

Letters to the Editor

KEEPING THE
107212 PEACE

A WORLD CONSORTIUM
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—In the discussion of foreign affairs at the present time there seems to be a constantly recurring confusion between two quite opposed sets of principles, which it is worth while attempting to distinguish more clearly than is usually done. Fundamentally these sets are quite irreconcilable. They determine entirely different lines of political conduct, and our political ideas would be infinitely more effective if we kept their essential antagonism clear. At present nearly all of us seem to slip quite easily from one to the other, we mix them both in debate and practice, and our general public is incalculably fluctuating and indecisive on that account.

One of these groups of principles might, I suppose, be best called universalist or liberal or left, and it rests primarily on the idea that humanity is to be regarded as one community. The opposite group, for which the words nationalist and patriotic seem most appropriate, is built on the tacit assumption that humanity is an assemblage of combatant communities. Logically these ideas are flatly incompatible, but human behaviour is rarely logical, and a vast proportion of the world's distresses and dangers at the present time are due to the general lack of lucidity in this respect.

The one-community idea is the professed idea of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and all the world religions. It is implicit in the catholicity of science and art. It points to a world with a common commercial and economic system, free trade, free movement, and perpetual peace. It is a product of human reason and human aspirations. It runs counter to the normal instincts of mankind. These normal instincts certainly incline towards the combatant community—defensive and isolationist when it is frightened, and arrogant when it is not. The combatant community is a far more ancient conception of collective life. If liberalism is in our heads, nationalism is in our bones. Most of us, unless we take ourselves to task about it, are in a perpetual see-saw between these two groups of ideas. Most of us in our political lives are capable of the most glaring inconsistencies, because few of us have ever taken the trouble to decide to which side we give ourselves. We are sentimentally for world peace, but nationalism is in our tradition, our habits, and our blood, and when we are confronted with the most evident imperatives if world peace is to be attained, we recoil.

An enormous majority of people in the present world would vote for perpetual peace and an absolute end of war for ever, if they were given the chance. But they would do little more than vote. If they were asked to accept the broad things that world peace certainly entails, that majority would collapse into confusion forthwith. They do not seem to have the faintest idea what world peace really implies. May I point out the most obvious aspects of a world peace, that seem to be disregarded at the present time?

First, world peace, like social peace, is incompatible with monopolization. Within the limits of the contemporary state that is now recognized everywhere. We are all to that extent socialists. We may have the most varied ideas about the need and benefit of private enterprise, but we insist there must be enterprise and competition, we are all against the lock-up. But it is less generally recognized that this principle can be and should be applied to international affairs also. Nations have no more right to monopolize or underdevelop than have individual owners. From the liberal free-trading point of view no community, no national or imperial system, has the right to lock up its territorial advantages and resources against mankind.

In recent years existing Governments have shown a tendency to direct economic processes, a task for which their militarist traditions and Constitution unfit them. They have invaded the freedom of private

enterprise by financial and economic controls from the militant national angle. The present intense tension in international affairs between the "haves" and the "have nots" among nations is the political expression of this chronic militancy. The only substitute for these combative economic controls which lead inevitably to war and which are in themselves a sort of war is a world-wide control. This does not mean a world super-Government, which thing is only conceivable after a cycle of catastrophic wars, but it does mean a world consortium, a permanent federal board, with powers to direct production, distribute natural and manufactured products, watch the seasons and harvests and the fluctuations of demand, in the common interests of mankind. Such a consortium would necessarily control the broad movements of credit and sustain a world-wide monetary system.

A federal board for the direction of world production and trade is a quite possible thing at the present time. It may be improbable but it is fully within the compass of human ability. It requires no supermen for its organization or staffing. It is only impracticable because people's minds are unprepared for it—that is to say, because their social mentality is still fundamentally warlike.

But a world consortium for production and exchange is not the only *sine qua non* for world peace. Equally necessary is some international organization for the primary biological interests of mankind. Without a collective control of germs and birth-rates, all the balances of human life are bound in the end to be deranged to the fighting pitch. Neither world sanitation nor that maintenance of standards of physical well-being which would involve population control is beyond the practical capacity of men to-day. Finally in a world of continually more facile movement, a world control of main-line transport, posts, telegraphy and radio, and also a world Scotland Yard are becoming not merely possible but eminently desirable.

Behind these possibilities looms the need for one general level of education throughout the world. The achievement of as much federation of existing Governments as this is surely the essential foreign policy of the modern liberal and it is irreconcilably opposed to the conception of the combatant sovereign state. The liberal conception of life involves the taming of the combatant state to the level of a constituent state in a union which has delegated the wider aspects of its sovereignty, its financial and economic and indeed its world relations generally, to a treaty-made world federal authority or system of authorities. Only in this fashion can we conceive a practicable non-catastrophic world *pax*. Opposed to this idea of federation through world-boards is militant political economic and social nationalism. There is no possible reconciliation between the synthesizing and the recalcitrant isolationist idea of policy. A clear-headed man who really faces the situation of affairs must be quite definitely black or white, on one side or the other. But events have caught us piebald in a phase of transition, saying both yea and nay to peace.

Complications of this open contrast arise in practice from the fact that no one lives legally or mentally in a world community. That is the clue to our confusedness. Every one is under some national sovereignty and must work, politically at least, through the established forms of the combatant state. There are no cosmopolitan legal forms. But these complications are in themselves a reason why we should do our utmost to keep this primary opposition of liberal and nationalist before our minds. The former is modern, rational, adult, hopeful, intellectual, experimental, and unfortunately "sketchy"; the latter is traditional, puerile, richly emotional, instinctive, organic, and intimate. Which is it to be?

The quintessence of a modern liberal policy seems to be a bold repudiation of that return towards economic nationalism of which the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain made himself the prophet. But mere resistance to increased tariffs and armaments is no policy at all. It is ineffective peevishness. A positive liberalism will work incessantly for the development of super-national agreements and organizations making for economic unification and general world development, for persistent world education and universal intellectual freedom. It will consider the purely negative policy of "collective security" as a provisional and quite questionable

set of expedients. Support of a League of Nations which seems to embody the suggestion that "Nothing more is going to happen" is a mockery of creative liberalism. Something has to be done about backward and barbaric regions and about monopolized natural resources, and that is a business which what I may perhaps call "League of Nations Liberalism" has tacitly obstructed for the last 18 years.

I submit that the underlying spirit of the British peoples is and has been liberal in the sense given it here and that it is high time it found clearer expression and more explicit leadership.

I am, &c.,
H. G. WELLS.

CAPTAIN VANCOUVER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The fine photographs of Santiago, Chile, reproduced in *The Times* of April 17 recall a connexion between that city and Captain George Vancouver, R.N., whose exploration of the west coast of North America received some notice in your recent article about the early history of Vancouver City. His task accomplished after several years of arduous voyaging in the Pacific Ocean, Vancouver, homeward bound, put in his ship *The Discovery* at the port of Valparaiso for repair of the damaged mainmast. An invitation to the captain and his officers from the Viceroy of the kingdom of Chile to visit him at Santiago was accepted.

Under guidance of two Irish dragoons the party, arrived outside the capital, were in the midst of tidying themselves ("we had scarcely a coat or hat that was fit for common use, much less for an occasion like this") when an officer appeared with high-bred, richly caparisoned horses sent to carry them for a public entry into the city. Protest against this unwanted honour was unavailing; furthermore, said the Spanish officer, reserving their best uniforms ("rotten and unfit for any service on horseback"), mounted, but, to the Spaniard's "great mortification," without spurs.

Awaiting them at the palace, no doubt with some anticipation of the spectacle of the British Navy trying to look dignified on mettlesome horses, was his Excellency, no other than an Irishman, Don Ambrose Higgins de Valenar. The Viceroy saw to it that his visitors were given a right royal welcome. The party, indeed, found everything to their liking (including the ladies, but their teeth "are suffered to become intolerably dirty") except the very dirty floors of their apartments: to clean which neither brooms nor brushes were forthcoming, for "they told us such things were not in common use in St. Jago."

The interesting description of life in Santiago in 1795 contains almost the last words of Vancouver's own in his book "A Voyage of *The Discovery* round the World"; the illness that ended his life at Petersburg in 1798 deprived him of the satisfaction of carrying his narrative much beyond this point.

The entertainment at Santiago had one curious sequel. Dr. Archibald Menzies (later president of the Linnean Society) was official botanist of the expedition. At a banquet in the Viceroy's palace he pocketed some strange nuts offered for dessert. Planted in his glass-frame on board *The Discovery*, five of these produced young monkey puzzle trees, the first to be introduced into Great Britain. One of them is known to have survived in Kew Gardens until 1892.

I am, &c.,
ROBIN GERARD.
Richmond, Surrey.

DAMAGE BY WILD DEER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Your beautiful picture in *The Times* of April 17 over the title "Damage by Wild Deer" must have been of very great interest to residents in this part of Surrey.

With others, I can speak with some real experience of the damage which is done to gardens and young woodlands by these fascinating yet costly visitors. Practically every night my own garden is approached or entered by them. Only last week we surprised a beautiful stag and young doe feeding off the young flower buds on a terrace running right up to our windows. One interesting point to be observed is that they seem to favour different plants on different visits. Sometimes they concentrate on rose bushes, sometimes on young shoots, and at others (making a clean sweep) on some particular vegetable from the garden, but all in turn systematically nibbled, the deer slots indicating how the animals have been grouped and how they have sought for their pre-selected delicacies.

As many as 15 have been counted at one attack, and the characteristic little cry uttered by the leaders—not unlike the crow of a pheasant, and passed from point to point over a distance of half a mile—seems very clear evidence that the whole area under their attention is outposted most diligently. One startled animal will immediately put into motion the whole herd. They are difficult to deal with, since they always come at night and early dawn, and can escape by gracefully taking a standing leap over a 5ft. fence.