

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

OUTLOOK FOR 1944: FIELD-MARSHAL SMUTS AND HIS PLANS  
AN AMENDED "LEAGUE": EDUCATING OPINION.

THE OLD YEAR ENDED for the peoples of the United Nations in an atmosphere of confident hope that 1944 would see before its close the Axis Powers completely vanquished and the blessing of peace restored to this battered world after its desperate travail. This hope has been stimulated by notable victories of the allied forces in different quarters of the globe, and by accumulating evidence that the power of Germany's great military machine, although it is still formidable, is steadily waning. The coming months should see the grand climacteric of the war, when what President Roosevelt has described as "massive offensives" are launched against the enemy powers. The strategical dispositions have been made, the military, naval and aerial plans have been carefully worked out, the commanders most fitted for the different tasks have been chosen, and vast forces of well-trained fighting men are poised ready for action.

Final plans for the great concerted offensive were settled at the fateful conferences which took place last month at Cairo and Teheran, but the more important achievement of the Teheran meeting was the definite sealing of the alliance between Russia and the western democracies. So far Russia had been only a co-belligerent, remaining suspicious of both Britain and the United States, and taking her own courses. But now she is a full working member of an allied partnership, and this change has made possible that complete coordination of the purposes and plans of the democracies which was virtually indispensable for the success of their great campaign. Some other fruits of the new orientation are already beginning to be visible in different quarters. To Russian influence and pressure can be attributed a new disposition on the part of the British and American governments to stop coddling reactionary governments-in-exile headed by discredited monarchs, and to show some practical sympathy for genuine movements of democratic liberation such as are represented by Tito's army in Yugoslavia and by the Leftist elements headed by Count Sforza in Italy. A hundred and fifty years ago, Tom Paine wrote these words: "We have it in our power to begin the world over again". They are even truer to-day, but before the Teheran Conference our governments by their shortsighted and timorous policies were rapidly dissipating the precious power that is in their hands.

THE EXPLICIT PRONOUNCEMENT made by President Roosevelt that, while the four major powers among the United Nations, the United States, Russia, the British Commonwealth and China, would continue their cooperation to preserve peace by force, if necessary, they had no intention of imposing their will upon the rest of the world, and that the rights of every nation, large and small, would be jealously guarded and respected, should help to remove forebodings and apprehensions aroused by the speech recently delivered by Field-Marshal Smuts to a private gathering of British parliamentarians. In this speech the Field-Marshal was credited with flying a kite for the benefit of Mr. Churchill in observations and proposals, which he made about the post-war world and its reconstruction. He offered the forecast that after the war the United States and Russia with their large populations and huge resources would be in a class by themselves as the greatest powers, that Britain would rank as a relatively weaker third, that France could be written off for the time being and possibly forever as a first-rate power, and that Germany, Italy and Japan, when proper penalties for their sins were imposed upon them, would perforce have to accept a very inferior status.

But Field-Marshal Smuts also advanced the view that it would be very beneficial for the world if there existed a third power of size and impressiveness equal to the United States and Russia, and he conceived the possibility of its organization with Britain as the core of it. As a preliminary, there would have to be built some structure of coordinated unity for the British Commonwealth and Empire, and the adhesion of the Scandinavian countries, France and other democracies in Western Europe, like Belgium and Holland, would ensure the emergence of a powerful new Confederacy, which could hold its own with the United States and Russia. But this ambitious scheme has not excited much enthusiasm in any quarter. The French are naturally resentful about the relegation of their country to a permanent status of inferiority, and Mr. Van Kleffens, the foreign minister of the Netherlands, has declared that the idea of a merger of his country with the British Commonwealth is unthinkable. In Canada the outstanding comment upon the plan of Field-Marshal Smuts has been a forthright denunciation by the *Winnipeg Free Press* in these words:

It would be a proposition to blow up many things that have withstood the deadly strokes of this war, and replace them with combinations which would establish in the world conditions

making for inevitable future upheavals. We would have the balance of power business on a scale never before known. We would presumably have the continuation of the color line as a determinant of how power is to be divided, and there appears not to have been a word in Field-Marshal Smuts's plan about China and the very complex problems of the Far East. As for the British Commonwealth of Nations, it would be smashed to smithereens, and the British Empire would be mangled beyond recognition. Nations not within the charmed circle of the Big Three would apparently be pariahs: powerless, but protected during good behavior.

Only from Belgium has there come so far any sign of a sympathetic response to Smuts's proposals, and it was couched in terms of cautious restraint.

The *Free Press* prediction about the mangling of the Empire beyond recognition refers to one of Smuts's proposals, namely that the colonies and dependencies now ruled by the British Colonial Office should be divided up among the different British nations so that the burdens of their administration could be distributed. Presumably, if this change were carried out, it would mean that Canada would assume the tutelage of the British West Indian islands, South Africa of all the British African colonies and mandates lying south of the Equator, and Australia and New Zealand of various groups of islands situated in the Southern Pacific. But strong and even violent opposition from many quarters to this scheme can be easily foreseen. British manufacturers and exporting merchants would not lightly consent to the incorporation of territories, in which they now enjoy free markets, in the political structure of Dominions which maintain tariffs against British goods. Nor can we imagine any enthusiasm at Ottawa for casting the hoop of Confederation around a mass of predominantly illiterate colored people, who would involve us in all the baffling problems presented by the negroes of the Southern States.

There might, however, be widespread popular enthusiasm in South Africa for a project which would enable the South African whites to rule the roost over the whole of the southern half of the African continent. But the desirability of this would be seriously questioned, until there was definite evidence that the Union was prepared to adopt a genuinely liberal and generous policy towards the colored population within its bounds. The absence of such a policy in the past has been responsible for the refusal of successive British governments, whose stand British public opinion has firmly supported, to transfer to the Union

the administrative control of three native territories, Bechuana-land, Basutoland and Swaziland, which are still under the supervision of the British High Commissioner for South Africa. Now it is an open secret that the resolute objections of the native peoples of these territories to South African rule are shared by their colored brethren in areas like Northern Rhodesia, and, since it is the avowed policy of the British government to be primarily a vigilant trustee guardian of the interests of the native peoples under its rule, they could not without a grave breach of trust hand over a fresh mass of natives against their will to the control of the South African whites. Any such move would encounter bitter opposition from the Labor and Liberal parties in Britain, and the latter could rely upon the support of Tory Imperialists, who objected to shedding any part of the British Imperial domain. Furthermore, the white population of Southern Rhodesia have repeatedly rejected overtures to join the Union of South Africa because they are predominantly British, and have no relish for the idea of being dominated by a Dutch majority. Accordingly, this particular proposal of Field Marshal Smuts does not seem within the realm of practical political possibilities.

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THE fulfilment of our aspirations for the establishment of an effective international authority, which will offer some guarantee of security and peace for the world, will depend largely upon the attitude of the American people, and fortunately there are encouraging signs that a large majority of them have moved far away from the mood of parochial shortsightedness which induced them to endorse in 1920 the rejection of the League of Nations by their Senate. In a brilliant, lively and penetrating appraisal of a group of famous American politicians, Mr. Gerald W. Johnson devotes a very interesting chapter to a sympathetic analysis of the character and career of Woodrow Wilson, and the reasons for his failure to secure acceptance by his countrymen of his great project of the League of Nations. He agrees with the judgment of the late Earl Balfour, that Wilson will live in history as a wise and far-seeing statesman, and maintains that in repudiating Wilson the American people repudiated Destiny, Fact and Reality. He will not accept the common explanation that partisan jealousy and spite were responsible for the American rejection of the League, nor does he concur in an alternative theory that the rejection was the revolt of an exhausted people,

sick of war and Europe, and persuaded that the Treaty of Versailles was grossly unjust to Germany and should not be endorsed by the United States. He declares that the League was rejected not by the Republican party but by the whole American people, because in their judgment the case for it had not been proved, and he sums up their outlook in 1920 in these words:

"After the lapse of more than twenty years, it is easy to see the hopelessness of expecting a nation such as the United States was in 1919 to comprehend such a concept as the League of Nations. It was an unbeaten country, a happy country, an optimistic country; and the League of Nations was the fruit of wisdom born of defeat, suffering and disillusionment. With our customary joyous facility at getting the cart before the horse, most of us looked upon the League as impractically idealistic. What was wildly impractical, of course, was the idealistic assumption that in the crowded world of the twentieth century the nations could live happily and safely together without any provision or restraint of one that might go wrong. The League of Nations was the grimly realistic acceptance of an unpleasant fact: but America was too little scarred, too little tested, too full of ebullient self-confidence and adolescent scorn of all others to accept realism or even to recognise it. . . . The League of Nations was rejected, not by an exhausted and disillusioned nation, but by one intoxicated with success and cherishing the dangerous illusion that its own unaided strength was and would ever remain sufficient for its needs."

Mr. Johnson reveals that Wilson clearly realized what a grim joke the American people had played upon themselves in rejecting the League, and in proof cites part of a letter which the then dying ex-President wrote to Philip Kerr, the future Lord Lothian, in 1924:

"The great tragedy of the last six years is the fact that American failure to accept world responsibility means that the job will have to be done over again within twenty years, and at ten times the cost."

He was the truest of prophets, only underestimating by three years the time when Germany would renew her assault upon democratic freedom, and the cost of the Second World War which is already more than ten times greater than the cost of its predecessor. But Mr. Johnson believes that the mass of the American people have now learnt a bitter lesson, and are ready to face the realities of the modern world, and he thus proceeds:

"So almost miraculously we have another chance. We have also that perambulating conscience of America, Woodrow Wilson, come alive again and speaking in every man's ear, telling us no

fairy tales but stern old truths, reminding us that greed is suicidal, that suspicion of all the world is silly, and that selfrighteousness leads straight to humiliation."

Mr. Johnson's confident belief about a change of heart and outlook among the American people may not be justified by the actual facts, but in no country at the present moment is there so much vocal support for the idea of a rebuilt League of Nations and so much study of the problems which must be solved for its successful reconstruction. Foremost among various hopeful endeavors has been the earnest work of a group of political scientists, known as the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, and its labors, for which the Carnegie Corporation has provided financial support, have now resulted in a final report. The directing spirit in its work has been Dr. James T. Shotwell, a native of Strathroy, Ont., who was one of the technical advisers of the American delegation at the last peace conference, and enjoys international prestige as a preeminent authority upon the problems of peace and international order. He has never wavered in his fidelity to the ideals of Woodrow Wilson, his political mentor, and as soon as the time seemed ripe he applied fresh vigor to the task, which he had never abandoned, of converting the American people to seeing the need for practical application of these ideals. The personnel of the Commission included also such outstanding American liberals and authoritative experts as Professor Quincy Wright of Chicago University, Dr. J. B. Condliffe of California University, and Mr. Chester Rowell, the veteran editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Its findings should carry immense weight with the American people as the considered verdict of a group of able and disinterested men about the framework of a new international authority which would promise attainment of the objectives desired for it.

The salient recommendations of the Commission call for the creation of a new League, for whose membership all nations would ultimately be eligible; for the establishment of an executive council, supplied with its personnel by a limited group of states, including those which would shoulder the main responsibility for restoring and preserving peace and authorized to make speedy decisions about threatened aggressions; and a secretariat whose duty it would be to study international problems and supply information and secretarial services. There is prescribed firm acceptance of the principles that aggressive war is a crime against mankind, and that member nations must give pledges to abjure any but peaceful methods for the settlement of disputes,

which, if settlement by arbitration proved impossible, would be submitted to the Court of International Justice. Up to this point the structure of the new League is modelled on the now defunct League, which was reduced to innocuous helplessness because powerful nations like Japan and Italy repudiated its basic principles, and the other members who professed to follow them made very feeble and ineffective use of such machinery as had been devised to enforce conformity to the decisions of the League.

So these American architects of a new League want to endow it with real authority. They insist that every member nation must give an explicit pledge to "employ whatever means are necessary to resist aggression" through the international organization, and that since its executive must be empowered to decide and act quickly whenever aggression raises its head, all members as far as the waging of war is concerned must subordinate their judgment to that of the League's executive and to this extent made complete surrender of sovereign rights. It is proposed that for preventive action in an emergency the executive of the League would have at its disposal an international air force recruited by voluntary enlistment and based upon strategic islands and other fortresses within easy reach of all potential danger zones. Here is the most far-reaching innovation in the new scheme, and it can be predicted that in every country the isolationists and the imperialists will make common cause against any waiver of the ancient rights of their nation to have a foreign policy of its own and to control the operations of its own defence forces. But this problem of the perpetuation of what is called national sovereignty is fundamental, and over it a great political battle will take place in many countries.

It is impracticable here to outline the other interesting proposals which the Commission advances with the object of making the League an effective instrument to safeguard essential human rights and promote a general diffusion of well distributed prosperity. Of these, one of the most controversial is a suggestion that all nations whose flag now flies over non-self-governing territories should acquiesce in a measure of control over them by the new international authority, in order that exploitation of backward peoples may be prevented and their progress towards self-government accelerated. But the heart and core of the new international structure is the establishment of an over-riding authority equipped with real power to enforce its decisions. Dr. Shotwell and his associates have done an invaluable service

in drafting the plan of a workable structure for a new League, and in it they have remedied many of the basic weaknesses of its prototype. Their scheme will doubtless encounter severe criticism from various quarters, but in default of a better alternative scheme it deserves the sympathetic consideration of all the governments and peoples of the United Nations. Its American origin is not the least of its merits.

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A CANADIAN, who lately resumed residence in his native land after a prolonged absence, recently expressed his gratification and surprise at the widespread interest now being taken in international affairs and problems in this country, and at the volume of informed knowledge which now existed about them. He recalled that at the close of the last war he had been dismayed and even appalled at the deplorable ignorance of and indifference to international realities which then prevailed everywhere except among a limited elite of intellectuals, and he rejoiced at the vast improvement in what might be called higher political education which he found in most sections of this Dominion. His associations are mostly with our worlds of business and finance, and he had been greatly impressed and encouraged by the keen interest which their denizens were taking in international problems and the broader conceptions of politics which they had acquired.

For this healthy change considerable credit must be assigned to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, which is now a well-established and flourishing institution in all our important centres of population. The activity of all its branches is not uniform, but at least a score of them are very vigorous and fruitful agencies for promoting the impartial and intelligent discussion of international problems, and purveying through addresses by recognised experts and the dissemination of readable literature accurate information about the fundamental issues involved in these problems. The members of each branch of the Institute may constitute only a fraction of the communities in which they live, but they usually represent the pick of their brains, and provide the local intellectual leadership. Through them the information gained through the activities of the Institute filters down to a much wider circle, and a great impetus is thereby given to the formation of an intelligent public opinion in Canada about international problems.

Indeed there is reason to believe that the Canadian Institute exercises a much wider influence upon the public opinion within



its orbit than does its British progenitor, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, which has its headquarters at Chatham House in London. With this base of operations in the metropolis, it can enlist a rich variety of political talent and experience as speakers, and it furnishes its members with an appetising menu of well-written literature on political, economic and social issues. It has very active branches in Edinburgh, Glasgow and some other northern cities, but in numerous other cities with populations ranging between a quarter and a half-million of souls no branch of the Institute exists. There is no Canadian city with a population of more than 50,000 where a branch of the C.I.I. A. is not carrying on work effectively, and not a few smaller communities possess one.

So the influence of the C.I.I.A. is now nation-wide and promises to expand progressively. It lately undertook with marked success the ambitious enterprize of organizing at the Seignory Club at Montbello, P.Q., a full-dress conference at which delegates drawn from all parts of the country and representing all shades of political opinion met for ten days to discuss in frank terms the paramount problems facing the Canadian people in the domestic and international spheres. There was no attempt to reach or record final verdicts upon these problems, but there was general agreement that the interchange of views, which took place, was exceedingly profitable and illuminating. One handicap which the Canadian Institute suffers from by comparison with the Royal Institute is the apparent indisposition of many Conservatives, who ought to belong to it, to take an active part in its work. As a consequence, there is usually an inadequate presentation of the Conservative doctrine, and the supporters of the Liberal and C.C.F. policies meet with too little challenge for their views.

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