

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

RUSSIA AND U. N. O.: THE ESPIONAGE AFFAIR: IMMIGRATION PROSPECTS: SECOND CHAMBER PROBLEMS: INDIA.

ALMOST A YEAR has elapsed since the military defeat of Hitlerite Germany removed the most sinister menace that the world has faced for centuries, and offered mankind another chance to build a decent peaceful civilization. But to-day only inveterate optimists can find any satisfaction in the state of this war-battered planet. Vast numbers of people in Europe and Asia are dragging out a miserable existence under conditions of semi-starvation. Revolutionary movements and civil strife keep different countries in a state of turmoil, and democratic freedom has no foothold on a large part of the earth's surface. For the speedy and effective reconstruction of the world's political and economic fabric, a continuance of the co-operative unity, forged for the war, between the Anglo-Saxon democracies and Russia, was absolutely essential. But instead there has been a progressive deterioration in their relations, and it has now reached an ominous climacteric through the stubborn refusal of the Russians to submit to scrutiny by the Security Council of the United Nations Organization a dispute between themselves and the established Government of Iran.

At the San Francisco Conference the Soviet Union insisted upon the right of the permanent members of the Security Council to veto any action which it proposed to take after consideration of any international dispute. There were serious misgivings about this concession, but it was made from the conviction that without it Russia's co-operation in the work of the United Nations Organization could not be secured. Hopes that it would suffice to allay the apprehension of the Russians were nullified when, at the meeting of the Security Council in New York last month, their representative submitted a document demanding a further concession. It proposed that the permanent members of the Security Council should possess the right, not merely to veto any action designed by the Council after consideration of dispute, but also to veto any appeal presented to the Council for consideration. The original concession at San Francisco weakened very seriously the authority of the Security Council, but the second threatened to paralyse it completely. So the Security Council by a majority of 11 to 2, with Russia and her satellite, Poland, the only dissentients, decided to reject the Russian demand, and to hear the case of

the Government of Iran about Russian interference in the affairs of its country. The Russian Government, taking immediate umbrage at this decision, instructed its delegate to withdraw from the meeting of the Council, and blunt intimations were forthcoming from Moscow that the move must be regarded as a gesture of hostility and a step towards the creation of an anti-Russian bloc with an Anglo-Saxon coalition as its core.

The source of the dangerous international friction is the unconcealed determination of the Russian Government to build an outer ring of defence bulwarks for protection against an attack by a combination of capitalist nations. Stalin explained their motives quite frankly when he said:

The Germans carried out an invasion of the U.S.S.R. through Finland, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary . . . What can be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union in a desire to ensure its security for the future tries to achieve that these countries shall have governments whose relations to the Soviet Union are loyal?

But the fears which are driving Russia to erect this protective hedge of semi-vassal states have an origin earlier than the German invasion. In an admirable book, *Soviet Politics—at Home and Abroad*, Mr. Frederic L. Schuman, an able American historian, devotes several chapters to retelling the deplorable story of the concerted attempts of the victorious Allies after the First World War to overthrow the Bolshevik Government established by Lenin after the Russian Revolution of 1917, and to replace conservative elements in power at Moscow. The British Government of the day, largely under the inspiration of Mr. Winston Churchill, spent at least 250 million pounds, most of it in the form of subsidies to reactionary ruffians like Kolchak and Denikin, on the ill-advised crusade against Bolshevism, and the contributions of the United States, France and other countries were almost as expensive. The crusade failed, because it was unpopular with the working classes in the western democracies, and the Coalition, for a variety of reasons, could not bring their full power into action against the Bolsheviks. Also because Lenin and Trotsky were able to persuade the mass of the Russian people that they were doomed to a worse slavery than the Czarist regime had ever imposed on them, if their enemies prevailed, and to mobilize them for a desperate and successful effort to repel the onslaught . . . According to Mr. Schuman, it was this grim fight to save the Revolution which impelled Lenin and his associates to discard all ideas of demo-

cratic freedom, and to build a totalitarian structure of government as a necessary instrument for securing the rigid discipline of the whole nation required for its survival. There was also indelibly imprinted on the Russian mind the firm conviction that, until a world proletarian revolution was achieved, the great Socialist State of the world would always be liable to attack by some combination of capitalist nations seeking its destruction.

To counter the charge that they are contemptuous of the interests and needs of other countries and are solely and most selfishly concerned with the aggrandizement of their own strength, the Russians can produce considerable evidence that the Anglo-Saxon democracies are not exactly governed in their actions and policies by a selfless spirit of international altruism. They attribute, for example, to the pressure of Anglo-American oil interests the refusal of the Iranian Government to grant oil concessions in Northern Iran to Russia. They allege that 29 American-trained Chinese divisions have been sent into Manchuria as a threat against the U.S.S.R., and that negotiations now afoot between Turkey and Irak are promoted from London with the object of creating a Near-Eastern bloc of Moslem states, hostile to Russia. They point out that Britain and the United States show no disposition to abandon their respective rigid controls over great international waterways like the Suez and Panama Canals, and argue that while pledges have been given to secure to the Russians by treaty rights free access to the Dardanelles and the Kiel Canal, the British are trying to neutralize the concession about the former waterway by air bases in Greece and the Aegean Islands. Americans are represented as taking similar action about the latter through the retention of air bases in Iceland and Greenland. The British have recently tried to remove one grievance of the Russians by agreeing to discontinue their financial support of the army of 200,000 anti-Russian Poles, which General Anders, the sworn enemy of the present Polish Government, had been allowed to collect in Italy. But the Russians still want to know why the Americans have built Super-Fortress air bases in Germany, and why half a million German troops are being kept under arms in the British zone of occupation. The Russians also see the United States proposing to retain bases on the former Japanese islands of Okinawa, Iwo, Kiwaljein and Saipan in addition to their former bases in the Pacific, and they cannot have failed to note the recent announcement that some 65,000 workers in the United States were occupied in the manufacture of atomic

bombs. Furthermore, they think they see the Roman Catholic Church employing unceasingly its elaborate machinery of propaganda to foment hatred of infidel Russia and stir up a sort of Holy War against her. It does not help to turn Russia to more moderate courses when Cardinal Spellman sees fit to describe her rulers as he did on St. Patrick's Day in the sermons:

Godless, lawless leaders, drunk with delusions, are imperilling our peace . . . The bloodstream of human kind is poisoned by the plague of militant atheism, its body plundered by greedy leeches, its soul scourged by man's scorn for the laws of God.

Again, the Russians can be excused for resenting the half-hearted line which the Governments of Britain, France and the United States are taking towards the retention of power in Spain by Hitler's obnoxious ally, General Franco, and the strange tenderness of the British towards his South American counterpart, Colonel Peron, who has just been confirmed in Argentina through election conducted under most discreditable methods.

These facts are set forth not to excuse the unco-operative attitude of the Russian Government and its high-handed actions in different countries, but to explain its preoccupation with the problem of its country's security. The gap between Russia and the western democracies has been widened by open breach at the meeting of the Security Council in New York, and unless both sides make haste to show a spirit of mutual accommodation, a willingness to abide firmly by the spirit of the U.N.O. Charter, the world is headed for a disastrous permanent cleavage, which may well contain the seeds of another World War.

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The present Federal Parliament has now assembled for its second session in an atmosphere charged with unwonted excitement as the result of the sensational disclosures, involving one of its members, about the activities of officials of the Russian Embassy and a group of Canadian confederates in the field known as espionage. Since the persons accused of selling or conveying without price information to the Russians are either on trial or due to be tried in the courts, comment on the whole strange business is hampered by recognized limitations. But certain pertinent observations are permissible.

In the first place, the Russians are guilty of no breach of the accepted canons of international relations in trying to discover secrets of the atomic bomb, or other instruments of

warfare, through whatever agencies they choose to employ. Does anybody imagine that, if the Russians possessed a monopoly of the secrets of such a devastating weapon as the atomic bomb or the super-explosive RFX, the Governments of the Anglo-Saxon democracies would not have had their intelligence services busy as bees trying to ferret them out? Only they would have instructed their agents to operate on their own hook, and have left their Embassies in a position to disavow them, if they were caught redhanded in espionage work. It was therefore what might be called bad international form for the Russians to use their Embassy at Ottawa as the active headquarters of their espionage in North America. But the real culprits are those Canadian and British citizens who, for different motives, were willing to act as accomplices of the Russian agents.

They seem to have been animated by different motives; some of them are scientists who honestly believe that scientific secrets of immense potency for good or evil should be shared by all the democratic nations; others are political fanatics, whose zeal for the Communist faith impels them to place allegiance to Moscow before any other loyalty, and a third set are frustrated misfits, who cherish personal grievances against Canada or its Government. In due course, if they are found guilty, appropriate penalties will be meted out to them, and they will be branded individuals hereafter.

But the Government created popular sympathy for the accused, and erred greatly in not taking scrupulous care that the established practices of British justice were followed in its moves to bring the offenders to book. It was an indefensible departure from those practices to hold the arrested persons *incommunicado*, and to deny them access to their families and counsel for a considerable period. Ministers had no reasonable answer to the searing indictment of their tactics which a former colleague, Major Power, made in the House of Commons . . . Canadians will no longer be able to cast stones at Moscow for its high-handed methods of administering justice, and it is very disturbing to find that a Fascist contempt for traditional liberties has been given free play by a Canadian Liberal Ministry. One damaging result is that it has provided the Duplessis Ministry in Quebec with an excuse for reviving the operation of its notorious Padlock Law, a high water mark in illiberalism which ought at the time of its passage to have been disallowed by the Federal Government.

It is satisfactory, however, that Prime Minister King did not allow the attacks directed at him by the official Moscow press

to affect his judgment about the importance of the episode, and that there is to be no severance of diplomatic relations between Canada and Russia . . . It is indeed very dubious if the Russians received anything like adequate value for the money and energy which they expended at Ottawa on espionage. The physical ingredients of the atomic bomb are now common knowledge among the nuclear scientists of the world, and it is virtually certain that the veil of secrecy about certain processes in the actual manufacture of the bombs could not be pierced in Ottawa. So the Russians have probably a heavy debit balance for their expenditures, for they have supplied their enemies and critics in Canada with very effective ammunition, and at the same time have involved in grave discredit their satellite allies, the Labor-Progressive party, whose capacity for futile mischief-making seems to be unlimited.

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The King Ministry has a good excuse for declining to formulate any definite policy about immigration until it is within sight of achieving its goal of full employment for the present residents of Canada. But a forecast recently published by the Bureau of Statistics must have come as a cold douche to the hopes of those optimists who had been predicting that Canada would have a population of some 30 millions before the end of this century. The population experts of the Bureau, taking no account of the consequences of future wars and other unpredictable events, and making no allowance for any increment by immigration, calculate that Canada's population will reach a maximum of 15 millions about 1990, and will thereafter begin a slow decline. The present trends indicate that the decline will be first visible in the three prairie provinces, which experienced the greatest growth in population during the first three decades of this century, and that it will spread to the other provinces, not excluding Quebec, whose fertility rates have already begun to fall.

But an increase of some 3 millions over our present figure of 12 millions would still leave Canada a very sparsely populated country, with a physical equipment far in excess of the number of people who were using it. So there is a strong case for adopting a vigorous policy for the encouragement of immigration as soon as the problems of post-war reconstruction are solved, and without it Canada is destined to remain a minor power in the world. But there are clear indications that the

British Government, which in the years between the two world wars allocated every year very large sums for the promotion of immigration to the Dominions, will not revive this policy, and figures recently published in the London *Economist* explain some of the motives behind the change. It is estimated that in the years after 1946 Britain will have to keep for manning her defences and honouring her commitments in different parts of the world about a million and a half of her citizens, distributed about equally between the armed forces and the factories which supply them with munitions. The needs of the huge housing programme and other tasks of reconstruction will absorb a very large number of workers, and her Government's policies also aim at an expansion of her export trade by 50 p.c. above the pre-war level, a feat which will require the application of a large volume of additional labour in the industries manufacturing exports. In a recent debate in the British House of Commons a Conservative member estimated that to meet all the commitment of the nation's policy an additional 2,500,000 workers would be required before the end of 1946, and that only one tenth of this number were in sight. Sir Stafford Cripps challenged the accuracy of these figures, but so far the Government has not offered any alternative estimate. Today Britain is faced with a declining population, and in the years ahead the proportion of people in the older age groups will steadily increase. Many people in these categories will be pensioners who will have to be maintained by the labours of the younger age groups, and therefore Britain simply cannot afford to see any serious drain upon the latter. So it is quite plain that Britain's needs, which are very desperate, will impel her to restrain by every means in her power the emigration of her young people, and that if Canada wants an influx of immigrants, she will have to look to sources other than Britain.

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THE POSITION OF THE Canadian Senate becomes more anomalous every month, as the operations of mortality thin the ranks of the Progressive-Conservative Opposition. Its strength has now been reduced to about one-fourth of the Senate's total membership of 96. Since most of the surviving Tories are aged men, the end of the present Parliament may well see them diminished to half a score, and left a negligible minority incapable of sustaining an effective debate. Even in the days when there was a reasonable balance of party strength in the Senate,

it had many more critics than defenders, and the Liberal party is definitely committed to its reform in its official programme. The system of filling the Senate by life appointments on the nomination of the Government of the day has long been recognized by all intelligent Canadians as an anachronism which offends against the principles of democracy, and it would become indefensible if the Senate's personnel came to be composed solely of Liberals. This might well occur if the Liberal party won another Federal election. Prime Minister King seems to have shed all his erstwhile ardor for the reform of the Senate, but it would surely be an act of political wisdom if he filled the vacancies created by the recent resignations of two veteran Progressive-Conservative members—a very rare occurrence—by nominating in their place two members of the same party. Even an enlarged representation of the Progressive-Conservative party, which would follow its victory at the next election, would not cure a fundamental flaw in the composition of the Senate, namely the complete lack of representation for the minor political parties, to which about one-third of the population of Canada on the evidence of the last election give allegiance. The reform of our Senate is long overdue, and the lethargy of the Opposition parties in not pressing for it is very curious.

It is interesting, however, to note that Lord Cecil has raised at Westminster the issue of the reform of the House of Lords, whose composition is just as much an anachronism as is our Senate's, and moved a series of resolutions whose aim was to keep the existing structure intact, but to introduce various adaptations and changes for the purpose of improving the quality of the membership. His proposals were (1) that peeresses in their own right should sit in the Lords: (2) that the creation of life peerages should be authorized, and (3) that Ministers of the Crown sitting in the Commons should be given the right to address the Lords. It would have been a natural expectation that the Labour party would put the reform of the House of Lords in the forefront of its programme, but its leaders are apparently satisfied with the present limitations upon the veto power of the Lords, especially as the Conservative majority in the Upper House, probably fearful of providing any excuse for a crusade against it, has shown consistently a very conciliatory attitude towards the Socialist measures of the Attlee Ministry. So Lord Addison, as its spokesman, gave a very cool reception to Lord Cecil's proposals, rejecting the second and



third completely, and intimating the willingness of the Government to leave the first to a free vote.

So far the problem of constructing a Second Chamber on hereditary principles but armed with powers both and useful unobstructive has defeated the reformers in Britain, but the argument against perpetuating a system of membership in a legislative body for reasons of birth and not of merit is unanswerable in this democratic age, and the issue, as in the case of our Senate, cannot be indefinitely shelved. The British, however, would hesitate about the application of drastic surgery to such a venerable institution as their House of Lords, and would prefer to eliminate the hereditary principle by some process of gradualism. One idea, that has attractions for many people and is endorsed by the London *Economist*, is that hereditary titles should be on a descending moving stair, with each successive generation occupying a lower rank, unless promoted upwards on personal merit. Under this plan the titles of the unworthy members of the Lords would be extinguished, and retention by others would be a badge of continuing valuable service to the country.

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**A** LAST AND DESPERATE effort is now being made to solve the deadlock about the Indian problem. A special Mission of three British Ministers, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, the Secretary for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, who tried his hand at a settlement some years ago, and Mr. A. V. Alexander have arrived in India with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate a settlement, and are now engaged in prolonged conferences with the Viceroy and his Cabinet and the leaders of the Indian political parties. At the same time Prime Minister Attlee, to fortify the hands of his colleagues and allay Indian suspicions of British good faith, recently made in the House of Commons a notable advance beyond all previous pledges by announcing that the settlement to be negotiated by his Government would leave India the free choice of remaining in the Commonwealth or withdrawing from it.

The conferences now begun are being held in a very tense and troubled atmosphere. Poor rice and grain crop last year, and the failure of the monsoon last fall, have produced famine conditions in a large part of India, notably in the province of Madras, where thousands are faced with starvation unless relief comes speedily, and the baser Nationalist politicians have no

scruple about charging the British with responsibility for this disaster. In February the revolutionary ferment which exists in India boiled up in a mutiny of ratings of the Royal Indian Navy, and wild riots in Bombay and other big seaports of India, which before they were suppressed cost 270 lives and great damage to property. Some credit for the restoration of order must be assigned to Indian leaders like Mr. Gandhi, who supported the Government's appeal for a cessation of violence.

One factor, which increases the urgency for an immediate settlement, is the growing evidence that the loyalty of the native troops in the Indian army can no longer be depended upon. During the war there was considerable wondering why in two successive years the campaigns planned for the recovery of Burma from the Japanese suddenly petered out. It is now an open secret that these setbacks were due to widespread disaffection among the Indian troops, of whom about 50,000 deserted to the enemy and were organized with Japanese help into an Indian national army, professedly fighting for their country's freedom from British rule. After the defeat of Japan resulted in the surrender of this army, the British could not overlook such a mass desertion, and so three of the highest ranking officers who organized it were tried by court-martial and sentenced to death, the appropriate penalty for such treachery. But it was only natural that the people of India would regard them as heroic martyrs, and such a formidable agitation against the sentences developed both inside and outside the Indian army that the Viceroy was impelled to issue a pardon for the condemned officers and to order their release. It is quite plain that, if this step had not been taken, there would have been a second Indian Mutiny, ardently supported by all save a small minority of the Indian civilian population, and the task of coping effectively with it would have been completely beyond the powers of Britain in her enfeebled state.

But there has been no abatement of the revolutionary ferment, and the Indian extremists are delighted at the breach between Russia and the western democracies. They felt confident that, if a general uprising of the Indian people took place for the purpose of driving the British out of India, they could rely upon encouragement and even some practical help from Russia, some of whose territory lies not very far from the northern frontier of India. So the sands are running out, and the progress of the present negotiations is being watched with great anxiety, because their failure would produce a grave *impasse*.

The feud between the Congress party and the Moslem League still remains the chief obstacle to a satisfactory settlement. But it was encouraging to find Mr. Nehru, the Congress leader, making a conciliatory move in a recent speech by intimating that he would be willing to accept "95 per cent Pakistan", which means the scheme of partition advocated by Mr. Jinnah, the Moslem leader, within a federal system, and that if even then certain areas wanted to escape from the jurisdiction of the central government, no compulsion would be exercised to retain them, if the will of their inhabitants to withdraw was proved by a fair plebiscite.

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