altogether, and are materially influenced in their practices by the traditionally democratic character of the Scottish educational structure. At present most of these English public schools are making heavy weather through the impact of the war. The severe incidence of special war taxation has left thousands of British parents, who normally would have sent their sons to public schools, unable to pay the fees demanded by them, which range from \$500 per annum upwards and consequently, while schools of the highest social standing, like Eton, Harrow and

Winchester, still have no lack of applications for all their vacant places, many of the schools of lesser repute find the number of their pupils greatly curtailed. As they cannot easily reduce their overhead charges, they are, unless blessed with rich endowments, involved in very serious financial difficulties. If a heavy rate of taxation continues in the post-war era, there will be no abatement of these difficulties, and it is plain that not a few of the minor public schools will have to close their doors or undergo a drastic readjustment of their status and functions. Meanwhile they have been included within the scope of a comprehensive enquiry into the general educational problems of Britain, and the resulting report is expected to contain some innovating proposals about the public school system.

Its defenders, discerning a serious menace to them, are vociferously active in urging the case for their perpetuation in their present form, subject possibly to a few modifications. They argue that these schools are unique traditional institutions, part of the bone and sinew of England; that they have turned out through the generations a class of men who, through the educational training received at them and the virtues thus acquired, have enabled the British people to gain possession of and to administer efficiently the affairs of a vast Commonwealth, imposing a rule of law and order over one quarter of the earth's surface; that they give a special flavor to English civilization which other nations envy, and that any reforms which would deprive them of their free status and incorporate them in a uniform national system of education would deprive England of one of her special glories.

But the critics of the public school system contend that, however valuable in the past the contribution of the public schools to English life may have been, they will be superseded institutions in the post-war world, and that their preservation in their existing form and status must prove a fatal barrier to the transformation of Britain into a genuinely democratic community, an ideal to which all classes except the socially elect "diehards" are now giving lip service. It is idle, say these critics, to talk about the creation of a reasonably equalitarian society in Britain as long as a select upper crust of the population, who enjoy the largest incomes, are in their youth kept in a separate educational compartment from the rest of the nation.

They also point out that, in the years that lie ahead, there will be much less occupation abroad for the potential administrators, in whose production the public schools specialize, when



Britain has finally withdrawn from India, and the units of her tropical empire, if they have not been placed under the supervision of some international authority, have made great progress towards self-government and are producing a local crop of native officials. Her much greater need will then be for men who are equipped by their educational training to grapple efficiently with the problems of a world ruled by science and machinery, and to provide intelligent leadership at home for a people who will be compelled to depend more than at any time in the last century and a half upon the resources of their own island and to reintegrate their economic, industrial and social system to meet radically altered conditions. Furthermore, there is almost general agreement that in the pre-war years British industry and commerce were greatly handicapped by the fact that in far too many cases the control of important enterprises, built up by energetic self-made men, had passed into the hands of descendants whose public school education had given them a veneer of social polish but had signally failed to equip them for the efficient management of business affairs.

Perhaps, however, the strongest count in the indictment laid against the public schools is their anti-democratic bias. Many of them are situated within the bounds of or in close proximity to some town in which a variety of excellent people, doctors, merchants, engineers, plumbers etc. are earning their livelihood and comporting themselves as decent citizens. But to the inmates of the adjacent public school these people are the "townees", an inferior tribe set apart from the residents of the favored enclave, and a false social philosophy is inculcated into thousands of young minds at a formative age and often they never shake it off. They come to regard everybody who does not speak with their special brand of accent or possess their ideas of what constitutes "good form" as lesser breeds without the law and consequently, if it ever falls to their lot to live outside England or India or one of our tropical dependencies, they find it extraordinarily difficult to fit themselves into and acquire any popularity in a *milieu* where products of English public schools are not conceded any natural superiority.

As for the quality of the education which is supplied by the public schools, it varies enormously. The clever boys, who reach the topmost forms at schools like Eton, Winchester, and Rugby, usually emerge with well-trained intellects; but boys who are endowed with only modest brains secure a very inadequate educational equipment for the modern world, not nearly as good

as what the average boy who attends a first class day school like Manchester Grammar School or George Watson's College in Edinburgh acquires. Lancelot Hogben asserts that the upper classes of England are the "most expensively uneducated people" in the world, and while this may be an extreme statement, it can fairly be argued that, if the upper classes of England, who form the core of the Conservative Party, had been better educated, they would never have appraised mediocrities like Earl Baldwin, Mr. Neville Chamberlain and Sir Samuel Hoare as statesmen fitting to give wise guidance to their national policies, or have tolerated the appointment of obvious fools like Sir Neville Henderson to key diplomatic posts.

The alumni of the public schools are by no means at one in their defence, and indeed it is the critics who have had personal experience of them that provide the most damaging evidence against them. Among my own acquaintance the most relentless opponent of their perpetuation is an old Harrovian, who was a first class athlete, a good enough cricketer to play for an English county, and sufficiently clever to win a scholarship at Oxford, but who declares that it took him ten years to make good his faulty education at school, and nobody makes a more formidable indictment of the public schools than Professor R. H. Tawney, who was educated at Rugby and Balliol.

The famous Dr. Arnold of Rugby set a pattern for the public schools by proclaiming that their fundamental aim should be to turn out a breed of "Christian gentlemen", but Professor Tawney asserts that what England requires is not more gentlemen but more men of sufficient character not to care whether they are gentlemen or not. He disapproves of a favorite project of many would-be reformers of the public school system, a plan for democratizing them by reserving in each of them a number of places for boys who receive their primary education at elementary or national secondary schools and who would have the high fees met by state scholarships. He argues that such a scheme implies a complete misunderstanding of the problem involved in the public schools, and states it in these terms:

It is not how to select the sons of common persons who are capable of profiting by attendance at a public boarding school. It is how to modify the atmosphere, outlook and manners of life of the more expensive boarding schools in such a way as to make it beneficial for ordinary boys to attend them.

As he points out, a great deal of nonsense is talked about the venerable antiquity of the English public schools. A few of them are really ancient foundations, but the great majority of them were organized within the last century to meet the requirements of such prosperous business people as desired their children to become endowed with the manners and speech of the ruling class to whose ranks they were being admitted. Most of these *nouveaux riches* wanted their sons removed from the drab environment of the industrial towns in Yorkshire and Lancashire, where the family fortune was being made, and hence arose a tremendous demand for places in boarding schools. One very unfortunate result of this snobbish tendency was to divorce hundreds of boys at an early age from the environment in which they had responsibilities to shoulder, and to make them lose contact with the plain folk whose labors had made possible the education chosen for them, and it produced the "two nations" whose existence so good a Tory as Disraeli deplored.

So Professor Tawney proposes to transform many of the public schools into great day schools, serving the districts in which they happen to be located, and he would use others to accommodate groups of selected boys from the day schools of the great cities for short periods of residential education, in which he discerns certain benefit. He does not expect any early acceptance of his plans, but he is confident that sooner or later they will be put into operation, and declares cynically that when they are acted upon,

the schools planned in accordance with them will be described as institutions peculiarly characteristic of the British genius, each with a distinctive tradition of immemorial antiquity, and all offering unique opportunities for the training of character and education for leadership.

There is, however, a reasonable certainty that once the British Labor Party comes into power with a definite majority, as it will one day, the public schools of England will under some scheme or other be forced to fit themselves into a national scheme of education and, whenever this change occurs, the problem of the kindred Canadian institutions will have to be faced.

The average university professor in Canada, who has a chance to test the abilities of students in their first year, would not concede that the products of the Canadian replicas of the English public schools are one whit better educated boys than boys coming up from our high schools and collegiates. Indeed

the balance of superiority would probably lie with the latter, because boys born into a home where there is a tradition of and respect for learning and culture secure a better foundation for their later education than do boys reared in homes where wealth and luxury are the ruling elements and culture is at a discount; there is a larger proportion of the former class of boy in the high schools and collegiates than in the private schools. Consequently there is keener intellectual competition in the former, and there is a more vigorous circulation of the mutual education which clever boys transmit to each other. Fortunately, however, in Canada attendance at a private school does not confer the same social accolade as attaches to the "old school tie" in England, and so there is less urgency for a process of democratization in our private schools.

But if the English public schools cease to be exclusive preserves for the richer classes, and are incorporated in a unified national system, a demand for a similar change in Canada will develop and be hard to resist. They might in future years have a very useful destiny, if, with the support of generous state scholarships, they became special residential training schools for boys who aspire to devote their lives to public service of some kind, as civil servants, diplomats, municipal administrators and even as politicians. The writer, after watching more than twenty sessions of Canadian Parliaments, has long been in agreement with the proposals of Mr. H. G. Wells that nobody should be eligible for nomination to a seat in a legislative body until he has satisfied a Board of competent examiners that he has a working knowledge of economic, financial and social problems and of international affairs, and has an educational equipment which fits him to pronounce an intelligent judgment upon them. We keep the Royal Military College to provide an annual supply of trained military officers. Why should we not have parallel civilian institutions for ensuring a steady supply of well-educated men for our administrative posts and our political life.

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