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ST. MARTIN'S STREET
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Telegraphic Address :
PHUSIS, LESQUARE, LONDON

Telephone Number :
WHITEHALL 8831

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THE WAR EXTENDED

SIGNOR MUSSOLINI'S decision of June 10 has inspired the contempt of all freedom-loving peoples. That two men are able to decide the fate of about a hundred and fifty million people, and challenge, directly or indirectly, the peace and prosperity of the rest of the world with little or no reference to other authority, is perhaps the greatest blow to human dignity in history. But this is not the time for recrimination and criticism. The challenge must be met now.

On the same day, Mr. Duff Cooper, Minister of Information, spoke of this new tragedy, pointing out that there is so much that we all like and admire in Italy and the Italian people. All scientific people will contribute to this view. It is scarcely necessary to mention the fruitful fields for archaeological and historical studies offered by that country, the first marine biological station at Naples, the important contributions to the mathematical and physical sciences made by Italy over a period of centuries. Yet it is a sad reflection on modern civilization that we must now anticipate an "increase in the number of ruins for which Italy has long been famous". Much, far too much, of Europe is already in ruins; there is not the slightest reason or excuse for opening out the vista of this hideous carnage. "No war has ever been declared with so little provocation as this. Italy had no quarrel with Great Britain or with France, and had made no claim which had been refused." Every problem could have been solved by scientific and honest debate.

M. Reynaud, on this same sad day, asks: "How shall we judge this act? France has nothing to say. The world which is looking on will pass judgment." The lovers of freedom and of democratic government have passed their judgment in

no uncertain terms. The highest moral authorities in the world, including the Pope and President Roosevelt, had repeatedly tried, but in vain, to prevent the extension of war, which is opposed to all ethical principles and to human solidarity.

Two great democracies, two great Empires, are fighting for their freedom and that of other countries—indeed of the world. After all else had failed, they were compelled to meet force with force. To those "evil things" which they have been fighting for ten months are now added more evil things. But great inspiration is forthcoming to those two democracies from a third. There has been no doubting the moral attitude of the United States since hostilities began; but on the day of Italy's declaration, President Roosevelt, at the graduation exercises of the University of Virginia, spoke emphatically of Italy's scorning "the rights and securities of other nations".

"On this tenth day of June 1940," he said, "from this University, founded by the great American teacher of democracy [Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States], we send forward our prayers and our hopes to those beyond the seas who are maintaining with magnificent valour their battle for freedom." The Americans have now seen beyond any shadow of doubt the ascendancy of the philosophy of force in country after country where free institutions and individual liberty to search for truth and to express opinion were once maintained; where control of machines was retained in the hands of mankind as a whole. "Neither those springing from that stock nor those who have come hither in later years can be indifferent to the destruction of freedom in their ancestral land across the sea", the President said.

For years NATURE has striven hard for intellectual freedom in thought, word and action. We can never subscribe to any theory of nationalism in science; and therefore men of science can now look with deep satisfaction on the quick passing of the isolationist policy so recently advocated by certain groups of Americans, but now so clearly repudiated by their President.

The British and the French are not nations fighting nations, but freedom-loving peoples actively opposing the forces of evil and falsehood. In this hour of need it is a comfort to know that the United States is now to "extend to the opponents of force the material resources of this nation".

Unity in the common cause has been achieved within the British Empire and within the French Empire, and also between the two. Movement towards the achievement of such unity throughout the democratic States of the whole world is increasing in momentum, a movement in which science is playing an important part. In the leading article in NATURE of May 25, p. 796, attention was directed to the brilliant contributions to our war effort that many men of science of the Allies are making in the Fighting Services and research organizations immediately connected with them, to say nothing of the many scientific workers and teachers carrying on at the home front. (Alas, the work of many others in Poland, Norway, Holland and Belgium has been immobilized by the brute force which has temporarily overcome them.) But now to these efforts will be added much from our colleagues in the United States.

When "the control of machines was retained in

the hands of mankind as a whole", untold benefits accrued, but under the system of force in the hands of irresponsible conquerors, the machine becomes master, with mankind a servant and victim. It cannot be denied that science has been a major element in forcing such a grievous issue resulting in this holocaust. But the conscience of science is clear. She offers man a rope to skip; she cannot be blamed if he chooses to hang himself with it. On the other hand, science is willing, nay eager, to assist him along the path of prosperity and happiness which she has helped to provide.

Thus, when Great Britain declared war on Germany, the voice of science was raised. In NATURE of September 9, 1939, p. 455, we emphasized that "It is the duty of the man of science to lay aside his just misgivings whether the greatest force of the human intellect should thus be harnessed to the forces of destruction. . . . The interests of pure science as an intellectual pursuit and discipline must remain in abeyance." The voice has proved strong and it did not cry in a wilderness. Science is being utilized in this war effort as never before. And now, we say, this voice must be even stronger. Our energies must be directed without remission to the cause of freedom. British and French men of science in collaboration, with the moral sympathy and active assistance of their American colleagues, must give their all, even at the expense of sacrificing or modifying their cultural pursuits. Thus alone can we hope for the overthrow of brute force and the speedy initiation of the period of reconstruction which shall enshrine the great prize of freedom.

CO-ORDINATION IN NATIONAL FOOD POLICY

THE new ministries established to deal with war-time problems must find it necessary to improvise policies and, since decisions are urgent, to adopt short-term arrangements for dealing with the manifold problems they are called upon to handle.

Food concerns every one of us. Food production and the trade in foods give employment to more people than any other form of industry or service. Hence it was only to be expected that the Ministry of Food should have become a target for a large volume of criticism.

As has already been pointed out in the leading

article in NATURE of March 30, food policy has never been in peace-time the principal responsibility of any minister or of any Government department. Food production has been considered from the point of view of the farmer, imports of food as factors in commercial policy, food distribution as it related to the wholesale or retail trade. The Ministry of Health, largely preoccupied with the problems of local government, held a watching brief for the protection of the consumer from impure or adulterated food; but, although committees had been set up to consider nutritional requirements, there had been no attempt to co-ordinate