

Nationalism — a Threat to Happiness

In Seeking a Return to Outmoded Patterns of Government and Conduct, the Nations Condemn Themselves and Their Peoples to Destruction, Expert Warns

By Arnold J. Toynbee

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IF WE WANT, in one sentence, to make an accurate and comprehensive statement of the inward conflict which is at present rending our world asunder, we may fairly say that we are in the throes of a struggle between nationalism and internationalism.

Nationalism was the force which made the Great War; internationalism has been our post-war reaction. Painfully and laboriously, since the war, we have been attempting to build up a social structure of organized internationalism. Today, more than 15 years after the armistice, we are manifestly discouraged by the poor results that have so far attended these labors.

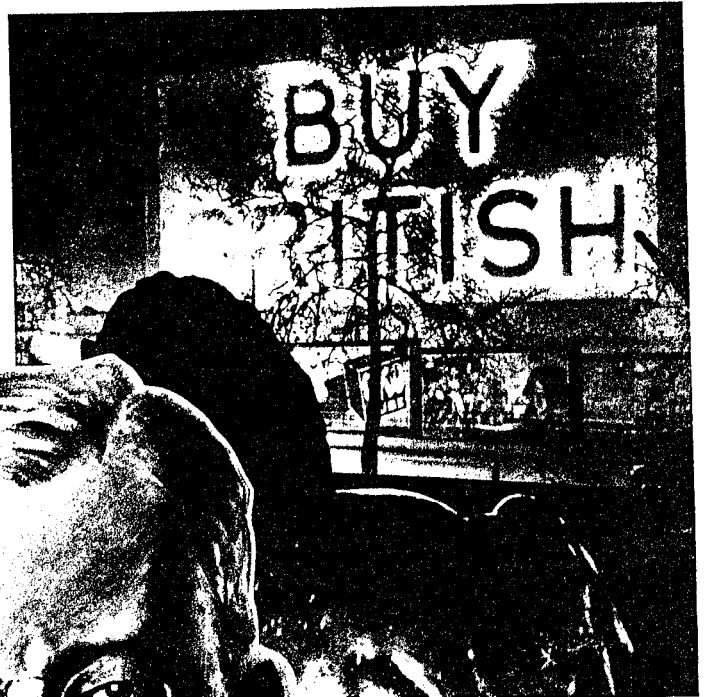
We are masters of material nature. We can build giant houses and giant ships and giant guns when we wish, and we can fly across the Atlantic. But while we have become adepts in this mastery of material things, we feel ourselves helpless and inept in managing our human relations with one another than our fathers were before us. And accordingly, like baffled and ill-tempered children, we are now in a mood to throw up internationalism in disgust and to drop back into our old nationalistic ruts again.

In this present counter-offensive of nationalism against internationalism, the older and narrower of the two forces has a number of formidable advantages on its side. To begin with, it is supported by tradition; for the modern schism which has divided our Western World into a patchwork of parochial national states—a blood-stained coat of many colors—is now more than four centuries old. The original unity and fraternity of Western Christendom waned with the Middle Ages. In the second place, this traditional parochialism—which we like to call "nationalism" in order to lend it a dignified name—has been roused to militancy because it is now aware that its recent hold over Western minds has been threatened by the development of our modern industrial and mechanical technique: a new economic force which demanding an ever larger field of operation until it is now evident that

its optimum field will soon be nothing less than the entire surface of the planet and the entire living generation of mankind.

Each of the 60 or 70 parochial sovereign states which exist in the world today feels its sovereign independence threatened by the economic colossus of the Machine Age; and they are all striving together, like the Lilliputians in Swift's satire, to bind the dangerous giant down with the gossamer threads of tariff walls, currency manipulations and migration restrictions.

In this attempt to put the Titan of industrialism in bonds, the national states are able to make certain specious appeals for the sympathy and support of their respective subjects. On the economic side they can represent that industrialism is a wayward, anarchic force which has no care for individual human weal and woe or hopes and fears. The monster, they say, must be put under discipline. And what effective authorities, other than the parochial governments of the existing national states, are to be found in the world of today for undertaking this task? On the political side, the national governments sail on a different tack. They suggest that if industrialism, with its many inventions, does become the obedient slave of this or that other national state which is their own hereditary



Both Photos by International News Photos

POSTERS AND ILLUMINATED DISPLAYS IN ALL PARTS OF GREAT BRITAIN USHERED IN A CAMPAIGN IN 1931 INTENDED TO PERSUADE LOYAL BRITONS TO BUY HOME-MADE GOODS AND HOME-LAID EGGS. THE PURPOSE WAS TO SUPPORT BRITISH PRODUCERS AGAINST FOREIGN COMPETITION.

Below—A Campaign to Persuade Americans to Pledge Themselves to Use Only American-Made Goods Was Organized Throughout the Country by the Hearst Newspapers in 1933. In Cities Where Hearst Newspapers Are Published It Made Some Headway, but Has Since Been Forgotten.



Drawn by Dwight G. Sturges
PROF. ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

rival and neighbor, then the new power will arm the old enemy with unprecedentedly dangerous weapons. In the name of security, therefore, they demand of their own subjects that they should rally to their own government and allow it to equip itself with the same newfangled economic weapons in self-defense.

Through the combination of these various appeals, nationalism today is retaining, or acquiring, a powerful hold over people's thoughts in almost every country—though in different degrees, according to the differences in the local circumstances. At the moment, it looks as though, in the present round of the struggle between nationalism and internationalism, the prospects were in nationalism's favor. And we naturally ask ourselves: What is the next stage, supposing that in this round nationalism definitely wins? Will mankind settle down into a parochial life in 60 or 70 mutually isolated hermit kingdoms?

This seems to me the expectation of those people, in each country, who are

hailing the resurrection of nationalism, and who are looking forward to carrying it through to its logical extremes, as though it were an infallible prescription for bringing in the millennium. For those of us who do not share their faith, it is not easy to understand their line of reasoning. We have had any amount of nationalism without ever enjoying the millennium in the past. And if nationalism did not bring the Golden Age under the pre-industrial system of economic life, it is difficult to imagine how it can possibly bring it in in an age when economics is governed by a technique which demands operations on the grand scale if it is to operate effectively or even to work at all. A repartition of the world, which industrialism united economically in the 19th century, into 60 or 70 old-fashioned hermit kingdoms would surely sabotage the working of our modern industrial system of economy in every one of those little parochial units, and even a national state on the scale of the United States is a little parochial unit compared with the size of the world as a whole.

Theoretically, of course, one can imagine an advocate of nationalism who was so zealous a believer in the nationalistic creed, and at the same time so clear-sighted in estimating the economic consequences of his policy, that he would deliberately and frankly declare to his fellow men that the pursuit of nationalism demanded a heavy sacrifice in standards of living, and would at the same time propound to them that the advantages of nationalism were so great that they were worth the price. There is one conspicuous example of a living and reigning nationalist of this temper in the person of Mr. Eamon de Valera, who is pursuing his nationalistic

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Nationalism

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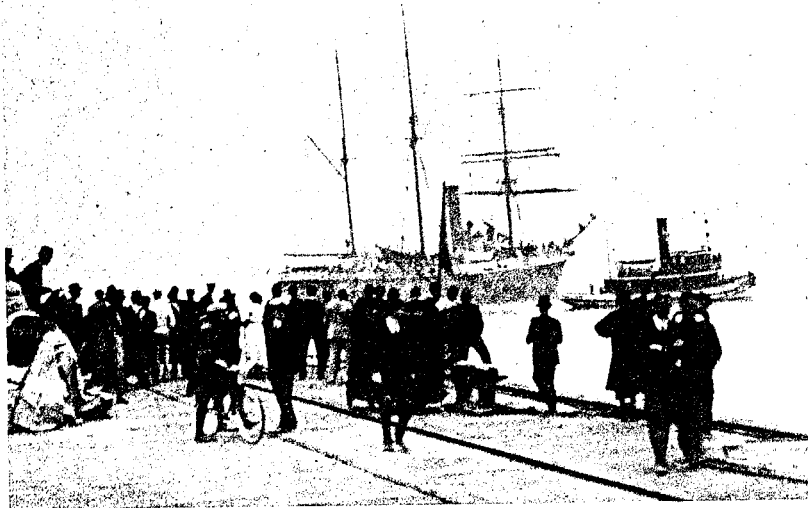
policy à outrance, and has told his Irish countrymen outright that, while he wishes to abolish extreme poverty in Ireland, he has no use for great wealth in Ireland either. However much one may disagree with Mr. de Valera's policy on this point or that, one cannot but respect his character. Unhappily, however, nationalists of Mr. de Valera's kind are rare, and the reason is obvious. The type requires not only unquestioning faith in the intrinsic value of nationalism, and a clear understanding of its economic cost, but a very high order of personal courage. For the doctrine that nationalism and material comfort are incompatible—although this would seem to be the truth—is the most unpopular proposition that any politician in any country could possibly present to "the man in the street."

The fact is that "the man in the street" today wants both of two incompatible things. He wants to retain all the well-being—in the shape of automobiles, radios, refrigerators and steam heat—which industrialism has brought him; and at the same time he wants to relapse into the solaces of tribalism to which he has become accustomed by long habit. He wishes to believe that his two desires are in harmony with each other and that both goals can be reached by following the same identical path. Nothing makes him so angry as to be told that nationalism and material well-being are ultimately incompatible, and that he has to make his choice between them. And therefore he is seldom old this vital, bare truth today by the politicians, who mostly make their living by prophesying smooth, desirable, pleasant things.

When "the man in the street" is told that economic nationalism, carried through to completion, means sailing back to the standard of living of the 18th century, he loses his temper and refuses to believe his ears. Yet in reality, if nationalism does now win the day, men will be lucky to get off at no heavier a price than the decline of 30 to 60 per cent in the material amenities of life. We might as well be as lucky as this unless, at the same time we can epudiate, abandon, and forget the mechanical technique that we have invented for ourselves during the last century; and here is no indication at present that we are going to cut out our modern technique and cast it to the winds.

On the contrary, we are advancing by enormous strides every day in our mastery of the physical universe; in our capacity to put an unprecedented material drive behind all our human actions, whether these actions happen to be wise or foolish or good or evil. In particular, we are making astonishing progress in "annihilating distance" and in devising weapons for destroying one another wholesale. And it is one of the most curious and ironic and potentially tragic spectacles of the present panorama of human affairs to see "the man in the street," who is in full cry for nationalism, cheering in the same breath each fresh exploit of the world's armies. This spectacle is strange because the conquest of the air is bound to be employed, for human weal or woe, in one or the other of two alternative ways, ways diametrically opposed to one another. In any case, the conquest of the air has made nonsense of national frontiers and is manifestly destined unless the act of flying is soon forgotten or else deliberately even up) to break those frontiers down by one means or other. One day in which aircraft may abolish frontiers is by gradually com-

From the 'Hub of the Universe' to the Axis of the Earth



BYRD EXPEDITION STARTING SOUTH FROM BOSTON

Acme Newspicture

pleting that voluntary and pacific unification of the world which began in the 19th century but which was checked abruptly by the war in 1914. But there is also another way by which aircraft may bring about—and this more rapidly—the same result; and that is the traditional method of war, now to be waged, however, with unprecedentedly destructive weapons.

In a society which insists on combining the traditional institutions of nationalism and war with the new weapons which industrialism has now placed in the warrior's hands, the lives of the 60 or 70 parochial sovereign states are certain to be "hasty, brutish and short." For, under this combination of conditions, those states that are now all doing their utmost to isolate themselves from one another cannot possibly "live happily ever after" as hermit kingdoms without mutual contact. You might as well abolish all traffic controls and light signals on a modern highway, without at the same time forbidding the use of automobiles, and then expect the automobiles—traveling on the modern road under anarchic conditions—to steer clear of one another. Of course we all realize that, under such conditions, the cars would collide with one another right and left and the road would become a scene of carnage; and that is why we submit to the nuisance of traffic regulations. These regulations place irksome restrictions upon the liberty which the wayfarer used to enjoy in the pre-automobile days of pedestrians and horse-carts; but we submit to these restrictions with a good grace because we neither want to give up the use of automobiles nor do we want to have our lives cut short in automobile accidents, and we realize that these are the only two alternatives to the light signal and the traffic policeman.

We realize this in our use of the literal highway in our individual private lives. But we seem unable or unwilling to apply the parable to the social highway which we call civilization. Yet the parable undoubtedly does apply to this larger and far more important field of human action. On the great highway of international relations, warlike collisions between sovereign states

did not produce any intolerable degree of destruction, so long as the belligerents were no more high-powered than pedestrians and oxcarts. Now, however, such collisions have become fatally destructive because every belligerent is armed with all the weapons that modern chemistry and modern aeronautics can provide.

In these circumstances only three courses are open to us. We may accept voluntarily, by mutual agreement, a certain surrender of our respective national sovereignties in order to make possible an effective international control over the relations between national states. Secondly, we may repudiate, abandon, and forget the mechanical technique which has armed us with annihilating weapons and has provided us with the means of using these weapons, from the air and otherwise, against one another. Thirdly, we may refuse to pay the moderate price of international cooperation, as required by the first of these three courses, while refusing at the same time to give up our modern means of wholesale mutual destruction, as required by the second. It is toward this third possible course that we now seem to be drifting, sulkily and helplessly. We offer the spectacle of sheep going to the slaughter. For this road leads to death. On this road, the high-powered sovereign national states of today will collide disastrously with one another, and the disaster will be repeated again and again until the road is held by some single solitary survivor.

This is the Roman solution of our modern problem; and we know what the Roman solution meant in ancient history. In the last chapter of ancient history, the Romans eventually unified by force the multitudinous sovereign states of a warring and distracted world which had obstinately refused to cooperate voluntarily. But the Roman example shows that when unification comes in this way, the price that has to be paid for it is prohibitive. The destruction of the ancient civilization was the price of the devastating wars through which the ancient world was unified under the Roman Empire. Let us, in our generation, avoid this fate. We still have time to avoid it, but we have reached the eleventh hour.

Star Dust

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that has fallen upon the snow blanket. It is believed that the only constituents of this will be star dust and volcanic ash. The volcanic ash can be separated, and the star dust isolated.

If, out of all the water melted in the months that the expedition remains at Little America, even the smallest amount of star dust is obtained Dr. Poulter declares that he will be satisfied.

From a scientific standpoint no doubt there is much to be learned from this collected dust of other worlds. Meteorites are seized upon eagerly by those who wish to learn more of the planets and stars that wheel through illimitable space. Star dust is but another form of this same material, holding in itself a challenge to man, who has not yet been able to look upon a single grain of the unknown tons that have fallen upon the earth all down through the ages.

Perhaps the natural scientist may bring back from the south polar silences new knowledge about the make-up of planets or Persels. Perhaps he will be able to spread out beneath his microscope the grist of the mills of air, and gaze upon the dust of stars that once swam in fiery brilliance across the world's vision.

But for many men the romance of that collected dust lies in the mysteries that surround the earth. Is this dust the stuff of which sunsets are made? Is this the glory that marches across the frosty curtain of the arctic sky? Is this the dye that colors the misty robes of twilight?

Forthcoming Articles

Next Week:

Señor Salvador de Madariaga, now Spanish Ambassador in Paris and his country's representative in the League of Nations, will throw some much-needed light on what recent disturbances in Spain mean to the world at large. Señor Madariaga has lectured widely in the United States, written for American periodicals, and was for a time Spanish Ambassador in Washington. He was professor of Spanish at Oxford for several years, and writes and speaks Spanish, French and English with almost equal facility.

Violet Ker Seymer, associate editor of the Christian Science Sentinel and Journal, in an article entitled, "Wheels," points out that the wheels of progress are turning inevitably toward that goal of peace and security which all nations desire. Education and intellectual freedom point the way.

The picturesque Indians of the American southwest, experts at making rugs, blankets, pottery and silver ornaments, have suffered competition from machine-made copies of their handiwork. Harold Ickes, United States Secretary of the Interior, and his wife, Anna Wilmamth Ickes, have long had great interest in the welfare of the Indians. Now steps have been taken to protect their arts and crafts. Mrs. Ickes writes about what this means to the Indians.

Coming Soon:

Some new stories and thoughts about Abraham Lincoln will be offered by W. R. Rathvon, who was present when the famous Gettysburg Address was delivered, and for whom a study of Lincoln has been a delightful avocation.

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