



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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### CO-EXISTENCE

An address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L. B. Pearson, to the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, Windsor, Ont., August 30, 1954.

Some twenty-five hundred years ago a political writer in Greece by the name of Aristotle, who was interested in municipal problems, stated that though men first came together in cities in order to live, they remained there in order to live well. He was concerned by the implications of this development, as most of you must be concerned today, because it meant extending the responsibilities of city government from the protection of life and property to such things as education, health, recreation and social welfare. No doubt many of you, interested, and perhaps often harassed by such problems as how to relate new services to old revenues, must at times be tempted to think that this extension of municipal functions and the difficulties it creates is not sufficiently appreciated by provincial, or even federal politicians and officials.

Aristotle, however, was not so much interested in the problem of the relations between city and province (in his time and place the city was itself a state) as he was in the deeper and more universal problem of political purpose in the government of his day; and, particularly, in the deterioration that takes place in society when men limit and lower their vision and reconcile themselves to the mediocre and shoddy. He would have agreed with a remark made not long ago that the fault is not in missing, but in aiming low.

This possibility, that men may sell themselves short, and may voluntarily or unthinkingly accept sub-standards and unworthy objectives, has always been one of the greatest dangers to face free human societies. This danger, that of inadequate political purpose, which worried the Greek observer of five hundred B.C., is still here to worry us today. This applies to the field of municipal politics with which you are concerned, as well as to that of international politics which absorbs most of my time. The appeal to the second-rate, and the insidious effort to substitute the spurious for the genuine, is the more dangerous today, because all the media of mechanistic propaganda can be brought to bear in its support. There never was a time in history when so much ingenuity was used to confuse, to conceal and to betray. Especially is this true of the propaganda of international communism.

In this connection, a strange new word has lately been insistently and cleverly pushed by the communists - "co-existence". In its discussion it occasionally becomes a "fighting word". It is certainly a "fooling" word. It is also the thinnest word, I think, that I have ever heard. It may be appropriate enough to its source, which is the Kremlin, but it is unimpressive if you set it in any other context.

It would be a pretty poor family, for example, if the best you could say for it was that its members co-existed. Not much affection there, not much co-operation, not much life. Merely a tolerance of each other's existence: and the implication that it is a pretty drab existence at that.

Also, it would be a bad day for Canada if the municipalities merely co-existed with the provinces; and the provinces with the Dominion. If we lived and worked together in any such sterile way, our country would never achieve the great destiny that lies ahead of it; and which we have the right to hope and expect it will achieve.

Though we Canadians of different sections and origins do much more than co-exist, there is, of course still room for progress in working out the implications of our unity.

I have often thought, for example, that I would like to be Minister of Education in one of our provinces, at least for one purpose. I would like to negotiate agreements with my colleagues in other provinces for the exchange of teachers. I would like to give the school children of my province the opportunity of close contact with teachers from each of the other main sections of our country: and I would like as many as possible of my province's teachers to have had the enriching opportunity, at some stage in their careers, of two or three years' experience as an exchange teacher living and working with the children and parents of at least one of the other main regions of our broad and richly-varied land.

Again, as our wealth increases, might not some of it usefully be spent in organizing and making possible for our children vacation tours on an exchange basis in other provinces? This need not cost much. Given the initiative and a little organization, it would certainly be found that many parents would be happy to put up school children from another province for a few weeks, if in exchange their own children received a corresponding opportunity elsewhere.

Given our almost unique opportunities we can and should be much more bilingual, as a people, than we are. There is in fact plenty of scope for diplomatic negotiations within our own federal state in the challenge and the adventure of working out our unity on a basis that is far deeper and far more lasting than mere co-existence.

In a wider field, our relations with the United States, our friendship and co-operation with our great neighbour, go far beyond anything that could be called co-existence. To look at another part of the world, Western Europe, from

here we know that France and Germany can, of course, "co-exist" there, even if the problem of their association together in EDC or in NATO is left entirely unsolved. But it might be co-existence without confidence, where controversy and competition might easily replace collaboration. It might delay and even prejudice both European co-operation and growing unity and the development of the Atlantic coalition. The opportunity to write a shining new chapter in history would, for the time being at least be lost. One cannot help but feed deep anxiety at the possible failure to exploit this great opportunity for peace that may not soon or easily recur. But one can also hope that this anxiety will be removed by the action of those in Western Europe who would be the first to suffer from the consequences of failure.

That hope is not by any means destroyed - so far as I am concerned - by the decision of the French Parliament not to ratify EDC. One method of solving this problem - a method originally worked out by the French Government itself - has now been discarded. That may be disappointing, but it is certainly not any reason for despair. The free nations of Western Europe, including Germany, will, I feel sure, wish now to try to accomplish their objective of closer co-operation for collective defence and unity, by some other method. The other members of the North Atlantic coalition, the United Kingdom, United States and Canada, will, I am sure, wish to assist in this process, and the best way to do that, in my view, would be to look at the whole problem in an Atlantic context.

Today, however, the word "co-existence" has acquired a special and narrow significance which has nothing to do with the family, the nation, or even the European or Atlantic communities. It has become a promise - or a lure - by the men in the Kremlin that their world, their system, can live, and desires to live, peacefully and amicably with ours.

Perhaps it is not surprising that this appealing but ambiguous slogan, "co-existence", should have been launched by men who have inherited and maintain the device known as the "iron curtain", that complex of ingenious barriers, physical and psychological, designed, organized and administered to deny and prevent normal relations and friendly intercourse between men and between nations, and, incidentally, to poison the free and frank relationship between individuals even in the same political society. How long, for instance, would a citizen of Moscow co-exist with other Muscovites if he mounted a soap box in the Kremlin Square and called for a change of government by peaceful means?

Out of this concept of co-existence there has come a perplexing new query which tends, in certain quarters, to become almost a challenge or an accusation: "Do you believe in the possibility of peaceful co-existence with communism?". It reminds one of the old question, "Have you stopped beating your wife?". You are condemned by your own mouth whether you answer "yes" or "no".

If you answer "yes" to the possibility of peaceful co-existence, this might seem to imply a softness towards communism at home and abroad, an unwariness of its menace, a willingness, a readiness to relax one's guard. "Live and let live" is generally sound doctrine, but it can suggest a tendency to minimize a danger, to become less

alert, to turn our attention elsewhere. If we believe that we can live and let live, surely (the argument would run) we can abandon some of the precautions against danger and ease some of the burdens of defence. Weary of the effort which seven years of cold war have involved, we can now afford to be distracted, for "peaceful co-existence" has arrived!

But if saying "yes" to this loaded question about peaceful co-existence is apt to be risky and confusing, saying "no" is worse. It is a wrong and defeatist, a despairing answer, for it assumes to inevitability of war. Furthermore, if Western governments return a short "no" to Moscow's declared belief in the possibility of peaceful co-existence, they would be attacked as intransigent warmongers by friendly neutrals and the well-intentioned uncommitted. To those who judge these issues only by words, and who hear words usually in the careless condensed and confident form of headlines, this blunt "no" would appear as the rejection of what might have been a proffered truce. At the very least it would blur the question of the responsibility for continuing international tensions. Those who say "no" to the possibility of peaceful co-existence, are thus apt to lend colour to the despondent, fatalist belief that war is inevitable - a belief that is not only false but profoundly dangerous, since, if widely accepted on either side, it could lead to ill-considered actions which might certainly make war inevitable.

We would be wrong then to under-estimate the power and the danger of this loaded question about peaceful co-existence. The measure of that danger is the fact that it has become the key-note of all recent communist propaganda. Communist dictators are good at using semantics as weapons. The debasement of good words by "double-talk" is one of the main characteristics of totalitarian tactics and propaganda. But "double-talk" can be just about as dangerous as "double-think". Indeed, the two go together.

Though the question about co-existence, then, is so phrased, so contrived, that a short "yes" or "no" answer is confusing, it is, I think, worth trying to clear up the confusion, and to examine the real issue which it raises. It is an issue central to many of the problems of our time, as we face the menace of the international communist conspiracy.

A first point to notice about this question of co-existence is that we have, in fact, been co-existing with communism for the past thirty-five years.

But another and more significant point is that a good many countries, such as the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the democratic regimes in Poland and Czechoslovakia, which co-existed with the U.S.S.R. for some years, have now ceased as free nations to exist at all. Co-existence is no problem for them. It has become the co-existence of Jonah and the whale that swallowed him. You will recall, however, that Jonah was eventually liberated by spontaneous convulsion, but without, I understand, any interference from outside!

There is plenty of evidence that communist dictatorships inevitably tend to expand, and that as they do, they will destroy the "co-existing" possibilities of free regimes in other countries wherever and whenever they think they can get away with it. It is something to remember.

The moral of this is plain, that adequate defensive strength and eternal vigilance is the price to be paid for "co-existence". In the world in which we live it is dangerous to try to secure it on lesser terms. You can't get security, in present circumstances, by a small down payment.

If we lack power and vigilance, if we become careless and disunited in the free world, "co-existence" could soon be replaced by "non-existence". But if we follow steadily but persistently the other course, peace through defensive collective strength, and patient, persistent diplomacy, I don't see why we shouldn't continue to exist indefinitely alongside the communist world.

There is, I think, because of our growing collective strength, less danger at this time of a deliberate frontal aggression than a few years ago.

The Soviet leaders are realists. They know that such an attack would be met by swift and annihilating atomic retaliation, which would leave their great cities in ruins. For this reason, they may be quite sincere when they advocate co-existence in present conditions, because they know that the alternative in case of war is co-destruction.

But they undoubtedly also hope that we may ourselves weaken the strength, unity and resolve that make co-existence as essential for them - as for us. They will certainly do their best to encourage us in this suicidal tendency.

Even, however, if we can successfully hold off deliberate and full-scale aggression, war could come in one of two other ways. It could come by accident or miscalculation; a war which neither side intends, but which might result from a misunderstanding of current moves, and a tragic misinterpretation of each other's intentions.

This could happen. To avoid it we should, among other things, keep our diplomacy active and flexible; keep open the channels of communication and contact such as the United Nations, and remove, where we can, barriers, including psychological barriers, to understanding. No easy task - indeed, an all but impossible task, when you are dealing with communist states but one which we should never, I believe, abandon.

We should also do our best to find out what is the purpose and plan of the potential adversary in every move he makes. But what is even more important, we should leave him in no doubt about our own policy; about what is in our own minds. This means, of course, that we of the free world should know our own minds and follow, together, a policy which is broad principle, objectives and basic purposes, is steady, fixed and firm.

It means also that we should avoid panic and provocation; that we should be "trigger ready" without being "trigger happy"; that while maintaining our strength, we should make it quite clear, by word and action, that this strength will never be used for any aggressive purpose.

The only other way in which war could come is that our free civilization should lose its nerve, its patience, its confidence, and, above all, lose touch with its own moral values. Such a tragic deterioration is, if not unthinkable, at least highly unlikely.

The kind of co-existence with communism which I have been describing is not, of course, "peaceful", in the sense that it is founded on friendship and co-operation. It is hardly more than mutual toleration, derived in large part from the sure knowledge that each side can wipe out the other, and that the victor would have nothing to gloat over but rubble and ruins.

This kind of co-existence does not give one too much joy or comfort in the future. But it is realistic and, as such, the best adjustment to the present situation. We accept it as the best possible solution at this time, but also in the hope that in time a better basis of understanding and a stronger foundation for peace may grow out of it.

There are, of course, some people - some good and sincere people - who take the view that brutal atheistic communism being inherently evil, it is impossible, and in any case would be morally wrong, to accept any kind of "co-existence" with it. This view seems to me to involve a confusion not only of words but of thought. Good has always, in this world, had to co-exist with evil, and though some day this situation may end, that day has certainly not yet arrived. It has never, I think, been sound doctrine, either theologically or politically, to believe that because a good man hates sin, he should seek to destroy every sinner. On the contrary, our moral traditions are based on the teaching that the thing to do with a sinner is to save him from his sins. Ostracism, or the refusal to communicate or have any dealings with publicans or other sinners, is for the Pharisees. It may, for a time, make the individual feel better. It has never made society better.

None of this means, of course, that Western civilization and communism should be expected to exist together on equal terms, or that one could in any sense equate or assimilate them. Our civilization is the heir to two thousand years of Christendom, and embodies, too, the rich traditions of Judean, Greek and Roman civilizations before it. Communism, on the other hand, is a nihilistic rejection of every moral value.

This flight from and rejection of moral values and moral responsibility has, on occasion, created dynamic societies but they are often more virulent than virile. For a period these movements, Naziism, Fascism, Communism, may occupy a strong position in the centre of the human stage. But they are in essence insubstantial and they can pass.

Philosophically and ideologically, communism, far from being a new, permanent and revealing concept of life, is merely a narrow Western heresy, born amidst the abuses of the industrial revolution of the last century, and morally and, therefore, intellectually bankrupt.

There is no reason to believe that, considered in historical perspective, communism can long survive. Men are in their deepest natures moral beings to whom questions of good and evil are basic. But communism is fundamentally anti-moral. The very nature of man, therefore, makes it inevitable that sooner or later totalitarian and tyrannical regimes based on philosophies like communism either evolve or explode. If we remain strong and patient, therefore, we may before too long have something better to co-exist with than the international communism of today.

Quite apart from this fundamental point, the internal conflicts of interest, and the internal distrust of group for group, and of man for man, which one finds in any totalitarian society, is so great that ultimately such societies must change their nature or destroy themselves. The internal stresses and strains are such that sooner or later, it seems to me, the so-called monolithic societies of the totalitarians must crumble. So, though we must remain wary and alert, and take adequate precautions against the danger that they might burst outwards, we should also refuse to become panicky or too impatient as these inevitable historical processes are slowly working themselves out. We should also assist the process when that can be properly and wisely attempted.

As I see it, the answer to the question whether co-existence with communism is possible, lies basically in recognition of the simple fact that we have to share a planet, not with abstractions, but with fellow human beings, who have now learned the secret of destroying life itself on that planet. The real question, in fact, is not whether we can "co-exist", but whether we can prevent the unspeakable catastrophe of an atomic war, and ultimately find ways not merely of co-existing, but of co-operating with the peoples of Russia and China; without at the same time betraying our own principles, weakening our values, or sacrificing our security.

Every one of us - in Canada and every other free country, and in some form or another - has a responsibility to take part in the search for the right answer to that question, for in finding that right answer, not merely peace, but, literally, existence on this planet, is at stake.

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