

TOPICS OF THE DAY

UNITED STATES POLITICS: INDIA: ITALY: NEXT LIBERAL LEADER
IN CANADA: ATOMIC BOMB PROBLEMS: GERMANY.

THERE IS NOW great political activity in the United States, in the form of the preparations and manoeuvres preliminary to the Congressional, which is due to be held next November. Nations sometimes deviate from the traditional pattern of conduct which they adopt under certain circumstances, but there is a fundamental conservative bias in the American people which seems to be impelling them to follow—after their third great ordeal in arms since they gained the independence—the same path in their political and economic tendencies as they took after the two great earlier conflicts in their history, the Civil War and the First World War. During all three struggles they acquiesced in the extraordinary powers which were vested in the administrations of the day, but they never took kindly to the rigid disciplines and interferences with their normal ways of life which were imposed upon them. Their passion for what Herbert Hoover called “rugged individualism” shed some of its fervors under the impact of the grim depression which occurred after 1929, but it still survives in considerable strength, and has been reflected in a mood of popular sentiment which has encouraged Congress to respond to the persistent pressure of industrial and business interests for the speedy elimination of as many as possible of the war-time controls and restrictions. A large proportion of them have already been swept away, and bitter political battles, whose result is still undecided, are in progress at Washington over the retention of military conscription and a limited measure of price control.

Meanwhile the leaders of the Republican party are full of optimistic hopes that a “back-to-normalcy” among the voters, which wafted them back to power in 1920 after the long Wilsonian regime, is due to operate again in their favour. They admit that they may experience some difficulty in wiping out the substantial Democratic majority in the Senate, but they are serenely confident that they can easily gain the 27 seats needed to give them control of the House of Representatives. Its attainment, terminating the 14-year domination of Congress by the Democratic party, would at once produce a stalemate in domestic politics, and might have unfortunate repercussions in the field of international politics. But such a situation would be no novelty in American politics. Since the Civil War it has been the lot of eight out of sixteen Presidents to face at

some stage in their terms of office hostile party control of one or other House of Congress, and four of them—Hayes, Cleveland, Wilson and Hoover—had to battle with antagonistic majorities controlling both Houses. Faced with these conditions, no British or Canadian Prime Minister would try to carry on an administration; but an American President, no matter how impotent and uncomfortable he feels, must remain in office and engage in continuous warfare with his Congressional opponents to secure endorsement for even non-controversial legislation. There is therefore no pleasant prospect before President Truman, but he may console himself with the view that the frustrations which lie ahead of him, if the Republicans' hopes are realized, can not be much worse than those which he has experienced in the past year at the hands of a sinister combination of Republicans and reactionary Southern Democrats who disliked his policies.

The records show that since the Civil War there has been only a single and rather dubious exception to the rule that when an opposition party gains control of the House of Representatives, it wins the next Presidential election. Through its domination of one House of Congress it can thwart legislation to remedy popular grievances and produce such general confusion that public resentment against the ruling administration mounts and a President seeking re-election becomes the scapegoat for it. It is also very unfortunate for President Truman that he has forfeited the confidence of the labour unions, whose members gave their almost solid support to President Roosevelt, by the very arbitrary measures which he took for the suppression of the railway strike. So many omens indicate that for the first time in 15 years the Republican party has an excellent chance of regaining control of the policies of the United States.

Now it is an accepted axiom of American politics that, when the prospects of the Republican party become rosy, its directing spirits feel less need to conciliate the liberal voters by drafting a progressive programme or choosing a progressive candidate as their Presidential nominee, and let their conservative tendencies have free rein. So the "old guard" of the party, who are still in full control of its political machine, are in a very happy frame of mind, and they have been made happier by a recent severe defeat which they have lately administered to their most formidable antagonist, the youthful Governor Stassen of Minnesota, who, as an avowed candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination, has been carrying on the crusade

begun by the late Wendell Willkie to liberalize the policies of the party. Mr. Stassen campaigned vigorously for one of his allies, Governor Griswold of Nebraska, an ardent internationalist, when the latter tried to wrest the Senatorial nomination for his state from Senator Butler, an unrepentant isolationist, but Butler was renominated by a large majority. Such a rebuff has naturally lowered the stock of Governor Stassen, and improved the prospects of the more conservative aspirants for the Republican nomination. Of these the three most outstanding are Governor Bricker and Senator Taft of Ohio and Senator Vandenberg of Michigan. Governor Bricker is described as a respectable Warren Harding, and the Republicans have surely too painful memories of the performances of that ill-starred politician to take any chances with another mediocrity from Ohio. The other Ohioan, Senator Robert Taft, has, besides the advantage of a famous name in American politics, brains and character, and is a most industrious politician, who knows all the tricks of the game. But so far from inheriting any share of the *bonhomie* of his illustrious sire, he is singularly lacking in personal magnetism and the sort of qualities which make a good vote-getter. In these respects he is at a disadvantage beside Senator Vandenberg, who has been building up his prestige as a peace negotiator and has strengthened himself with the liberal elements in the country, through his consistent advocacy in recent years of a policy of full international co-operation for the United States. If the result in Nebraska indicates that isolation has still strong support in the Republican party, then Taft, who claims to have already the pledges of over 150 delegates to the Republican Convention, will have the edge over Vandenberg, but they will both have to reckon with the claims of Governor Warren of California, who has just performed the remarkable feat of securing simultaneously the nominations of both the Republican and Democratic parties for another term of the Governorship. This exploit, however, augurs an independence of mind and liberal record which will have little appeal to the old guard of the Republican party. Governor Dewey of New York, the defeated candidate at the last Presidential election, seems to be out of the running.

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THE WRITER RECALLS a prediction, derided at the time, made more than 40 years ago by Meredith Townsend a famous editor of the London *Spectator*, who had in his earlier days edited a paper in India, that Britain could not hope to rule that

country for another century, and it is one of the more encouraging features of the international scene that this prophecy is now within measurable distance of fulfilment. The special mission of three members of the British Cabinet, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander, has now returned home with a considerable measure of accomplishment to its credit. It has been able to induce the Congress party, the Moslem League and the native Princes to accept the plan for the endowment of India with full self-government under a Federal political structure. Mr. Jinnah and his friends have not abandoned their demands for their Pakistan solution, but for the moment they have agreed to be content with a scheme which guarantees the Moslem community against the dangers of domination by the Hindus. It is true that the British Ministers failed to persuade the leaders of the Indian factions to co-operate in the formation of an interim Ministry, which would carry on the administration during the period necessary for the election of the Constituent Assembly, which is to draft the new constitution. The Viceroy and the British Government will perforce have to assume the functions of a "caretaker" government. It is to be hoped that when the Constituent Assembly essays its task, the delegates will show some appreciation of the generous liberality which the present British Government has shown in its treatment of India's problems, and will frustrate the desires of the extreme nationalists to make a complete severance of India's relations with the British Commonwealth. The recent recurrence of serious riots, accompanied by considerable loss of life, indicate the persistence of bitter religious animosities between the Moslems and Hindus, and in her early years of self-government India will need very firm administration. So she would gain little and might lose much by withdrawing from a great political society whose members would be ready to lend her people a helping hand for the solution of their problems.

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THE POLITICAL PATTERN of the liberated countries of Europe has been gradually taking shape through general elections which revealed a distinct movement of public opinion towards the Right. Undoubtedly in all these elections, notably in the Italian, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which remains bitterly antagonistic to Soviet Russia and her policies, has been powerfully exerted to secure votes for parties which oppose the effort of Communists to make their countries

satellites of Moscow, and the aggressive character of Russia's policies since the war ended has played into the hands of her enemies and critics. In France the general election held in May has pared down the commanding majority enjoyed by the Left after the Liberation so severely that Leftist and Rightist blocs of almost equal strength face one another in the political arena. The chief factor in the achievement of this equilibrium was a transfer of votes from the Moderate Left, the Socialists, who lost 15 seats, to the Moderate Right, represented by the Popular Republicans, who emerged as the strongest single party in France, and although the Communists maintained their strength, they now take second place. No possible combination of parties has hopes of a stable majority in the Assembly, and since the precarious state of the internal affairs of France forbids the resumption of partisan warfare, the leaders of the three dominant parties have agreed to preserve for the time being the Coalition Ministry, which was established under De Gaulle. One effect of the Rightist gains in France will be that the Communist-Socialist draft of a new constitution for France, which the voters rejected at a plebiscite on May 5th, will, before it is again submitted to the French electorate be substantially on more conservative lines, which will seek to retain a Second Chamber and endow it with considerable powers.

The election held in Italy on June 1, produced a similar equilibrium between the Rightist and Leftist forces in the country, with the Moderate Right—The Christian Democrats—emerging as the strongest party, and a Coalition Ministry remains in power. The ranks of the few surviving were thinned further by the result of a referendum which yielded a decisive majority for the abolition of the monarchy in favor of a Republican regime, and no sympathy need be wasted on the fate of the House of Savoy. It has given Italy only one creditable monarch, the first Victor Emmanuel, and its present members showed scant concern for the real interests of the Italian people when they become active accomplices of Mussolini in his baneful tyrannies and ill-starred adventures in Imperialist aggression. But one disturbing feature of the Italian election was the million odd votes polled by an avowedly Fascist party, which sits under the deceptive misnomer, "The Common Man" party, and the size of its poll revealed that Fascism is not as dead in Italy as Vichyism is in France. Again in Holland a recent election for the First Chamber brought confirmatory evidence of the Rightist trends manifested in the polling for the First Chamber

held a fortnight before. The Communists increased their percentage of the popular vote, but only to a slight degree, while the Labour party lost ground, with only 25.8 per cent of the popular vote as compared with the 31.4 per cent recorded for the Catholic People's party. So one of the leaders of the latter was commissioned by Queen Wilhelmina to form an administration, and in its personnel Rightist politicians are in a majority. In Belgium the Leftist forces are still in power, but in Parliament they only have a bare majority over the Rightist forces, most of whose leaders want to bring back King Leopold, but are not sure that public opinion would support such a move. However, these revelations of Rightist tendencies do not mean that any large number of the liberated peoples seek a restoration of their old economic and social orders. Their general temper is still very Leftist, and the moderate parties, which have gained new adherents from the Left, would soon lose most of them if their leaders forswore their pledges to carry out progressive programmes of social and economic reform. Upon their honesty and firmness of purpose the internal stability of their countries depends.

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THERE IS A NOTE of finality about Prime Minister King's recent public reiteration of his decision to retire from public life before the end of the present Federal Parliament. The departure from it of a politician who has played an important rôle in it for nearly 40 years and held the office of Prime Minister for a previously unexampled length of time must necessarily constitute a landmark in Canadian politics. His career has presented the curious paradox of achieving a long ascendancy for the Liberal party through the support of the most fundamentally Conservative element in the country, the French-Canadians. While it will provide parennial material for controversy, some years must elapse before the exact value of his contribution to the fortunes of the Canadian people can be accurately appraised. But meanwhile his decision has naturally produced a flood of discussion and speculation about succession to the leadership of the Liberal party.

On the grounds of seniority in the official hierarchy of the Liberal party, and administrative experience, Mr. Illsley, the Minister of Finance, has obvious claims to the leadership, and he enjoys good repute throughout the country on account of his high character, his intellectual integrity and his judicious stewardship of the national finances during the war years.

But he has never learnt from Mr. King the expert mastery of the arts of the political technician which the latter has applied so successfully for the management of the fortunes of the Liberal party, and he is by nature averse to the combative partisan warfare of politics. So the Liberals may decide that he has not the stuff of vigorous aggressive leadership in him, and may set his claims aside. The candidate of the French-Canadian wing of the party would naturally be Mr. St. Laurent, the Minister of Justice, who, since he entered the Cabinet, has become one of its major figures. His great legal ability and wide experience have been very valuable assets to the Cabinet, and he has revealed an aptitude for political life which eminent lawyers who enter it in their later years rarely show. Moreover, he has a very attractive personality, and his Irish strain of blood has probably operated to make him unsympathetic with the extreme racialism by which too many politicians in Quebec are obsessed. But it is dubious if his aspirations for the leadership of the Liberal party (about which there is some uncertainty) would find favour with its English-speaking contingent in Parliament; many of them are already chafing about the assertive temper of their French-Canadian brethren over issues like the projected new Canadian flag and the change of the name of Dominion Day, and they would be very apprehensive that the leadership of any French-Canadian, however able and eloquent, would impair their chances of re-election.

But, if the French-Canadian Liberals could not achieve the selection of Mr. St. Laurent, they would be disposed to throw their support to Mr. Douglas Abbott, the Minister of National Defence. As a native of Quebec, who has a fluent command of the French language, he is *persona grata* to the French-Canadian members, and they would feel that the representative of a constituency in Quebec would never dare to neglect their interests. But, apart from this, Mr. Abbott since his admission to the Cabinet has gained more in political stature than any other of the younger Ministers; he has proved himself a competent administrator of an important department, he has shown good parliamentary ability and has pleased his opponents by his studious fairness, and he has many of the qualities which make for personal popularity with the voters. He is as the sunlight to the moonlight by comparison with another contender for the leadership among the younger Ministers, Mr. Paul Martin, the Secretary of State. Mr. Martin is convinced that a French-Canadian, who sits for a constituency in Ontario, has very special

qualifications, for the Liberal leadership, but his narrow partisanship and his general record in politics do not inspire widespread confidence. The claims of Mr. Howe, the Minister of Reconstruction, will have a strong appeal to the powerful elements in "big business" which support the Liberal party, but it would be a strange development if a native of the United States were entrusted with the leadership of one of Canada's historic parties. The Liberal party, which has long been a sort of Coalition, is a less harmonious body than it was a few years ago, and a new era will open for it once the master hand, which has kept it in a state of effective unity since 1919, is removed.

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THE RESULT OF THE primary election in Nebraska and the reluctance of Congress to continue the system of military conscription would, on the surface, suggest an ominous waning of the enthusiasm for international co-operation, which ranged the American people so solidly behind the United Nations' organization at the time of its creation at San Francisco. For this recession a considerable measure of responsibility lies with the tensions, dissensions and outright quarrels that have occurred so frequently in the sessions of the Security Council, now in session at Hunter College in New York before the eyes of the American people. It is only natural that a succession of deadlocks, walkouts and clashes of selfish interest, which received more publicity than the harmoniously conducted constructive work, should have bred in the United States a widespread feeling of scepticism about the possibility of effective international co-operation. But this feeling of disillusionment does not mean that the American people would give the Republican party a mandate for reverting to a policy of isolationism as they did in 1919. Not only have they learned by grim experience that isolationism is both unprofitable and impracticable for them, and that they have a motive of self-interest in constructing and backing with all their influence and resources some system of collective security, but they have also assumed, with the approval of both their historic parties, international responsibilities in different parts of the world from which retreat is impossible.

Furthermore, the atomic bomb and its fearsome possibilities have thoroughly frightened millions of Americans, and their fears have not been allayed by the fact that the test at Bikini did not reveal powers of devastation for the bomb on the scale expected. Against its portentously destructive capacities

there is no sure defence, and it has even converted so lukewarm an internationalist as Mr. Walter Lippmann to the view that some sort of world government has now become essential. But what was needed to revive American enthusiasm for world co-operation was some constructive effort towards the establishment of a system of security which would offer some guarantee of settled peace, and it has been forthcoming in the proposals for the control of atomic energy contained in the report of the National Atomic Committee under the chairmanship of the veteran, Bernard M. Baruch.

The fundamental proposals of this immensely important report are that all nations should agree to outlaw the use of the atomic bomb as a weapon of war, and to vest in some international authority complete control of all the materials used in the bomb and the processes of making it, together with inspection over every source and development of atomic energy. But the report also insisted, as a cardinal point, that in regard to the application of sanctions by the international atomic authority against violators of its regulations, the application of the veto in the Security Council must be eliminated. Inevitably this suggestion aroused the suspicions of the Russians, who set much store by the veto, and, when the report came up for discussion before a sub-committee of the United Nations, their delegates raised a variety of objections to the Baruch plan and demanded that as a "primordial step" there should be concluded an international treaty binding all the signatory nations to destroy their atomic bombs within three months. Naturally the Americans, who possess all the existing atomic bombs, are not prepared to scrap them until they see some effective system of collective security established, and so Mr. Evatt of Australia, the chairman of the sub-committee, has proposed a compromise scheme in the hope that its acceptance will enable the Atomic Energy Commission of the United Nations to begin work on the basis of certain fundamental principles. But if the members of the United Nations, including Russia, can be induced to endorse the basic features of the Baruch plan, then real progress towards world disarmament will be made. Any agreement reached for control of the atomic bomb would assuredly be extended to cover deadlier weapons as they were invented, and it is difficult to imagine that, once such a control is in operation, the nations of the world would spend their money in competitive rivalry in the production of minor weapons and forms of armament, which would be useless before the impact of the atomic bomb.

WHAT is the most important of Europe's problems, the future of Germany and her people, still remains unsettled, and until it is settled there can be no real recovery of reasonable prosperity for Western Europe, because Germany was one of its chief mainsprings, indeed the foremost. The core of the problem is how to prevent the Germans from regaining any power for aggression and at the same time to assure them a decent standard of well-being, which will keep them from nursing hopes of revenge and offer them a chance to make the valuable contribution which they could make, under proper direction, to the common civilization of Europe. The German people have been living on very meagre rations, but they emerged from the last winter in better condition than anybody expected, and this spring they have been cultivating their land with assiduous energy and have the prospect of at least average crops, while they are applying their traditional industry and skill to the reconstruction of their economic and social life.

For occupation purposes the country is still divided into four regional zones and, while there is much day-to-day co-operation between the occupying powers, no real progress has been made towards the restoration of a unified structure for Germany which was the basic postulate of the Potsdam Agreement. And the reason for this calamitous failure lies in the sharp divergence of views among the occupying powers about the treatment of the German problem. Public opinion in the United States has been greatly stirred by the publication of stories by reputable correspondents about the deplorable state of the morale of the American army of occupation in Germany and under such influence the chief aim of the Truman administration is to get the American troops home as soon as possible. Incidentally the complete withdrawal of Canada's troops from Germany has strengthened the demand for similar action in the United States. So at the Paris Conference Mr. Byrnes, the American Secretary of State, proposed a four-Power Treaty to ensure German disarmament after the withdrawal of the armies of occupation. But the proposal was not received with enthusiasm by the other Powers, and in any event immediate withdrawal cannot be contemplated.

The western democracies have not been able to find common ground for a policy about Germany, but they have common apprehensions about the policy now being pursued by the Russians in their zone. It shows scant regard for the terms of

the Potsdam Agreement, and runs contrary to the idea of any joint Allied policy for Germany. In their zone east of the Oder River the Russians have successfully promoted a merger of the Communist and Socialist parties into a new Socialist Unity party, and they have entrusted its leaders with considerable administrative authority. They have abandoned to a great extent their original policy of transferring plant, machinery and livestock to Russia, but only after transfers on a large scale had been made. They have also released some 3800 factories to produce goods for internal consumption in Germany, and have promised help in the shape of raw cotton for the textile plants and other materials and supplies. Consequently the level of industrial activity is higher in the Russian than in any other zone, and since it contains some of the best food-producing districts of Germany, the general standard of living is better. The efforts of the Russians to conciliate the Germans living under their control are meeting with a considerable measure of success, and Germans are reported to be migrating from other zones into the Russian. But this conciliatory policy seems to have behind it the larger aim of the political unification of Germany under Communist leadership, and her industrial revival with an eastward orientation. For the Germans, both outside and inside the zone, it must have considerable attractions because it offers them some prospect of salvaging their status as a national unit and emerging from their present state of poverty-stricken chaos, provided that they work hard and are submissive to the desires of Moscow. But at the same time this policy offers a very serious challenge to the western Powers, because, if it were successful, it would bring the principles and political organization of the vast totalitarian structure, which Russia is building in Eastern Europe, to the frontiers of France.

The French, determined to clip Germany's claws forever, have been insistent that the Saar Valley should be annexed to France with a measure of local autonomy, and that the Rhineland and the Ruhr, the chief seats of Germany's industries, should be separated politically and economically from Germany and placed under international control. But the British and American Governments will not countenance a policy which would embitter every German and make him work and plot perpetually for its reversal. However, the Attlee Ministry, after long vacillation, has at last realized the need for a positive policy about Germany. So Mr. Bevin has induced the French Foreign Office to study, with sympathy, a plan for the future

of the Rhineland and the Ruhr. Its essence is that Germany, while continuing to be an economic and customs union, would be developed politically as a federation. It proposes that the British zone should be divided into three states—Schleswig-Holstein with the Hansa cities of Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck and their hinterlands: a Greater Hanover: and a Ruhr-Rhine province including most of Westphalia, which would be completely socialized, with other nations enjoying the right to participate in the control of its heavy industries. The premise of this plan is that it would dovetail into a federal structure for the whole Reich, and also fit into a new regional synthesis for western Europe. But it has not found favour in Moscow, and it is probably not without Russian inspiration that the leaders of all German political parties in the Russian zone have issued a joint statement condemning Federalism as a solution for Germany. So the German problem remains unsolved, and will be until some reasonable concordat can be achieved between Russia and the western democracies.

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