

FLYING SAUCERS AND POLITICS

IF and when it is established as an irrefragable fact that a flying saucer from outer space has landed on this planet, bearing with it intelligent beings, the impact of that fact on man's life and thought would be tremendous.

Certain things would be explicit in such an arrival. First, it would prove that intelligent life exists elsewhere than on this planet, which would be a salutary check to the conceited notion that only this obscure planet on which we dwell can bear such life. Next, it would follow that the life on the heavenly body from which the saucer had come was a highly-organised life; for only a high degree of organisation could have enabled the visitors to have conquered the problems of space travel. Next it would follow from the visit that the inhabitants of that heavenly body desired, for some reason, to establish some sort of relations with the inhabitants of Earth.

Analogy

It is beyond our wits to conceive all that these things would mean in various fields of life, or to imagine their impact on our political set-ups on Earth. The nearest analogy, and this is a very weak and inadequate one may be found if we look back at Europe before America was discovered. When the New World was discovered it would have been just as impossible for European man to foresee the consequences of that discovery as it would be now for us to forecast the consequences in various fields of our life of the arrival of flying saucers. But looking back, we can see what the results of the discovery of America have been so far.

When man first sailed round the earth, and came back to the point from which he started, it became evident that the earth was not flat but round. That meant a revolution in cosmogony and in geography. It meant, too, a change in the centre of gravity of the world of men. It has involved a tremendous shift in the balance of

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political power and economic strength. And a revolution in industrial processes. We can dimly conceive what the discovery of America has meant if we can picture how different the whole course of modern history would have been had there been no America taking part in it. With no America to siphon off millions of the surplus population of Europe, it is probable that European history during recent centuries would have been even bloodier than it has been. And without America in recent years all Europe would have fallen under the Russian yoke.

But perhaps in the present connection the principal result of the discovery of America was to compel us to think in terms of *continents* rather than *countries*. Men do not easily come to think in terms of continents. They think at first in terms of their own village or county. Only gradually do they think in terms of country. And still later in terms of continents. As the discovery of America compelled this widening of view, so the arrival of a flying saucer on earth would compel us to think in terms not of continents but of *worlds*. If there are to be relations between the inhabitants of two countries there must be some medium, *country-wide* in scope, to regulate those relations. If there are to be relations between the inhabitants of two continents there must be some medium, *continental in scope*, to

W. J. Brown, ex-Independent Member of Parliament for Rugby until 1950, considers the effect the confirmation of the existence of flying saucers would have on world politics in this, the third in a series of articles intended to bring different points of view on the subject into focus.

regulate those relations. If there are to be relations between the inhabitants of one planet and another, there must be some medium, *planetary in scope*, to regulate these, too.

The principal political impact of the arrival of Space visitors would be to make men think more in terms of the world, and less in terms of continents or countries. Just as the discovery of America added another dimension to human thought and action, so the arrival of beings from outer space would add another dimension, and one of vastly greater scope and potential impact.

Impact

This would be true whether the visitors, and consequently the inhabitants of the world from which they came, were hostile or friendly. The conquest of space would imply a level of technical development by comparison with which even the latest achievements of our science might well seem clumsy and infantile. If "invaders" from another planet came with hostile intent they might well be expected to bring with them weapons and types of strategy which would make nonsense of all the weapons and military dispositions of Earth. We should have to combine for the first time as "*Earthmen*" resisting attack, say, by Martians. We should have to drop all the differences and competing ambitions which divide nations and groups of nations today. The Atlantic Charter, the European Defence Force, the Communist power-bloc, would become meaningless irrelevances to the new situation. The "Curtains" would have to come down all over the world. Plainly the political impact would be immense in every country. Most of our domestic differences within each country, the Party struggle for power, the exciting of class against class, would have their content taken from them. Just as during the last war we had to drop internal Party wranglings and concentrate on survival, so it would be again. But this time it would not only be domestic differences within countries which would have to be dropped, but differences between one country and another and one continent and another.

But there is nothing so far observed in the movements and dispositions of unidentified flying objects which suggests hostility from whoever or whatever it is that controls them. True, one American Air Force officer who pursued a group of these things high into the sky,

crashed with his plane to earth and was killed. That, however, might well have been due to some technical or human failure. Generally speaking, the one desire which these objects manifest, as soon as they are approached, seems to be to get away as quickly as possible.

Assuming that any invasion of the Earth were peaceful and well-disposed, still the re-adjustment of our whole life, including our political life, would have to go far and wide. From the fact that they would have conquered problems which we have hardly yet begun seriously to consider, it is to be deduced that there would be something of the same disparity in knowledge and equipment as, say, there was when European man first confronted the Redskins of America or the blacks of Africa and Australia. We should represent a "backward race," a "primitive civilisation," by comparison with our "invaders" and the civilisation from which they came.

Now when backward civilisations are confronted by more advanced ones they must either adjust themselves to the more advanced or go under. On the premises I have adopted for purposes of this discussion (and on the assumption, too, that our "invaders" would behave better to us humans than human whites have behaved to Redskins, Africans and Aborigines when the white civilisation has invaded "backward areas" of the earth), the main preoccupation of Earthmen would be to acquire the more advanced science, the better techniques, the more refined civilisation and codes of manners we may expect our invaders to possess. That might well involve a shake-up of a revolutionary order in our sciences, our industrial processes, and our political and social organisation which would make the scientific and industrial advances of the last two centuries, remarkable as they have been, appear as a very minor adjustment indeed. It might even make the new Industrial Revolution of Automatism, on to which we have now begun to enter, not much more.

Interrelation

Since industrial production, scientific techniques, finance and political organisation are inextricably related to each other, such a change as I postulate might indeed amount to a real Revolution in our whole way of life, with the politics of the first half of the twentieth century

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