

PHYSIC FOR A SICK WORLD

WE do not reprint the following comment from "The New Yorker" because we agree with all that it says, but because it is honest, plain speaking. And honest, plain speech is a commodity scarce enough to have acquired news-value.

THE Egyptian delegate, retiring from his presidency of the Security Council, stepped down in a burst of candour. Dr. Afifi Pasha said he was depressed, and humanity was disappointed. It seemed to him nations were acting each to further its own interests, not to further the cause of people generally.

That is precisely the case. To change it around is precisely the task. How set nations to work furthering the universal (rather than the special) cause? What treatment is there for the disease of nationalism, a more troublesome disease at this point than cancer? The treatment is known, but not admired. There is a specific for nationalism. We use it every day in our own localities. The specific is government—that is, law; that is, codification of people's moral desires, together with enforcement of the law for common weal. The specific comes in a bottle and is very expensive. The price is terrific—like radium, only worse. The price is one ounce of pure sovereignty. Too expensive, say the elders of the tribe.

Read the papers and see what the people want. Security. Human rights. Freedom of the press. Peace. Control of atomic energy. Read the papers and see how the statesmen propose to get these plums. Through national power. Through balance of same. Through international accord. Through pacts and agreements (there is the five-year treaty with no frosting, the ten-year treaty with jelly filling, and the twenty-five-year treaty with a prize hidden in the batter). Through commissions. Through Operation Crossroads—to determine which is the more durable, a battleship or a tropical fish. Through foreign policy. Through secret diplomacy (which is merely a redundant term for diplomacy). Through the creaky, treacherous machinery of international relations against the same broad, chaotic

backdrop of pride, fear, absolute sovereignty, power, and the colourful banners we saluted in assembly hall as pupils in grammar school.

DR. AFIFI is right; the people are not satisfied. During the first post bellum year, nations have approached the future each to gain its own ends. A fair question is this: Can nations now act in any other than a selfish way, even if they want to, given the political equipment which they have provided for themselves? We doubt it. A wrong turn was made somewhere, as far back as the Atlantic Charter—that beloved document which expresses people's desires and their noble aims. The Charter could have shaken the world, but it failed to. It almost made the grade, but not quite. It specifically stated the freedoms we grope toward, specifically denied us the means of achieving them. It reserved for each nation full and unlimited sovereignty—and in so doing wrote itself into history's wastebasket. Again, at Dumbarton Oaks, the right turn was avoided, discreetly, and with many words of cheer, of good will.

BUT the earth, scratching its statesmen as though they were fleas, heaves and rocks with big new things. This is one of those times. The people feel the disturbance. They know it's here, they fear its consequences, and they live in fear. Living in fear, they act with suspicion, with tension. If anyone were to run out into the Square and shout, "Go East!" like the characters in the Thurber story, there is a good chance you would see an eastward movement in the panicky noontime; Orson Welles managed it, in a mere radio dramatisation, way back in the days before the atom was fairly split.

WORLD government is an appalling prospect. Many people have not comprehended it (or distinguished it from world organisation). Many others, who have comprehended it, find it preposterous or unattainable in a turbulent and illiterate world where nations and economies conflict daily in many ways. Certainly the world is not ready for government on a planetary scale. In our opinion, it will never be ready. The test is whether the people will chance it anyway—like children who hear the familiar cry, "Coming, whether ready or not!" At a Federalist convention the other day,

Dean Katz of the University of Chicago said, "Constitutions have never awaited the achievement of trust and a matured sense of community; they have been born of conflicts between groups which have found a basis for union in spite of deep suspicions and distrusters." The only condition more appalling, less practical, than world government is the lack of it in this atomic age. Most of the scientists who produced the bomb admit that. Nationalism and the split atom cannot co-exist on the planet.

LEADERSHIP is the thing, really. And we seem not to have it, anywhere in the world. Premier Stalin's speeches have been strictly jingo since the end of the war. President Truman carries a clipping about the "parliament of man" in his wallet, and keeps his pocket buttoned. It takes a small country like Egypt even to speak the dissenting words. The large countries speak more cautiously and circle around each other like dogs that haven't been introduced, sniffing at each other's behinds and keeping their hackles at alert. The whole business of the bomb tests at Bikini is a shocking bit of hackles-raising, which is almost enough in itself to start a bitter fight in the crazy arena of amorphous fear. One scientist remarked recently that the chances of the explosion's doing some irreparable damage to the world were one in a hundred septillion. Very Good. And if there is one such chance, who can authorise the show? What is the name of the fabulous ringmaster who can play with the earth and announce the odds? There is no such character. The natives who were tossed off Bikini are the most distinguished set of displaced persons in the world, because they symbolise the displacement that will follow the use of atomic power for military purposes. If one atomic bomb goes off, in real earnest, the rest of us will leave our Bikinis for good—some in the heat of stars, some in the remains of human flesh in a ruined earth.

GOVERNMENT is the thing. Law is the thing. Not brotherhood, not international co-operation, not security councils that can stop war only by waging it. Where do human rights arise, anyway? In the sun, in the moon, in the daily paper, in the conscientious heart? They arise in responsible government. Where does security lie, anyway—security against the thief, the murderer, the footpad? In brotherly love? Not at all. It lies in government. Where does control lie—control of smoking in the theatre, of nuclear energy on the planet? Control lies in government, because government is people. Where there are no laws, there is no law enforcement. Where there are no courts, there is no justice.

A large part of the world is illiterate. Most of the people have a skin colour different from the pink we are familiar with. Perhaps government is impossible to achieve on a globe preponderantly ignorant, preponderantly "foreign," with no common language, no common ground except music and childbirth and death and taxes. Nobody can say that government will work. All one can guess is that it must be given an honest try, otherwise our science will have won the day, and people can retire from the field, to lie down with the dinosaur and the heath hen—who didn't belong here either, apparently.

Unsuspected MALNUTRITION

There was laughter at a public dinner last night when a politician, speaking on the Dangers of Malnutrition, was told by a dietitian that he showed signs of Malnutrition himself.

But the laughter became a trifle nervous when the dietitian added that the rest of us were probably in the same condition!

"Malnutrition," he declared, "is increasing. Few of us are totally free from 'nerves,' digestive troubles, constipation, debility and other ills of civilisation.' Yet in most cases these ills are symptoms of Vitamin B deficiency."

"It isn't that we eat too little. It's because the Vitamin B is removed from our food by modern methods of 'refining.' And yet on Vitamin B the health of our nervous and digestive systems depends."

"But how," somebody asked, "can the ordinary person make good this alarming shortage of Vitamin B?"

"Well," he replied, "simply add a tablespoonful of Bemax to your porridge or breakfast cereal. Bemax is a Vitamin supplement so rich in Vitamin B that a daily tablespoonful makes up the regular quota one needs."

Bemax is obtainable from Chemists and Stores and each tin lasts a month. Distributors: Farnett & Johnson Ltd., Levy Building, Manners St., Wellington. A product of Vitamins Limited, London. Owing to present conditions supplies are limited. 3.5

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