

The quest for peace yesterday and today [Continuation]

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THE QUEST FOR PEACE YESTERDAY AND TODAY.

Memorial Lecture given by Professor William E. Rappard, of the University of Geneva, Director, Graduate Institute of International Studies, at the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies, April, 1954.

(Continuation)

Whatever the future of this tripartite Germany — and the uncertainty in which its future is clouded is anything but a guarantee of peace — one thing at least seems assured for today and tomorrow: in the struggle for an organized world community, the federal republic of Dr. Adenauer is clearly not on the side of the “thousand years” Reich of Adolf Hitler. As I see it, that is one of the all too few points on which the situation in 1954 compares favourably with that of 1939.

The same may be said of Italy. The charming, gifted, and unstable people who inhabit the peninsula were not as dangerous under Mussolini as were the Germans under Hitler. Can they, under President Einaudi and Premier Scelba, be relied upon as firm supporters of Western ideals of peace and freedom as truly as the Germans under Dr. Adenauer? Will they, in spite of over-population, persistent unemployment, and shocking inequalities of wealth and misery, prove immune to the virus of Moscow?

Similar hopes and apprehensions arise when we compare imperialist Japan of 1939 to the made-to-order democracy of the present day which seems to have replaced pre-war China in the confident affection of the American people. Has military defeat, followed by a few years' rule of the least democratic of the American generals, been able there to transform the most militarist of aggressive absolutisms into the most pacific of disarmed constitutional monarchies? Had the mysterious Far East not accustomed us to the least likely paradoxes, we could not get ourselves to believe it. However we may, in fact we almost must, hope for the best.

All the developments of the last decade in Germany, in Italy and in Japan may be looked upon as encouraging by all those of us who share the general international philosophy of Lord Davies. They are as nothing, however, when compared to the emergence from isolationism of the American people. Although that decisive change also is of course not without its uncertainties and even its dangers, it is still, as I see it, the great hope of the Western world.

After the first World War the United States, as we have seen, had done more than any other state both to bring into existence the League of Nations and also to kill it. The opposition of the American Senate undid what the initiative of President Wilson had done. After the second, as we have seen also, Secretary of State Cordell Hull was proclaimed “father of the United Nations”. But on this occasion his creative action was sustained by the legislative body of which he had long been a prominent member and whose support he had had the wisdom to seek in advance and the good fortune to obtain after San Francisco.

Since 1945 all will recognize that the United States has been the leading member of the United

Nations. America has ever been its chief financial sponsor and the principal animator of its debates and activities. Furthermore it has become the permanent host of its seat in New York. Moreover, and this may be more important still, the United States have, through their most “unsordid” economic policies, done much to rehabilitate Western Europe and at least something to promote progress in the backward areas of the world. Through their military policies, they have created and bolstered up the Atlantic Community, led the United Nations in Korea and supported France in Indo-China.

In less than a generation, American isolationism has made way for what we may well call American activism in international affairs.

This revolution, which is surely as momentous as the contemporaneous and countervailing rise of the Soviet Union, I look upon as the most promising event for all friends of peace in our day. It is more responsible than any other fact for the great change which has come over the world in recent years, a change which Sir Oliver Harvey so felicitously characterized on March 18, 1954, when he said, on leaving the British Embassy in Paris:

“If, on the one hand, the world is more divided, on the other hand, it is much more united. Surely we have the Iron Curtain, but we have, too, and this has never been seen in times of peace, a close union of free countries with firmly integrated forces, a union for the defence of peace.”

(To be continued.)

As exciting as the tempo of a Mazurka. As delicate as the movement of a waltz. As memorable as the grace and charm of the ballet.

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