

TOPICS OF THE DAY

THE NAZI VICTORIES: THE DEMAND FOR CONSCRIPTION: THE
FOUR FREEDOMS: THE NEW EDUCATION.

THE NAZI VICTORIES are a realistic measure for the stupendous, concerted effort to which we must now devote our entire energies. All talk about reaching the "peak" of our production in men or arms is delusive. The image it presents to the mind is false; or, if it is still used, we must think of national achievement not in terms of summits but of mountain ranges, peaks lying beyond peaks. In the language of the market-place, the sky's the limit. So far, Hitler's career has been one of almost unbroken success, which it would be folly not to recognise. In the very outreach of his victories, there may be the conditions of his final defeat; but, for the present, he has the immense moral encouragement of glittering triumphs, which have added greatly to our difficulties in counter-offensive. We are now at the stage where our own resolution to accomplish his defeat will be weakened rather than advanced by any belittling of the German achievement. This sober regard for the magnitude of our task need not become an occasion for weak-kneed terror; rather, a stimulus to straighten our backs and face what is required of us.

Hitler is the present master of continental Europe. Since the day when his armies marched into the Rhineland, nothing has stood in the way of his terrible might. Alike in peace and in war, his moves have been directed with a psychological skill that amounts to political genius. Every variety of method has been exploited to the full. The theory of an abused Germany was carefully disseminated both at home and abroad. At home, the doctrine of the Versailles affront to national dignity made the finest propaganda for creating the Nazi party; abroad, the same proposition induced an attitude of complacent acquiescence in the policy of national conscription, the recovery of the Rhineland and the annexation of Austria. Fear of Bolshevism was worked up with consummate skill, and the statesmen who trembled for the sacred ark of the capitalist system were assured that Codlin in the person of Hitler was their friend, not Short in the person of Stalin. Thus we were induced to set our feet in the primrose way of appeasement

that has led to the present bonfire. Germany combined with Italy to provide the armies of the Lord that saved Spain from the unholy conspiracies of the godless. A stage was reached in European diplomatic relations when the signature of a non-aggression pact by Hitler became the first blow in a German attack. Czecho-Slovakia disappeared into the Reich and then the climax of audacity was reached when the Saviour of Europe from the wickedness of communism made an agreement with Russia the point of departure for launching the long premeditated world war. The resources of diplomatic cunning had been exhausted, and a new series of opportunist victories by military conquest began.

Hitler has carried his victorious methods of peaceful penetration into his military campaigns with masterly skill. The same bold effrontery, the same impudent deceit, the same ability to take on one nation at a time, the same inspired sense of opportunity. Poland was smashed and torn asunder, Russia given enough to keep her quiet. The Communists were allowed to display their weakness in the Finnish campaign. Denmark was taken over an hour or so after a Berlin foreign officer had hung up his telephone receiver having delivered a re-assuring message that not a German soldier was on the move. The duplicity by which Norway was invaded stands unrivalled in the record of international treachery. Rotterdam will never expunge from her memory the unprovoked fury of the dreadful morning when Holland was over-run. The surrender of Belgium and the swift downfall of France still remain unbelievable disasters for our cause. In the Balkans Hitler has mingled the technique of bullying with new capacities for opportunist action as he has turned the weakness of his fellow-dictator into an occasion for subduing Yugo-Slavia, Albania and finally Greece, meanwhile gathering the puppet-strings that control the prancing Mussolini more firmly into his masterful grasp.

When we look at the parts of Europe not directly under German control, it is apparent that their uneasy freedom is permitted for the most part because it suits Hitler's purposes. Switzerland is a listening-post in the midst of conquered territories, Spain and Portugal are convenient doorways to the outer world, Sweden does what she is told. Unoccupied France has paid the price of a few concessions in terms of collaboration with her conqueror. Russia, her erstwhile comrade, is now assailed. Italy is a vassal state. Such is the unholy German Empire.

Over against the German conquest of Europe, we set first of all the unbroken resistance of the British people. Great Britain remains not only inviolate, but after all her series of ordeals, in a condition of growing power. Upon her continued will and ability to resist depends the very issue of the day. Further, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the Axis plans of conquest, despite their imposing success, have been compelled into alteration to the point of possibly fatal weakness. The Germans have been forced to fight on two fronts—east and west. More and more, the Axis powers will be forced to give battle on the eastern front and to that extent they will be deflected from their only road to final victory, which lies through the subjugation of the British Isles. At the same time, every new conquest adds to the German burden of defence and the growing volume of hate. Europe is under the German heel, but in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, France and Greece there are smouldering fires of cherished revenge that will yet be fanned into a terrifying blaze.

When the German attack on south-eastern Europe began, we were informed that Herr Hitler was in perfect health as he was engaged in directing his Napoleonic exploits. The flattering voice may have been prophetic. In the laconic words of the American President spoken in another connection but about the same person, the remark awakens memories. History need not repeat itself, but we can extract comfort and courage from the reflection that the British people went through a similar ordeal something over a century ago. Napoleon marched south-east and south-west and into the frozen north. He challenged the British fleet and even gathered his army of invasion at the channel ports. But he came to his Waterloo. Somewhere, somehow, sometime, the forces of the British Empire and of the German Reich must meet in a grand battle. Every turn of the war's events converges on that tremendous encounter, and when the hour strikes, everything will depend on what we can put into the ordeal. So, let us get ready.

THE DEMAND FOR CONSCRIPTION is growing in Canada. The actual term from its historical associations may be embarrassing, but the use of a word should not prove a stumbling-block if the adoption of the principle has become a necessity for public action. Alternative descriptions suggest themselves, such as national service, or, one in actual current employment,

compulsory training. Most people who are clamoring for conscription, know pretty well what they have in mind, although, at times, their zeal may exceed both their discretion and their knowledge. By conscription is meant adoption of the principle that for the tremendous national effort to which we are summoned, it should be decreed that the Government of Canada has the right and duty to demand of any citizen that he shall serve his country when and where some constituted authority decides he can best promote a Canadian victory. It is contended by those who press this policy on the Government that conscription is the only method whereby justice and efficiency can be attained in the Canadian war effort. All the men of Canada need not be enlisted in the armed forces: indeed, it would be the wildest folly to make an attempt to do so. But, between the rival claims of the fighting services and essential industry, it is suggested that the judgment of the individual should not be the final factor of decision. Above all, those who press for compulsion have in mind that we are now far beyond the stage when the choice between an active contribution to the national cause and an apathetic indifference should be left to the conscience of the citizen.

The plan of national service proposed is an extension of what is now in force. Already, every person in Canada over the age of sixteen years has had his or her name entered in a national register, which it is presumed, contains a record of the curious information disclosed when the index was compiled. On the basis of this register, it has been decreed that every physically fit unmarried male, between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five shall undergo compulsory military training. So far, this is the only mandatory use that has been made of the national register. The scheme in present operation is severely limited. It only applies to military training with the specific provision that the training shall be done in Canada. Only the younger age groups have been summoned, so that the greater part of the male adult population is quite unaffected. It may therefore be said that the principal war effort of Canada is still being made on a voluntary basis. The Canadian Active Service Force, The Royal Canadian Volunteer Naval Reserve, The Royal Canadian Air Force are recruited by voluntary enlistment. Employers engaged in war industry seek men where and when they can, and men are similarly free to find work of their own choice. The question is asked whether the principle of compulsion would not now be applied to service in the armed

forces and in industry so as to provide an even flow of recruits for all branches of our war effort. Indeed, it is asserted that a failure to introduce such a measure has become a positive hindrance to the national cause. The main complaint is the inequality of the voluntary system, which alike deters the responsible citizen and encourages the lazy slacker. The man who is engaged in essential war work would feel himself confirmed in his occupation if the Government told him that he ought to remain in the workshop, in the mine, on the farm or in the office. He would be relieved of the inevitable tension that must affect the honest mind, especially when one sees friends and comrades marching off to what must be a much more hazardous employment and at a much lesser rate of remuneration. On the other hand, we are told that many able and responsible young men feel that if they are wanted for the armed forces, the Government ought to say so and that everyone should be told with equal directness and force. And yet again, there are many who are not thinking about their duty at all, and who will only do so when they are compelled.

The problem of conscription is as much a question of expediency as of principle, indeed, more so of the former than of the latter. Taking the question of principle first, there is still a good deal to be said for free enlistment. An old adage has it that one volunteer is equal to ten pressed men. The cause of freedom should be defended by free men, who offer themselves willingly in its service. There is a certain contradiction in conscription for the promotion of liberty. No employer wants his workshops filled with forced laborers: indeed, skilled occupations cannot be carried on by men drafted under compulsion. A man who goes into battle faces the gravest risk and it is a question how far he should be forced to undertake such an ordeal unless by free consent. In any case, there can be no dispute about the fighting qualities of men who enlist voluntarily compared with the morale of the conscribed. The Air Force would never consent to have its pilots and fighters recruited by the method of the draft. The Navy has left behind the days of the press gang. Why should the army be left with what remains after industry, the navy and the air force have had their needs met by the method of voluntary service? If it is asserted that the present method operates unequally so that the ardent patriot is penalised while the man of poorer spirit is allowed to benefit by his brother's eagerness, the only reply must be that virtue is its own reward.

The problem of conscription is really much more one of expediency than of principle. If universal service became a demonstrable necessity, a way would have to be found. The question to be asked is whether we are prepared for conscription, not so much in the matter of political conviction as in organised ability to put a compulsory system into effect. There are those who contend that we ought to have enacted conscription with the same breath as we declared war. A sound study of the facts leads to a less excited conviction. The outbreak of hostilities found Canada the most pacific country in the world, completely unprepared for war. The conscription of Canadian manhood in September 1939 might have been a magnificent gesture, but certainly it would have been nothing more. Only with the greatest difficulty could we organise the dispatch of our first formations in the Canadian Active Service Force. Similarly, it takes a considerable period of time to reorganise industries for the production of munitions. Have the advocates of conscription realised the psychological effect of conscribing the manhood of a nation and, then, of not having any form of service to offer them? Even to-day, after nearly two years of war, the real question is concerned with the number of men we are organised to use in the Canadian war effort. Have we enough fighting men overseas? We are not pressed to send more. Have we enough at home? It appears that we have. Do we require men for the navy? Yes, but, first of all, we need ships in which they can sail. What of the Air Force? We are ahead of schedule in the Air Training Scheme and are using all the available equipment. What of industry? There is no acute shortage of labour and we are using every man we are equipped to employ. These are the questions to be studied in relation to compulsory service.

Too much has been made of the Quebec problem, especially by the political leaders of that province. It is possible to outweigh the esteemed boon of national unity if you keep on talking too much about the price that has to be paid for its maintenance. Certainly, our ministers would do well to keep from suggesting that well-intentioned advocates of conscription are weakening the unity of Canada by advancing their views. Minorities have their rights, but so have majorities. The policy of appeasement is suspect in the modern world and while no sensible man wishes wantonly to outrage political convictions, nevertheless, the time has come to say plainly that even Quebec cannot hope to be accorded the place that all good Canadians

wish to give to her in our Dominion life and at the same time claim special privileges in our national policies. The hour has struck for marching forward together into a new era of national opportunity and for letting the dead past bury the dead questions of a former day. History has sad examples of the unhappy fate that attends racial groups who keep on insisting too much and too long that they are a peculiar people.

We have really approached more nearly to national conscription of wealth than we have to the compulsory service of men. All are not asked to serve, but we have all to pay our taxes, and that is the only feasible method of conscribing wealth. We have been warned that we are not within sight of the limit to which the national income may be assessed for war levies, and while everybody grumbles, nobody is really objecting to the imposts. The other alternative would be the method of a capital levy, but the grave dislocations that would be caused thereby would discount the supposed advantages to be gained. You could not raise war loans on a market in which owners of capital were endeavouring to realise assets for the purpose of handing them over to the government. Unless it is proposed outright to introduce communism by the monetary method, we had better combine compulsory taxation with voluntary lending to the government of funds necessary for the prosecution of the war.

Nevertheless, conscription must come in Canada. The real question is when and how. It would be folly to introduce compulsory service before we are ready for it: it would be a graver folly to turn back from such a policy because of expediency or fear. The present principle of voluntary service can only be a wise and useful method of getting ready for the more thorough-going way of universal enlistment in the national cause. Every sane mind knows what we face and the effort that will be required. Meantime, we shall all best promote the fulness of our Canadian contribution by the maximum of our voluntary service that the day of a fuller effort still, which is desperately needed, may be brought nearer to its dawn.

THE FOUR FREEDOMS of President Roosevelt's January message to Congress have become a hitching-star for the wagon of democracy. The genius of the American President has once again given expression in language both terse and memorable to a new battle-cry for human liberty. Mr.

Roosevelt's gift is much more subtle and profound than the ability to turn a phrase: he has the sympathetic mind that feels with the popular mood, and, at the same time, he possesses the vision of a leader who gives utterance to the inarticulate. Moreover, like most men of real ability, he finds that it is not necessary to employ heavy or involved language to convey his thought. To see life in terms of elemental simplicities, without closing one's eyes to the complexity of existence, confers a capacity to gather energy and action around central loyalties. Consider the four freedoms of Mr. Roosevelt—Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear—what ranges of history are gathered up, what areas of human relation are included, what emotions are touched, what hopes are stirred! Present conflict and future aspiration are gathered up into a summary that can be run to the mast-head as a battle-flag.

The Four Freedoms contribute usefully to the clearing up of current confusion by mediating in a constructive way between the disputes about the need for stating war aims. The democratic leaders are being urged to formulate a pronouncement on what we are fighting for. With heat and impatience, the retort is often made that we are so busy fighting and under such a clear imperative that we have leisure neither of time nor of thought to give to the question. Forest fire fighters do not pause to ask themselves or to answer other people about what they are doing. There is a fire: it must be extinguished where, when and how you can. If asked whether they propose to re-plant the old forest or turn it into a pasture, with legitimate exasperation, they shout back that we must wait until the fire is put out. Therefore it is asserted that for the present there is and can be only one war aim—the destruction of Hitlerism. But our earnest inquirers return to the question: are we fighting for preserving the world we have known? The answer must be "Yes and No". We are in this immense struggle because there are values in civilisation that are menaced by new and revolutionary doctrines of forcible alteration. These social and moral gains have been hardly won, and we do not propose to allow them to be carried away as by a flood. Among these are freedom of thought and freedom of worship. On the other hand, it has to be recognised that the forest fire has been set ablaze and spread abroad because there has been a good deal of careless indifference to the conditions of healthy social husbandry. This does not excuse for a moment the wilful and perverse fire-raisers who not only

lit the conflagration but made arson a political policy. But when this wildness of destruction is finally mastered, we shall be granted no breathing space to plan the future. Immediate action will be necessary and of a very deliberate kind. Nazi-ism and revolutionism have both had an opportunity to develop in a condition of social unrest and international tension. Among the freedoms that men covet are freedom from want and freedom from fear. The post-war world, if it is to be a good world must not only preserve the old order, it must move on to a new and amended way of life. The hope of such a blessed result, so far from hindering the war effort will strengthen the zeal, especially of the great masses who now must toil and fight and sacrifice for victory.

Freedom is a condition of life hard to define but harder still to do without. It represents a way of existence that is elemental and irreducible. Elaborate systems of moral philosophy have been constructed to prove the idea of freedom an illusion, but they have been attended by this grave difficulty that no human being has ever been able to make them into maxims for conduct. Indeed, by a strange contradiction, theoretical determinists have often been the most ardent practical activists. The Augustinian and Calvinist interpretations of the Christian faith have been most zealous for obedience to the moral law. When did the Marxians surrender their practical doctrine of revolutionary action to the scrutiny of their dialectical materialism, whereby history moves on independent of individual volition? They talk much of mass movement, but their practical hope for alleviation lies in the activity of the little cell, which is made up of ardent disciples. Science with its categories of cause and effect may often lead to a determinist metaphysic but no scientist has ever believed in it so far as it concerns the capacity of his own mind to strike new paths and to make new discoveries. Even the Nazis in their saner moments are credited with having a philosophy of history, a supposed philosophy of dynamism according to which the individual is swept along by some inevitable wave of the future to a destiny which happens to coincide with the glorious régime of National Socialism. But they know very well where they are making for, and have chosen with a grim and unenviable determination the means of getting there. No! You cannot do without the idea of freedom. "Ah! Freedom is a noble thing." It represents at once a condition and a goal of human action: it is an individual possession and a social atmosphere: it is a beginning and an

end of human existence. In the fight for freedom, we struggle for essential humanity, not as a general abstract idea, but as the condition of the good life for individual human beings. If, as our Christian faith persuades us, the ultimate meaning of the universe can best be interpreted under the familiar symbol of a Father and His children in a relationship of love, liberty is of its essence. St. Paul saw that long ago and in his vision of its truth ushered in a new and irreversible era of human hope. Therefore in this fight, we battle not alone for the ideals of the western world, slowly developed through long centuries of toil, sweat, blood and tears, but the very stars in their courses are on our side.

Freedom, as the President clearly sees, is at once a positive and a negative idea. To be worth while, liberty must not be simply a formal possession: freedom is always practical, a capacity to do or to be something. With disuse, it atrophies and dies. That is a real peril in present-day democracy. We are living on borrowed capital. The precious fruits of liberty we enjoy were cultivated in a former time. To-day we pluck the fruits, but tend to forget that the tree of liberty itself must be nurtured, fed and pruned. What use to assert liberty of speech if you have nothing to say, or what you speak is not worth hearing? What purpose to claim liberty of worship, if the holy exercises of praise and prayer never engage the energies of the soul? Naziism arose with one voice to shout all others down and then to forbid them to speak because men were afraid to utter the words of the free. More, it was able to fashion itself into a system of worship because men would worship nothing else. The old saying has come strangely true that when the temple of the soul is empty, swept and garnished, seven spirits more wicked enter in and dwell there. Liberty has also its negative aspects. Freedom to act depends upon freedom from encumbrances. The haunting spectre of want persuades men to barter away liberty for a crust of bread. The powerful emotion of fear drives them to seek security in strange quarters. To be master of the world without, man must be schooled in a mastery of himself. Thus education and religion must unite with public policies of social and international security to lead men and women, not alone in making the heritage of the past a present possession, but also a capital instrument for a new and prospective production of civilised values. In brief, the long task of liberty never gives us rest. Freedom has to be won, and when gained it has to be guarded. To be conserved,

it must be used, but not to the neglect of its sources of energy. In all these exercises alike in the present desperation and in the future opportunity, the four-pointed star of President Roosevelt will make an excellent guide.

THE NEW EDUCATION has come to Canada and is now in process of settling down in every province. All over the world, and particularly in English-speaking and Scandinavian countries during the past score of years, there has been great talk about education, its virtues, defects and possibilities. This is nothing new in the history of mankind: no subject has been more consistently the subject of review and criticism. Moreover, it has been a sign of spiritual health ever since Socrates laid about the Sophists, and probably long before that. The New Education, as it is called, professes to be something of a Copernican revolution in the nurture of youth. Its principle consists in shaping education around the needs and interest of the student rather than around the curriculum with whose fixed movement he is expected to comply. The development of personality in its varied expressions rather than in its uniform characters is held to be its aim. Consequently, in practically all our Education Departments across Canada there has been a great activity of curriculum devising. At this time of crisis in civilisation this is a subject of unusual interest.

Education can never be a subject of strictly professional interest. It is indeed our most important social activity. The guidance of youth should be at once the practical expression of common ideals and a means of realising them. Education cannot be divorced from a philosophy of life and existence. The new doctrines of pedagogy accept this view as their foundation principle. Like most constructive movements, the new outlook in education is based upon a criticism of an older point of view. It is contended that education, until fairly recently, was concerned with subject-matter rather than persons: the pupil was made for instruction rather than the teaching for the student. Indeed this familiar word *instruction* must disappear along with the ancient and honourable name of *teacher*. The authoritarian type of nurture which used the word *instruction* regarded the pupil as relatively passive. Now, the teacher becomes an *educator*, with the suggestion that he is a guide rather than a teacher. Especially under the new insights of psychology, the activity of the student is engaged so that he acquires skill rather than learns by rote: in the current phrase,

he learns by doing. The pupil is encouraged to find knowledge by and for himself and always out of what are called *life-situations*. The art of the educator is to induce the interest and curiosity of the student, whereby he will want to seek out new information from books and other sources and thus he will acquire the habit of self-reliance, rather than the attitude of dependence on what is given to him. Considerable emphasis is laid on the social aspects of education. Students are encouraged to work in groups on what are called joint-projects often related to the life of the community in which they live. They find out, often by actual visits and inquiries, how communities are managed, what industries are carried on, and not infrequently take a turn at joint-activities of their own, such as composing text-books, producing newspapers and making things useful. Thus, it is contended, the life of the school is undergoing the most astonishing change. The class-room is becoming a place of joyous activity, rather than of durance vile, and education an eager interest rather than an imposed discipline.

About the need for educational reform in Canada there can be no question. A good deal of the criticism against the older system has been exaggerated, but much of it has been entirely justified. Despite what our modern theorists say, the art of the teacher remains the most important element in any form of education, and the genuine teacher who has an enthusiasm for his pupils has generally contrived to carry on his work by stimulating the minds of the instructed. But, he has had much to contend with in Canada. The systems of education have been too rigid and too mechanical in the operation. Above all, they have been cursed by an emphasis on the organisation of grades, and an almost morbid interest in the passing of examinations, so that there has been a fair amount of unabashed cramming. The teacher has not been entrusted with enough liberty to devise his own methods, suiting them to local conditions and adapting them to the capacity of the individual pupil. Not infrequently the student has been encouraged to learn facts by memory from dictated notes or provided text-books without understanding the meaning of what he has so laboriously conned. Above all, music and art, including the essential art of self-expression through writing and speaking our own language, have been shamefully neglected, so that the aesthetic capacities of our Canadian people have not been developed. Into all this atmosphere of formalism, the new education brings a healthy breeze of fresh air. The question

that some ask is whether the new currents may not develop into a gale that will carry away much that is solid while it stimulates the processes of new growth.

It is very obvious that the classical idea of education has been set aside in the new plans. This refers not alone to the classical languages, but to what they represent. According to the older idea, there were certain ideas of knowledge with which an educated man was presumed to be acquainted—certain books, certain ideas, certain languages. Nobody pretended they ever became the general property of many people: rather they were the intellectual heritage and preserve of an aristocracy of culture. But, unfortunately, the steep ascent of this classical mountain range was regarded as the educational journey for all. Many only scrambled around the foot: others made some headway, but never high enough to get a general view: a few elect spirits were able to roam at ease around the top, where they breathed the free and exhilarating air of the summit. Nowadays, this aristocratic ideal of education has been replaced by one that professes to be more democratic. This is great gain. But, are there to be no mountaineers? The real danger of the new education is a reduction of all to the level of the least common denominator. Modern education is confronted with the same dilemma as modern society—how to reconcile the idea of democratic government with the principle of leadership. It will be disastrous for the advancement of learning and the progress of civilisation if great tracts of culture are left untilled, and the heritage of the past perishes.

Grave question marks may be placed against the narrow pragmatic philosophy of life that informs some of the enthusiasts for the new education. A wise pedagogy will always endeavour to engage the enthusiastic interest of the student, meeting him on his own ground. But, this is a very different point of view from that which suggests the immediate interests of the pupil should dominate all that he is taught. Is not the function of education to enlarge the sphere of the mind's interests? There is no practical use for great music and art except to be enjoyed for their own sake. Shakespeare solves no problems, but he raises plenty of them. The human mind has no self-starting apparatus: it needs to be stimulated from without. One great art of learning is to make the discoveries of other people your own. Only a foolish conceit would suggest that we can neglect the great deposit of knowledge and experience that can only be appropriated if it is presented to us.

Nevertheless, we can take great hope in the enthusiasm and vision that inspires the new education. In Canada, its introduction will be attended with very great difficulty. The little one-roomed schoolhouse with its single teacher, endeavoring to educate a group of children from six to sixteen years of age at the same time, presents enormous difficulties. The economic status of the teacher must be raised before the best men and women can be attracted to make the profession a permanent vocation—and economic status is often a symbol of social esteem. Too often, teaching is a means of raising funds for the hopeful young man or woman to get into another and more remunerative kind of employment. But, all this said, we can be encouraged at a time of much despair by the knowledge that across Canada to-day, in every province, there is a group of earnest and enthusiastic people who are taking education to heart in a new way, and who are genuinely devoted to the ends of humanity in their work.

J. S. T.