

TOPICS OF THE DAY

OUTLOOK FOR NEW YEAR: THE REPUBLICAN VICTORY IN U.S.A.:
SCOTTISH DISCONTENT: PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

THE NEW YEAR HAS OPENED with the international skies distinctly clearer than they were a year ago, and there was considerable justification for the optimistic estimate that "the sun of peace is rising" made by Mr. Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, at the close of the recent meeting of the United Nations Organization in New York. Proceedings in its earlier stages did not offer much solid ground for such an affirmation, because they brought a recrudescence of the nationalist bickerings which had prevented any real progress at earlier conferences, no sign of any abatement of Russia's intransigence was visible, and a great deal of time was wasted on futile squabbles over procedure. But suddenly in the last week of the meeting the whole atmosphere was completely transformed. For reasons which are still obscure, M. Molotoff suddenly began to show a surprisingly conciliatory spirit; other delegates followed the Russian example, jettisoned selfish claims and prejudices, and as a result the meeting ended with a very encouraging record of practical accomplishment to its credit.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, which was only completing its first meeting after the adjournment at London, gave hopeful evidence that it was beginning to find its feet. It is true that there was still visible a disposition on the part of certain groups of states to act and vote together, with scant regard to the merits of the subject under discussion, and on some issues material interests and conflicting ideologies produced sharp divergencies. But before the Assembly closed, most of the delegates had become imbued with a sense of unity and common purpose, and the practical fruits of it in the shape of a series of important decisions on matters of high policy will help to revive a confidence, which had been steadily waning, in the potentialities of the U. N. as an effective agency of security and peace.

The Assembly has by the admission of five new members enlarged its total membership to 55, which is a much larger total than the League of Nations included at the same stage in its career. It has made useful progress with the development of its machinery by establishing what may become a very important instrument, the Trusteeship Council, which

will supervise the administration of territories formerly held under mandates from the League of Nations, and also an International Refugee Organization, which will care for, repatriate and resettle a million refugees or displaced persons in Europe, for whom U.N.R.R.A. will soon abandon responsibility. It has brought within its orbit the International Labour Organization, which may be allowed to remain at Geneva, and it has made a move for the solution of the thorny controversy about the veto by appealing to the Great Powers to modify their position about it and by urging the Security Council to devise a formula which will eliminate the objections of the smaller nations to the present veto. Then it has wisely settled the difficult problem of the organization's permanent home by accepting the generous offer of Mr. John D. Rockefeller to provide an adequate site for it in Manhattan on the East River at a cost of 8½ million dollars.

But by far the most important decision which the Assembly took was the unanimous adoption of a very broad and specific resolution about disarmament, whose passage was made possible by the Russians abandoning their stubborn opposition to any scheme of impartial international inspection of armaments. Under the terms of the resolution, the Security Council is charged with the task of drawing up a comprehensive plan for the general reduction and regulation of armed forces and armaments; it is instructed to outlaw the use of atomic bombs and other weapons of mass destruction, and to organize international control of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and international inspection of armaments. There still remains to be ironed out the divergence of opinion between the Americans and the Russians about policy relating to the atomic bomb, but some compromise now seems possible. For the moment, the scheme is only a pious resolution, but it represents a great advance on the proposals put forward at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva in 1932 and, if it can be put into practical effect, it will achieve a real measure of genuine disarmament which will save every member of the U. N. O. millions of dollars every year.

The Council of Foreign Ministers also made at New York remarkable progress towards the settlement of the welter of complicated problems confronting it. Five peace treaties—with Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Finland—have been completed, and arrangements are in train for dealing with the fate of Germany and Austria, the two remaining enemy

countries in Europe, at another conference in Moscow. To the settlement of other issues the new conciliatory attitude of the Russians made a great contribution. By conceding that effective power about security in the Free State of Trieste should reside with the Governor and not with the popular assembly, they have made possible a harmonious agreement about the Statute which is to govern the city's future. They have abandoned their support of Bulgaria's extravagant frontier claims against Greece, and they have agreed that Yugoslavia and Greece shall receive equal sums in reparations from Italy and Bulgaria. On the question of the control of the navigation of the Danube they have consented to the holding of an international conference between the states abutting on this great river, and the Big Four will discuss a regulatory statute for Danubian navigation. Accordingly the ground has been considerably cleared for tackling the all-important problem of the fate of the German people. They are passing through a very difficult winter on meagre rations, and are experiencing real hardships, but their internal economic position is slowly improving, and General Lucius Clay, the head of the American Control Mission in Germany, recently predicted that during this year at least 40 million Germans, or more than half the total population, would become self-supporting and need no further help from their conquerors. There is now a general realization that the dismemberment of Germany, or her reduction to the rôle of a purely agricultural state, is an impracticable policy, as it would leave Germany a seedbed of misery and political unrest in the heart of Europe. But it is also plain that her recovery of a reasonable measure of prosperity will be impossible until she acquires again a strong central government. Towards this goal the British and Americans have made a move by the unification of the zones which their armies occupy, and there are now indications that the Russians, who have hitherto been adamant against the re-erection of a centralized government for Germany, may now consent to it. Estimates that the American people had reverted to a conservative mood were confirmed by the Congressional election held in November, in which the Republican party won such a sweeping victory that it now controls both Houses in the new Congress by comfortable majorities. The notable decline in the total popular vote as compared with the figures for the election of 1944 suggests that the Republicans owed their victory less to enthusiasm for their policies and records than to the absence of millions

of voters who had always supported Franklin Roosevelt but had become disgusted with the ineptitude and reactionary ways of President Truman and his associates, and saw no valid reason for supporting a Democratic party when it was being led astray from the liberal paths marked out for it by Roosevelt. Be that as it may, the Republicans are now firmly in the saddle in both Houses of Congress, and the records of American politics show that, when a party in opposition had won a mid-term Congressional election, its triumph has almost invariably been followed up by the capture of the Presidency two years later. That unfortunate politician, President Truman, whose good intentions do not make up for the inadequacy of his equipment for his high office, is now fated to repeat during the next two years the miserable experience of predecessors like Woodrow Wilson and Hoover, and to be engaged in continual warfare with a hostile Congress. His lot is not to be envied.

In view of the record of the Republicans about Roosevelt's war policies and such questions as the lend-lease measure and the loan to Britain, their victory naturally aroused great disquietude in Britain and other foreign countries. But comfort was taken in the knowledge that the foreign policy of the United States had been conducted on non-partisan lines with Senator Vandenberg and other prominent Republicans cooperating actively in its formulation, and execution and that their actions and speeches had definitely committed their party to fore-swear isolationism and give unstinted support to the creation of an effective international authority. Yet some doubt must exist about the ability of the internationalists in the Republican party to make their views prevail over the ideas of the isolationist wing of the party, represented by powerful editors like Col. McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*, and noisy demagogues like Senator Wherry of Nebraska, who detest international cooperation in any shape or form. Nor should it be forgotten that the Republicans are the party of high protectionism, and will not be disposed to show any enthusiasm for the lowering of the American tariff. There are more ways than one of skinning a cat, and the real danger is not that the United States will withdraw from the United Nations Organization, which is not unthinkable, but that the Republican majorities in Congress will be persuaded to find ways and means for withholding effective American cooperation in the economic rehabilitation of Europe and Asia and towards liberation of the channels of inter-

national trade, two objectives whose attainment is considered essential for the restoration of general prosperity and the recovery of political stability for the world.

It can also be taken for granted that the Republicans will try to wipe out or amend drastically as many as possible of the measures of social and economic reform included in the "New Deal" programme. But the soberer spirits among them realize that they will have to walk warily in the matter of anti-labour laws, upon which the "diehards" of the party have set their hearts. However, under a Republican Congress the system of capitalist economy and free enterprise will be given unfettered scope to prove its merits at a time when heavy shackles are being placed upon the same system in Britain by a Socialist Government, and the results on both sides of the Atlantic will be watched with keen interest and have important consequences for the economic future of the rest of the world. The American people will expect the system of free enterprise to provide a full employment and maintain the high standard of wages and well-being which was reached during the war years, and, if it fails in this severe test, and the British experiments meet with a reasonable measure of success, a rapid growth of Socialist sentiment in the United States can be safely predicted. If contrary results follow, Socialism will lose favour in Britain.

Meanwhile the defeated Democrats are licking their wounds, but they are beginning to recover from their initial mood of despondency. Their representatives in both Houses of Congress constitute formidable minorities, who can muster as good debating power as the Republicans, and they hold the governorships of 23 out of the 25 states. But the records of American politics show that the Democratic party has never prospered when it fell into conservative hands and adopted Rightist policies, and that it has come into power since the Civil War only when under the leadership of able progressive politicians like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt it was made the effective political instrument of the liberal forces in the American nation. Very little in the way of invigorating leadership can be expected from President Truman, who will probably not seek re-election, and the hopes of the reliberalization of the Democratic party lie in such leaders as Mr. Henry Wallace, Senator Claude Pepper and Governor Arnall of Georgia. Already they are addressing themselves vigorously to the task of getting control of the Democratic party and its policies for its liberal element, and the recent appointment of Mr. Henry

Wallace to the editorship of the *New Republic* indicates an intention to make this influential weekly the spearhead of the drive to liberalize the Democratic party.

The *New Republic* has a very interesting history behind it. When a young American called Willard Straight was at college, he promised a group of young friends, who were ardent liberals, that, if ever he made money, he would help them to found a liberal weekly. Not only did Straight prosper in the world of finance and become a partner in the mighty House of Morgan, but he also married one of the greatest heiresses in the United States, Miss Dorothy Whitney, a sister of Harry Payne Whitney, the famous polo player. He kept his promise, and before the First World War provided funds for the establishment of the *New Republic*, which under the editorship of Herbert Croly came to occupy the same position in the United States as the *New Statesman* does in Britain. Straight died prematurely in 1919 during the Peace Conference at Paris, but his widow, who inherited not only his fortune but also even larger fortunes from her father, W. C. Whitney, a Traction magnate, and her grandfather, Colonel Oliver Payne, a Standard Oil multimillionaire, shared his liberal views and could well afford to subsidize the *New Republic* until it became self-supporting. Later she married an Englishman, Mr. Leonard Elmhirst, and between them they have been responsible for a series of very interesting agricultural and sociological experiments at Dartington Hall in Devonshire. However, one of her sons, Michael Straight, who was educated in Britain, returned some years ago to the United States and served as Washington correspondent of the *New Republic* before he joined the American Navy. He also wrote an interesting book called *Make This the Last War*.

Now that he has been released by the Navy and resumed his journalistic activities, his mother has handed over the control of the *New Republic* to him, and one of his first acts as its publisher was to entrust its editorial chair to Mr. Henry Wallace, the acknowledged leader of the liberal Democrats. Mr. Wallace is now provided with an admirable forum for the propagation of his radical ideas and policies, and it is a curious trick of fate that part of the fortunes accumulated by departed American millionaires should now be employed for this purpose. It is equally curious that two alumni of English public schools, Mr. Straight and Mr. Marshall Field, who is an Etonian and is the owner of the *Chicago Sun* and *P.M.*, should be virtually the only

men of wealth in the United States who are employing it in the rôle of publishers to keep their country in the paths of liberalism.

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ONE OF THE DOMINANT impressions left with the writer after a recent visit to Scotland was a noticeable increase in the national consciousness. The Scots people count themselves fortunate to have had a much smaller toll of casualties than in the First World War, and to have suffered comparatively little damage from German air raids. They are addressing themselves with their normal intelligence and courage to the tasks of post-war reconstruction. They are confident that, if the fates are reasonably kind, they can solve their present problems and difficulties, and not only recover an adequate measure of prosperity but build a better social and economic order than the country has heretofore known. But for the moment they are in rather a grim humor, and many of them are extremely dissatisfied with the present workings of their old partnership with England.

It was almost inevitable that, when the great political upheaval of the last general election took place, the voters of a country with such radical traditions as Scotland would elect a majority of Labourites for its 74 seats. Very many Scottish Liberals dislike the Socialist creed, and their support enabled the Conservative party to do relatively better than in any section of Britain except Kent and Sussex. But the Labour Government, which started its career with a large fund of goodwill in Scotland, has been steadily losing it by its cavalier treatment of a number of Scottish problems. Among the chief grievances which have accumulated against it are the relegation of the great Scottish airport at Prestwick to a minor rôle, the decision to shut down the great naval base at Rosyth, the rejection of plans for a new highway bridge across the Firth of Forth which is badly needed, and the continued neglect of the Highlands, which are now almost entitled to be classed as a "distressed area". One reason for the plight of this region is that the huge annual inflow of money from rich visitors, who rented grouse moors, deer forests and salmon rivers, has shrunk to a very thin stream, because very few people in Britain can now afford such expensive luxuries. Again, many Scottish industrial plants have been engulfed in the maw of great corporations whose policies are controlled by English directors and executives, and when orders are being distributed, the

House of Windsor, as it is now called, had the Crown of Britain bestowed upon it, the established tradition was that its heirs should choose their brides from the royal or demi-royal families of Germany, and the first interruption of it came in 1861 when the future King Edward VII married a Danish princess, although Queen Alexandra had a strong strain of German blood in her veins. But Queen Mary, the consort of George V, although she was born and brought up in England, had no blood but German. Accordingly the British Royal Family in two centuries had accumulated a large host of German relatives, some of whom were far from popular in Britain; it had among the British aristocracy a substantial array of kindred marked by the bar sinister, but very few legitimate relatives. Such a situation was considered to have great advantages. It helped to keep the Royal Family on what Walter Bagehot, author of *The English Constitution*, called "its solitary pinnacle of majestic reverence" and enveloped in "mystic awe and wonder". The King and Queen, too, are the foremost social personages in the country and, when they had no claims of relatives to consider, they could perform their functions as heads of British society with complete impartiality.

But this complete social exclusiveness of the Royal Family came to an end when George VI as Duke of York married Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, a daughter of an ancient Scottish family which held the Earldom of Strathmore. The marriage, coming as it did after a bloody war with Germany, previously the chief source of royal brides, was exceedingly popular with the British people, but it endowed the Royal Family with a large number of British relatives. It happened that the Bowes-Lyons have been a very prolific family in recent generations, and not only are the actual bearers of the name fairly numerous, but they have a huge tribe of relatives, some of them in comparatively humble stations of life. For instance, there are in Forfarshire farming families not very distantly related to the Queen, and some years ago a kinsman worked in a lumber mill in New Brunswick. In a democratic age there is no ground for deploring the termination of the social exclusiveness of the Royal Family, but the fact remains that its position is thereby altered and it can be no longer on "its solitary pinnacle of majestic reverence". Now, if Princess Elizabeth were to marry some member of the more exalted families of the British aristocracy, the union would evoke popular applause, but it would almost certainly bring another accretion to the ranks

of the British kinfolk of the Royal Family. If the process of intermarriage with Britons was continued indefinitely, the social exclusiveness of the Royal House would in time become so diluted that it would come to be regarded merely as the senior member of the aristocracy.

It is, however, unthinkable that Princess Elizabeth would not be given some freedom of choice about her marriage, and in recent weeks widespread publicity has been given to a story that she has set her affections upon Prince Philip of Greece, that he reciprocates her affections and that they want to be married as soon as possible. Now Prince Philip, who has served with credit in the British navy and is now a naturalized British subject, is described by all who know him as a most estimable and charming young man of fine character and high intelligence, who would make an excellent husband for the Princess. But the Greek Royal Family, to which he belongs, is half-German by blood, and does not bear any too good a name with the British public or even with a substantial body of the Greek people. Its head, King George, has lately been restored to his throne with the help of British bayonets, and he is trying to rule his badly battered country through a reactionary Rightist Ministry, which is accused of treating its opponents with ruthless brutality. In the northern areas of Greece, Leftist elements are now engaged in a continuous guerilla warfare against the Government's forces, and there seems substantial ground for the accusation that the rebels are receiving assistance from the Communist Governments of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania, all of them faithful satellites of Russia, and naturally hostile to a Rightist regime in Greece. It is notorious, too, that apart from the northern rebels, a large body of the Greek people are unreconciled to the restoration of the monarchy, and detest the tyrannical methods of the present Government. So, if it does not mend its ways and produce a swift improvement in economic and social conditions which are pitifully bad, the growth of a revolutionary ferment which will result in another of Greece's civil wars cannot be ruled out as improbable. The Leftist forces could count with certainty upon the backing of Russia and her Balkan satellites, and the Greek monarch and the Rightist politicians would assuredly turn to Britain for assistance. In such a situation there would be the seeds of a major international conflict and, if a Greek prince was the son-in-law of the King of Britain, the British Govern-

ment would be in a position of great embarrassment. The Attlee Ministry has been severely criticized by many of its own supporters for adopting the Churchillian policy of but-tressing the present regime in Greece with British troops and, while it would be unlikely to oppose outright the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip, it could not be expected to have any enthusiasm for it.

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