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The Soldier on the Maas. By Howard Marshall

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America and the Crimea Conference

By ALISTAIR COOKE

[The] twelfth of February is a day of special pride to [Am]ericans. It is the birthday of Lincoln. In ordinary [tim]es there are traditional ceremonies all over the land, [but] none more touching than that enacted again last [in] Springfield, Illinois—Lincoln's home-town—where a [...] of citizens trooped off to the cemetery to hear again, [at Lincol]n's grave, his appeal at the end of a great war, 'to [...] suffering, bind up the nation's wounds, and make a justice for all and malice toward none'. This year, [...]s Day, the news came through in the late afternoon [...]f those words had been acted on in the Crimea, and [...]ip begun in good faith, not between the divided [...] single nation, but between nations who live oceans [...w]hose history and ambitions have sometimes been poles [...] traditional Republican Lincoln Day dinner was inter[...] the flashes coming off the news-tapes, and former [H]oover, usually regarded as the spokesman of 'old [Repu]blicans', stood up before a thousand silent people and [...] proud to announce the Crimea Agreement: 'It will [...]t hope', he said, 'to all the world. It is fitting that [...]ve come to the world on the birthday of Abraham [...]

[...] these sentences of ex-President Hoover because they [...m]oods that have coincided in the typical American [...] the news from Yalta, but which might be the last [...]ould expect from the patriarch of the Republican Old [...] is a mood of deep, almost religious gratitude at the [...]e meeting. Now you know, just as the French enjoy [...]ud—perhaps more than any nation—the Americans enjoy feeling aloud. They sometimes do this with a spontaneity that is delightful, and sometimes with a mechanical ardour that seems out of all proportion to the event itself. Yet the general mood which has surprisingly infected non-political people, as well as politicians, and Republicans as well as Democrats, is more like what people felt when at last we invaded Europe. It is a mood of gratefulness, quite unlike the reception in this country of any previous conference. The other mood which may even surprise you more coming from Republicans is a feeling of deep relief that isolationism in America faces total collapse. Some of the speeches made at Republican Lincoln Day dinners around the country sounded a note almost of shrill protest at the suggestions that the Republican Party was ever the party of isolationism.

However, lest we get carried away by the general American satisfaction and before I detail the main reasons being given here for it, I think you should know that there are dissenting voices being raised. One of the two groups that raised immediate protests and has loudly sustained them is inevitably Polish-American groups in the United States. There are in this country one million Americans of Polish birth, and many more of Polish origin, and like many other Americans whose ancestors or parents renounced the 'old country', they have a strong protective feeling towards it, as if to justify themselves for having left it, and also for the real reason, that the rousing promise of life in the New World has not been fulfilled in the conditions of their daily life. They consequently feel a vigilance about Poland's future and are faithful to a picture of Poland in their mind's eye that seems more gallantly realised in the Polish exile government in London than in the Lublin government. Of course, this picture is very likely untrue

* Alistair Cooke was broadcasting on February 18

South Africa and the Future

(*continued from page 209*)

d fish. But during the war the Union has waived her preferences ı the export of citrus fruit to Canada and on fish to Great Britain, ıce, being herself unable to maintain supply, she did not wish the ople of Canada and Great Britain to pay more than the cheapest ice for what they could get from foreign sources. If imperial pre- rences are going to stand in the way of some freer and wider system world economic organisation, then let them go. But until it is a t clearer that other nations will take part in such organisation, we ould, I think, feel it best to maintain a system which brings secure moderate mutual advantages by arrangements freely negotiated as tween friends, rather than as between members of an economic nperialist conspiracy.

I find I have time only to touch on the last important question: would e association of the Dominions in colonial responsibilities be wel- ome? The answer theoretically at least would I think be 'Yes'. Indeed e Union's vision of the post-war future, as General Smuts has indi- ted, takes in the conception of a prominent place for the Union in me general association of the territories of South Africa. But cutting ıt these wider prospects which are still somewhat formless and remote, e more immediate problem that will arise, if some degree of colonial evolution is seriously contemplated, is the future of the Protectorates— asutoland, Swaziland and Bechuanaland. You may not all realise that e have inside our frontiers British administrative territories over which e have no control. If you contemplate the association of the Dominions colonial administration after the war, these Protectorates are there, as r as the Union is concerned, to prompt the claim that here is the first d obvious field where such association could be tried out.

This is just another of those thorny matters on which I cannot pretend that there is any unanimous South African view. As in the case of the Commonwealth connection, I can only give you the gist of widely differing opinions. Some of us would agree with a good many of you, that differences of native policy preclude such an experiment. The opposite group would argue that your retention of any Protectorate or territory within our frontiers is in fact an infringement of our sovereignty and casts a shadow on our status as full partners in the Commonwealth. Others again would urge that the spirit in which a law is administered may be less harsh than the law itself, that though our urban and de-tribalised natives are a sore and complex problem, our administration of the tribal territories and native reserves, as in the Transkei or Zululand, is ably staffed, and conducted with more genuine care for the native people than is commonly recognised; and that our association, at least in your administration of the Protectorates, would mark a valuable step forward for us in administrative experience.

I can, as I say, give you no unanimous South African view on this difficult question. I can only suggest for your reflection that if in time colonial devolution becomes a practical issue, the future of the Protectorates will figure largely in the picture. These and other great issues of the future will test the cohesion of the Commonwealth. The first necessity, if they are to be solved, is that you and we should try to understand as clearly as possible the nature of these issues, and the reaction to them of opinion on both sides. The effort is worth making, for I believe that the Commonwealth has a great and vital role to fulfil in the future peace and welfare of mankind, and that its unity can rest on no basis save that of the common ideas, common interests, and mutual respect and confidence that characterise any partnership that works and endures.

Points from Letters

THE LISTENER undertakes no responsibility for the views expressed by its correspondents

cience and Life

rofessor J. B. S. Haldane's letter on 'Science nd Life' in your issue for January 11 has imulated much interesting correspondence, but ıis has, it seems, failed to confront the Professor ith one of his own counter-arguments, as valid oday as when he first used it. The book has nfortunately disappeared from my shelves, but clearly recollect that in the 'twenties, Professor laldane pointed to the remarkable influence hich physiological science would be able to xert on individual character and intellect; for xample, the injection of certain glands might hange a nervous into a courageous personality. ut what, the Professor concluded (and I don't ıink I am misrepresenting him)—what if the erson in control of this wonderful scientific ıstrument chose to apply it to evil ends; if, or example, he elected to turn quiet, peace- ble characters into aggressive, selfish militarists? his brilliant phophecy was, at least in intention nd by similar scientific methods, fulfilled by the lazis.

This seems to me a convincing demon- tration of the fact that science is an instrument ith marvellous potentialities for good or evil, nd that whether it brings good or evil to man- ind depends on the will, the character and rinciples of those who wield it. Now this surely ıeans a scale of values, and if Professor Hal- lane admits this, he retreats from scientific otalitarianism and advances towards the Sermon n the Mount, or the great principles common o the chief religions, of which Christianity is he only conceivable one for Europe. Most Christians would admit that they have come far short of the ideals of their religion, but they would argue that the remedy lies in increasing fidelity to those ideals, not abandoning them as a guide to personal and international conduct. By whom and where have scientific methods 'on a large scale' been applied, as Professor Haldane declares? Surely best of all in the totalitarian states. A scientific totalitarianism such as he appears to advocate would be tolerable only if it were directed by saints. What is the moral basis on which Professor Haldane would train his directors? If not the principles of Christianity, we are entitled to ask for the alternative.

London, W.C.1 A. R.

Nazism and Humanism

Mr. Allan says that humanists (referring to Scientific Humanism) 'believe in the value of the individual and the importance of personal freedom not as divine laws but as truths derived from human experience and history'. May I point out that the proposition that the truth about values arises within the process of history is the one essential belief that the totalitarian regime requires? Values are not, in this view, rooted in the Being of God who transcends His creation, but are confined to the experience of men. Men do not, presumably, respond to such values as truth, beauty and goodness, as something which *claims* their respect and allegiance, but have first to 'create' values which they then believe in.

But this is the Nazis' work, and is it marvellous in Mr. Allan's eyes? If all values are confined to human experience and history (I assume, of course, that if the value of personality itself is, then all others are) then not only is the politico-social order the supreme reality; but there remain no criteria by which the actions of those who control it may be judged, and the Nazi regime is but one expression of the tyranny that must inevitably ensue. The doctrine of the *Herrenvolk* and the Fuehrer principle are in no way essential to the evil we are fighting, but are used, as Mr. Allan says, to provide the Germans with a moral sanction for their atrocities. But if this is so, it is a repudiation of the claim that values derive from human experiences, for the Nazi could claim that in his experience atrocities have, or create, new human values.

Nazism and humanism may not be fundamentally related on paper, but one or another form of totalitarianism is the concrete political embodiment of the latter.

London, S.E.4 H. B. ATKINS

Your correspondent G. A. Allan pointed out quite rightly that humanism recognises the fundamental unity of mankind. It is perfectly natural that a humanist should be agnostic in this respect. Men no longer worship idols— perfectly good idols in themselves as images— because they have discovered a far more universal image: the human body and its wellbeing. In this respect Nazism is primitive, even predatory, as compared with humanism.

St. Paul asserted that the body was a temple,

and of course to the humanist also it is a temple. But for what?

Yeovil K. W. PUDDY

Poetry in War Time

In his interesting reply to Mr. Richards, Mr. Henry Reed claims that the '*homme moyen esthétique*' approaches modern poetry with tolerance, patience and curiosity. Mr. Richards who, says Mr. Reed, does not, is therefore to be numbered among the Philistines.

It seems to me that this sad relegation gives us a good clue to the nature of modern poetry. We must have tolerance; we must not fling the book aside because it lacks rhyme and metre, or because its meaning is not clear. We must have patience in unravelling its mysteries, and curiosity in seeking out its allusions. In other words, modern poetry must be studied seriously, almost scientifically, and not read as if it existed simply to please and charm and excite.

I wonder if Mr. Henry Reed has put his finger on something that separates modern poetry from a great many of its potential readers? In poetry, alas, cleverness, sensitiveness, erudition, honesty—and nobody would deny these qualities to the moderns—are not enough. Mr. Reed claims that Rupert Brooke owed his popularity to his ability to 'falsify the nature of war in a way that the public found palatable'. Is this the whole, or even half the truth? Was it not rather that he happened also to be possessed of that gift for poetic expression which so many of the moderns, however right-thinking, serious and industrious, lack? One might charge Shakespeare with 'falsifying the nature of war' in 'Henry the Fifth', but would that make him less of a poet? And, after all, does Rupert Brooke's popularity rest on his war poetry?

'He wrote in enthusiastic ignorance', says Mr. Reed. Perhaps. I cannot avoid the unworthy reflection that it would be no bad thing to have a little more enthusiastic ignorance in our poetry today—and a little more poetry. Surely it is a mistake to suppose that a poet must necessarily be clever and honest, and that his ideas on war (or anything else) must be sound or profound. What matters is that he should be a poet, and this, whether one likes it or not, Rupert Brooke undoubtedly was. Mr. Reed says that 'there is no fundamental difference between his war poetry and the modern song beginning "There'll always be an England"'. Exactly. To turn a commonplace sentimentality into poetry is the mark of a poet, and English poets from Chaucer to Housman have done it successfully. The brutal fact is that Providence is all too shy about bestowing the gift of poetic genius, and that is why there are so very many modern poets—all sincere, thoughtful, clever and industrious to a man—and so very little poetry.

Worthing N. C. HUNTER

White Bread

Mr. R. D. English, by his letter in THE LISTENER of February 1, has done much to explain why the milling industry is so keen to foist white bread—*pain du mort* as the French have termed it—on an unwitting public. But can he, or any other reader, explain why the Ministry of Food is apparently powerless to restrict or abolish the activities of the millers to that end?

What needs even more elucidation, however, is the apathetic acquiescence in the white bread regime on the part of the medical profession, to whom we might reasonably look for a strong lead in weaning the general public from their ignorant acceptance of a devitalised foodstuff, the consumption of which is steadily adding its quota to the vast amount of alimentary disease still in existence.

It might be added, too, that the introduction of White Papers and the building of large numbers of health centres will have no effect on diminishing the incidence of ill-health so long as the present faulty food habits—among which the consumption of white flour products and white sugar is not the least injurious—are allowed to continue unchecked.

Burnley (Dr.) GEORGE GEMMILL

I have read the correspondence regarding white bread with interest and amusement, mixed with annoyance.

It is evident that none of the writers of the letters have ever had that troublesome complaint, colitis, but to those who have suffered in this way the whiter loaf has brought relief from pain and discomfort. There *may* be more good in wholemeal bread—a statement which I seriously doubt—but even so, this is offset by the irritation caused by the rough particles thus left in the flour. There is plenty of brown bread to be bought for the people who want it, without everyone, sick or well, being compelled to eat the offal, which is much more useful in feeding pigs and poultry.

Manchester L. HOWARD

The German 'P' and 'B'

It is not quite clear to me what Mr. Wickham Steed means, when referring to the names 'Borussia' and 'Prussia', by 'the difficulty which Germans find in distinguishing between the letters "p" and "b"' (THE LISTENER, February 15, first article). As far as my own reasonably good knowledge of their language and experience of their speech-habits go, labial (and also dental) plosives which are 'voiced in print' only become unvoiced at the *ends* of words. Nor is this a peculiarity of German, or even of the German language-group, for it is also the case in Russian.

It is true that French writers (*e.g.* Maupassant in his tales of the Franco-Prussian war) are in the habit of making Germans say *pon* for *bon*, just as Germans in English novels say *haf* for *have*. Without going into the details of the vocal movements concerned in each case, I think the former literary custom is due to the fact that the French 'b' is even less explosive than the non-French 'b', so that by force of contrast the 'b' of the German (or, for that matter, of the Englishman), to French ears, would suggest an approach, at any rate, to a 'p'.

Chiswick S. A. COOPER

The Dog of Tomorrow

I have read with much interest in THE LISTENER the talk broadcast by 'A Veterinary Surgeon', on 'The Dog of Tomorrow'. A good many years ago I was given a West Highland terrier, of some six months, who boasted a lang, lang pedigree and several first prizes. He was certainly a handsome fellow with a good brain-pan, but he could not or would not learn 'house', and had to be banished to an outhouse at night because of his bad habits. When he met children, especially children playing, he put his tail between his legs and bolted. So much for his mental health. His physical health was deplorable. He developed huge blisters between his claws, which suppurated badly, his eyes had at times a film over them, and the 'vet' said he would probably become blind. Luckily for him he was gathered to his fathers before that happened. He had a paralytic shock and lost the use of his limbs.

After these deplorable happenings I studied his pedigree closely, to find that he had been so inbred that he had very few relatives indeed. Though he was bred by a veterinary surgeon, only one or two outsiders had been brought in to improve the breed for a number of years. After that I went to a dogs' home and for the modest price of 7s. 6d. invested in a mongrel pup, who for fourteen years was my faithful companion. Though his body was not of a perfect beauty, he had the loveliest head ever seen in a dog. He was extremely intelligent, though not quite so intelligent as the cross-bred Shetland collie who succeeded him.

Cults GERTRUDE M. HECTOR

Edward I and Westminster Hall

To the list of authorities on the medieval practice of limewashing buildings, cited by Sir Henry Badeley in his recent letter to THE LISTENER, may be added the Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London, which forms part of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, translated by H. T. Riley.

Therein the contemporary chronicler, after recounting the 'noble provision made against the Coronation of his lordship King Edward, son of King Henry, son of King John' (Edward I) celebrated in Westminster Hall in 1274, notes with gusto: 'Also, the Great Hall and the Lesser one have been whitened anew and painted, so that the eyes of those who enter them and survey such great beauty, must be filled with joyousness and delight'.

Stanmore PERCY DAVENPORT

Gardening Questions

Question: Do you advise the general use of salt for root crops, and consider its application beneficial?—(J. K. F., Leicester)

Reply: Not necessarily. Salt has no feeding value, but an occasional light dressing helps to hold moisture in dry soils, and it also releases small amounts of potash which may be locked up in the soil.

Question. What is self-blanching celery, and is it as good as ordinary celery?—(R. M. C., Richmond)

Reply: It is type of celery which does not require earthing up. It is usually planted about nine inches apart or rather less, in beds, and allowed to grow without further attention. It should be planted on wet or well watered ground, or it may run to seed. It is quite good for cooking, but the stalks are not so crisp and sweet as those of ordinary celery.

Question: I have frequently seen in greengrocers lately a vegetable which is pink like a radish, but shaped like a carrot. What is it?—(M. B. H., Bradford)

Reply: I think most likely it is a winter radish, probably the variety Chinese Rose, which is sown during the summer, and used during the winter, sliced or shredded, as a salad.

Question: I have some cordon apple and pear trees which have grown much too tall. Would it hurt them to bend them over horizontally, or to loop the tops over to keep them down to the desired height?—(C. R., Princes Risborough)

Reply: No, I think it would be quite a good thing to do, provided you do not break them or loosen the roots. There is always a tendency for the sap to rush to the top and produce too much growth there, and the bending over would check this, and probably make the trees more fruitful.

Question: I had some Golden Thistle seed given me, which have made nice plants, but I forget what they are supposed to be used for; are they any good?—(R. J., Lostwithiel)

Reply: The thick fleshy roots are sometimes boiled and eaten as a vegetable; they have quite a pleasant flavour, somewhat resembling salsify.

C. H. MIDDLETON