NAZI GERMANY EXPLAINED

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by

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THIS BOOK is dedicated to the frequenters of the British *Stammtisch* in the Taverna in Berlin, in the hope that they will forgive me for writing on a subject which they know so much better than I do. And also, as always, to M.

Since I frequently have to face the microphone, one word of warning is perhaps necessary to avoid misunderstandings. This book represents only my own views of Germany.

VERNON BARTLETT.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS A POOR DEVIL TO THINK?

A YEAR or two ago two friends of mine went on a conducted tour to Russia—two of the most honest and sincere men I know. They visited the same factories and the same villages, and when they came home again their accounts of all they had seen were so different that it was difficult to believe they had seen the same places and almost impossible to believe they had seen them at the same time.

Germany is rapidly replacing Russia as the country about which no truths agree. Even those who visit the country every few months, and have known it for years, are bewildered. Some are so impressed by the enthusiasm that is everywhere evident that they look upon the ill-treatment of Jews, Social-Democrats, Communists, and pacifists as an inevitable, if unpleasant, feature of a revolution. Others are so revolted by accounts of this ill-treatment, and so alarmed by photographs of uniformed Storm Troops marching in excellent military formation past some Nazi leader, that they believe

war to be the great ambition of the National Socialist movement. Of the Englishmen who live in Berlin many are antagonistic, and for three reasons. One reason is that the Germans with whom they most easily made friends were Jews, or others who were internationally minded, and who were therefore most likely to suffer in a nationalistic revolution. Secondly, there is so much about Nazi doctrines which must be repugnant to all unbelievers. Thirdly, even the cleaner currents of any extremely nationalistic flood of opinion must arouse a certain resentment among people who are submerged by it, but who, being of another nationality, cannot wish to be swept along by it. Very few foreigners who lived in Italy at the time of the March on Rome in 1922, who watched the hysterical celebrations when all the Socialist literature and furniture that could be found were burnt in great bonfires on the Piazza Barberini, ever believed that Signor Mussolini would succeed in building up a system of government that is widely imitated and still more widely respected. On that October evening I wanted to see a certain young Fascist deputy who has since become one of the more constructive members of the Fascist Government. As I put my hand to my hip pocket to get out my card-case he quickly

drew his revolver on me, for in those days violence was in the air and he was taking no chances. Only a few months previously a circular had been sent round to members of Parliament politely requesting those of them who went armed to leave their revolvers in the special lockers which had been built in the lobby, to lessen the danger of incidents in the Chamber itself. In such an atmosphere the foreigners themselves thought and talked more of bloodshed and "incidents" than of the causes and aims of the Fascist movement. Indeed, the aims would have been difficult to discuss, since Signor Mussolini was not very much more specific about them before he came into power than Herr Hitler has been. Fascism, National Socialism, or whatever you like to call this nationalistic fervour which has become the inspiration of half a dozen Governments in Europe, starts by being an emotion ; it only develops a plan and a philosophy after the emotional crisis has passed its height. And it is partly because Germany is still in the state of emotional hysteria that opinions and prophecies about her vary so tremendously.

And they vary less between one man or one newspaper and another than between the same man or the same newspaper at different dates. People who formerly defended Germany

because they felt that she had been unjustly treated by the Allies, now attack Germany because they feel she has unjustly treated her Jews. Newspapers which protested strongly, at the time of the Peace Conference, against a treaty which would visit the sins of the ex-Kaiser upon the whole German nation now appear to be quite willing that this same nation should suffer for the sins of the Nazi leaders. The very people who were most horrified by the effects of the blockade of Germany after the armistice are, in many cases, now talking quite enthusiastically about Jewish plans to boycott the same country. And in both cases they are inspired by the same humane motives.

Papers which most criticised the French for their hesitation to disarm now urge her not to sacrifice a single rifle. Other papers which were most bitter against Germany at the Peace Conference are the only ones which sing praises of the Storm Troops. Many ardent supporters of the League of Nations have been so disturbed by reports of German armaments, and have been so ready to believe in the inevitability of another war, that a cynic might almost suspect them of being subsidised by the armament firms, whose shares go up magnificently in response to alarmist rumours. The newspapers which lay the greatest emphasis

upon the importance of maintaining a large navy and a large army in order to give them "security" are often among the most indignant that Germany, surrounded by much more fully armed nations, should desire to look after her own "security" in the same way. Certain Frenchmen who opposed the idea of making concessions to Stresemann, because he did not represent the nationalist elements in Germany, are still more opposed to making concessions to Hilter because he does. And so on, *ad infinitum.*

What is a poor devil to think?

This book is not an attempt to tell him. It merely seeks to put a few more facts before him so that he may be the more able to judge without prejudice.

CHAPTER II

GERMANY IN DEFEAT

BRUTALITY can never be excused, but sometimes it can be explained. Nobody can hope to understand what is happening in Germany to-day unless he remembers that country's history since the war.

On a cold rainy night in April 1919, the German delegation to the Peace Conference arrived at the little station of Vaucresson, near Versailles. There was an almost depressing lack of formality about their reception—a little heel-clicking, a little bowing, an ungodly rush on the part of reporters and Press photographers, and Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau and his colleagues were ushered to the motor-cars and omnibuses that were to take them to the Hôtel des Reservoirs at Versailles. If they had expected to be treated with anything more than the coldest courtesy they must have been disappointed. Which was just as well, since it put them into training for further disappointments to come.

Behind their comfortable hotel a small area of the park was fenced off for their benefit. I

happened to be standing near it while the fencing was being put up, and a Press photographer snapped me. The resulting photograph—almost the only one of myself I have ever liked—appeared in a London paper with some such caption as: "German delegate studies the strength of his bars," and I was strongly urged to bring an action for damages against the newspaper which attributed so unpopular a nationality to me. A well-known English lady of rather Teutonic appearance went into a chemist's shop near the hotel and asked for aspirin tablets. The chemist drew himself up. "I have none for you," he declared haughtily, and turned his back on her. After a day or two of comparative liberty, during which they wandered from shop to shop buying post-cards as souvenirs of the *Paxkonferenz*, the Germans found their liberties more restricted. Great precautions were taken to prevent anyone from speaking to them, and two little parallel wooden fences were put up which made a path from one hotel to another and, in so doing, took away the last hopes of the delegation staff that they might pass for Frenchmen, Englishmen or anything but Germans. Their hopes would in any case have been vain, for the war had involved the sartorial as well as the material isolation of Germany. Allied tailors

dreamt of circles, German tailors of cubes, and English trousers, short and turned up at the bottoms, were later to make me feel horribly conspicuous on my first after-war visit to Germany. The precautions in Versailles were taken partly for the delegates' own safety, but they rankled.

The first plenary session of the Versailles Treaty, held on January 18th, had been followed by much angry negotiation, but only between the Allies themselves. The Germans, on their arrival, were handed a completed treaty and told to make their comments on it. This they certainly did, for they felt it bore little relation to President Wilson's Fourteen Points which they had accepted as the basis of peace when they had asked for an armistice. Pages and pages of notes were feverishly typed out in the Hôtel des Reservoirs, but they brought about only very minor modifications. Suggestions that there should be a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine, that Danzig, Memel and Königsberg should become free ports, and that France should receive fixed annual sums of coal instead of taking over the coal mines of the Saar Basin, were among those that were rejected. A demand for immediate admission to the League of Nations and for the disarmament of the Allied Powers within two years

was also turned down. The final draft of the treaty was handed to Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau on June 16th with the cheering information that, unless it was accepted within a week, Allied troops would march into Germany. Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau refused and resigned his position as head of the German delegation. But the National Assembly at Weimar, and Ebert, the Socialist ex-saddler who had become first President of the Republic, made the best of a bad job. The blockade of their country was still in force, and a military occupation would only make things worse. They accepted the treaty after a final but fruitless attempt to get the "war guilt" clause cut out. The principal German signature was that of Herr Hermann Müller, who became Social-Democratic Chancellor in 1928. There was little enough rejoicing over the whole business in our own country; in Germany there was only disillusion, despair, and bitterness against the men who had had the courage to accept the inevitable. On May 7th, when the terms of the treaty had first been handed to the Germans, Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau had declared that the blockade had caused hundreds of thousands of deaths in Germany. "Think of that," he said, "when you talk of guilt and punishment." If Hermann

Müller had refused to sign, the blockade would have continued. Germany was defeated and had to bow the knee.

This is not an attack on the Versailles Treaty. President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George fought hard to make it as moderate as possible, and "Tiger" Clemenceau represented a country which had suffered two invasions in less than fifty years. Most of their critics forget the state of public opinion at the time. Machinery for propagating hatred and lies had gained such momentum and was so effective among nearly all sections of the public except, perhaps, the fighting forces themselves, that it would have been foolish to expect a more generous document. Besides, there were so many peoples that wanted to share the spoils. And there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that the Germans, had they won, would have shown even as much statesmanship. The Versailles terms are milk-mild compared with the treaties Germany imposed upon Russia at Brest-Litovsk and upon Rumania at Buftea (although, it is true, Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, was mainly responsible for the Rumanian affair). But if Herr Hitler still enjoys the task of being German Chancellor, he should daily give thanks for the Versailles

Treaty. Many of us who hung around in the corridors while it was being drafted felt that it so stretched the Fourteen Points which were to be the basis of peace as to make another war almost inevitable. What we failed to realise was how far it would go towards bringing about civil war inside German frontiers. "The Treaty of Versailles," wrote the very able Berlin correspondent of *The Times*,[1] "could not have been better calculated to nourish the revival of the nationalistic Germany. With its tortuous divisions of territory, its dogmatic pronouncements on war responsibility, and its pious indication of an undefined general reduction of armaments, it provided every grievance the heart of a German nationalist could desire."

Edgar Ansell Mowrer, who likes Germany as much as he dislikes the Nazis, believes that it would have been better for everybody if the Allied armies had refused Ludendorff's request for an armistice, and had gone on fighting until the entire German people realised the futility of further resistance. "This would have avoided the immensely harmful legend of victorious German soldiers panting to continue the conflict through the winter of 1919, but stabbed in the back by treacherous

[1] *The Times*, April 10, 1933.

workmen. Thanks to this myth the reactionaries have continually succeeded in bringing discredit upon the Republic. For these workmen are popularly supposed to have been bought with French gold."[1]

"In six months more," wrote Mr. J. L. Garvin in the *Observer* of October 8th, 1933, "peace would have been dictated at Berlin. The Germans would have been taught on their own territory the meaning of military invasion such as they had so widely inflicted on their neighbours. That sequel might have been the best for lasting peace. It would have taught the German people the full meaning of defeat. Never again would they have thought of war as the highest form of Aryan exercise. Impossible would have been that colossal falsehood of Nazi propaganda which is working as much evil as any other lie in the world to-day—that Germans are a superior race ; that victory is their natural prerogative ; that they really won the last war and are sure to win the next ; that, last time, they were only 'robbed of their fruits' by Jews and sundry ; and that next time they will glut themselves with 'fruits.'"

But on November 11th, 1918, we had no time for reflections on the psychology of defeat. In the months that followed we were far too

[1] *Germany puts the Clock Back*, by E. A. Mowrer (John Lane).

busy over the problem of getting back to civilian life to show interest in the way in which the new German National Assembly was hammering out the most democratic constitution in Europe. And the members of this National Assembly, in their turn, were too busy arguing about democratic theory to dismiss those bureaucrats, lawyers and teachers who believed only in autocracy and aristocracy, and who carefully forgot to remind their scholars or other people with whom they had to deal that the armistice was granted, not on the demand of cowardly civilians in Berlin but of an exhausted and defeated General Headquarters. It should have been easy enough to win enthusiastic support for the new Republic, for never have I known a people so emptied of prejudices and preconceived ideas as the German people in 1919 and 1920. They had never learnt to think for themselves. They had lived under a machine which taught them to click their heels and obey when spoken to by an officer or a bureaucrat. They had treated the Kaiser with greater deference than that accorded to any European monarch except the Tsar. And now the military machine had been forced to accept defeat and the Kaiser had fled to Holland to become a private citizen. Everything they had believed in lay in ruins.

The German God had failed them. They had accepted hardships infinitely greater than those of the Allies, and all to no purpose. Bewildered and starved, they would have followed any leadership towards any ideal. Humbly they went about their business—rode on bicycles which, owing to the rubber shortage, had miniature sofa springs fixed all round the wheel-rims ; lived on coffee made of acorns and bread made of filth ; travelled in trains with window-straps and seats made of plaited paper ; and waited for someone to tell them what to do.

The first German I met on German soil after the war was a porter who fetched my bags off a steamer that had brought me across Lake Constance from the Swiss shore. Where his arms should have been were two steel hooks. I had none of the " conquering hero " feeling when he told me they had been blown off during the war, and I had not got it in me to boast of my nationality. But when I had to show my British passport to the authorities, he was delighted, and told me how he had been a prisoner of war near Hull. He even talked broken English at me, and when he discovered that I had fought against him at Ypres, where he had been taken prisoner, his delight was boundless. Like everyone else

I met on that trip, he told me that the war had been the greatest piece of folly. Thank the Lord it was over ! All that mattered now was to build up a more sensible world in which war would be impossible. Ninety per cent of the German people were as emptied of hatred as of every other feeling except hunger.

. . . . . .

Dr. Delisle Burns, quoting from an official report on *Food Conditions in Germany*, by E. H. Starling, F.R.S., gives the following picture of Germany at the time of the armistice :

" All the industries lacked raw materials, and there was no money to pay for their import. The four months after the armistice were more ruinous than any before. No work was done, less food was available, and complete uncertainty prevailed as to the future. Starvation and despair in some quarters caused murder for the sake of a few marks, and in other quarters tricks to escape all taxation. The strain of the war continued after the armistice, and was no longer relieved by dreams of possible victory.

" In the chief cities ' a number of deaths occurred as a direct result of slow starvation,' and the powers of resistance to disease in a large number of the population were gravely

reduced. ' In Berlin two-thirds of the population are living on a low level of vitality.' ' The death-rate in Prussia from tubercle of the lungs has increased two and a half times.' ' The death-rate of women has increased proportionately to a higher degree than that among men.' The civilian death-rate in the whole Empire increased by 9½ per cent in 1915, and steadily rose to an increase of 37 per cent over 1913 in 1918. The birth-rate, owing to absence of men and to underfeeding, dropped from 27.5 per thousand in 1913 to 14.29 in 1917, and in 1918 it was below the number of deaths. Three years of underfeeding had had mental effects, and ' among the leading men mental and moral prostration is most striking. Their hopelessness is more striking than any resentment.' But men of tougher fibre, grasping what there was for themselves, came to the top. ' The very perfection of organisation in Germany has proved her undoing. No other nation could have liquidated and thrown into the fighting line the whole of its resources in men and material.'

" Partly owing to the blockade by sea, but not less to the chaos in the east and the trenches of the west and south, which completed their isolation, the German people were driven to an utter exhaustion of all their domestic

resources. The land diminished in productivity; the vitality and strength of men were deteriorating; and the mere acceptance of defeat did not stop the downward course."[1]

The 10 per cent who still felt hatred turned away from foreign politics; their effort was concentrated against their own countrymen. There had been significant happenings in Germany between the negotiations for an armistice and the signing of the Peace Treaty which put an end to it. Early in October the General Staff had insisted that immediate application for an armistice must be made. The "November Revolution," which is now blamed for all Germany's misfortunes, did not break out until a month later, and even then it started not among civilians but among sailors stationed at Kiel. On November 8th the Republic was proclaimed in Munich, and on November 9th the Revolution began in Berlin. On November 10th the Kaiser left for Holland, and the general public discovered for the first time how desperate the situation in Germany had become.

Only the Social-Democrats and the Independent Socialists had had any idea of the impending disaster, and had made preparations

[1] *A Short History of the World, 1918–28,* by C. Delisle Burns (Gollancz).

to meet it. But a struggle, which has weakened the German Left to this day, began between them. The Social-Democratic Party appointed a Council of Peoples' Commissioners who in turn appointed a Government which was predominantly *bourgeois*. The Independent Socialists formed their revolutionary Spartakist League, out of which grew the K.P.D. or Communist Party of Germany. While delegates from all over the world were discussing peace in Paris, there was civil war in Berlin. The Social-Democrats won the struggle, and presumably saved Germany from Bolshevism, but their victory was ultimately to be their defeat, since they turned for help to the remnants of the army. Noske, the Social-Democrat Minister of National Defence, organised a force consisting mainly of ex-officers under the command of General von Lüttwitz. The Spartakist League was defeated after several days of severe fighting, and its two leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Dr. Karl Liebknecht, were shot by their military guards. Liebknecht was said to have been killed while trying to escape; no such claim was made in the case of Rosa Luxemburg. She was brutally murdered, and her body thrown into the Landwehr Canal. Assassination had become a recognised and respected method of proving one's patriotism.

A method which came in very useful for the removal of men like Erzberger and Rathenau from the political stage.

Germany had not very long to wait before disgruntled officers—and they had some reason to be disgruntled, since the army was in process of being reduced from the pre-war figure of about 700,000 men to 100,000 and there was no place for the ex-officers in civilian life—made their first attempt to overthrow the Republic. General von Lüttwitz, who had been called in by the Social-Democrats to crush the Communists, felt the time had come for him to crush the Social-Democrats as well. In March 1920, with Wolfgang von Kapp and the notorious Marine Brigade, he attacked Berlin, occupied the Government offices, and made himself Minister of National Defence in the place of Noske, the man who had given him his chance. The members of the legitimate Government fled to Stuttgart. They argued that they did so in order to avoid civil war, but their action hardly increased their reputation for courage. The Kapp "Putsch" was a failure because the workers carried through a general strike which made life impossible for the would-be rulers in Berlin. Thirteen years later, when Herr Hitler began to destroy constitutional liberties, the same lack of agreement between

Socialists and Communists, and the fear of the latter to act without instructions from Moscow, caused delay that was disastrous to them. Also the number of Nazi "cells" in their organisations added to their hesitation to use this powerful weapon of a general strike until it was too late for them to do so.

The Kapp "Putsch" was one of the most important events in the history of Republican Germany, although people did not realise it at the time. There was a censorship and a breakdown of communications to confuse one. In the hope of finding out what was really going on, and of getting more news out of the country than anyone else, I bought two dictionaries in Zürich, worked out a very complicated code that could only be deciphered with their help, left one with a friend in Switzerland and took the other with me into Germany. On the way to Munich the engine driver suddenly decided he was going no farther that evening, and we passengers had to crowd into a tiny provincial hotel with instructions to be back at the station at four in the morning. The hotel manager took pity on us, and was up at dawn to give us coffee. It was my first taste of *Ersatz Kaffee*, and it had such effects on me that I was still clinging to the station railings and vomiting when the morning train went out, and had only

recovered sufficiently to remember I had left the precious dictionary in the hotel when I was in a later train well on the way to Munich. I never got the dictionary back, but it did not matter, for by that time the Kapp–Lüttwitz Government was already in flight, and the newspaper correspondents were sending through their telegrams in the normal way.

But this attempt from the Right had given the excuse for another attempt for the Left. Workers who had gone on strike in the Ruhr thought they had better remain on strike, and German and foreign newspapers were filled with alarming stories of the atrocities committed by the Red Guards in Essen. When I finally reached that city, I found the Workers' Council there busily encouraging resistance by similar and equally untrue stories of the atrocities committed by the attacking Reichswehr. If bitterness and resentment could kill, the Red Guards in the Ruhr would have destroyed every Social-Democrat in Germany, but their rifles and few machine guns were hardly more useful than bows and arrows against the Government troops. I have still a very vivid memory of lying on my stomach in a ditch near Dinslaken while the Reichswehr artillery shelled the road, and of listening, between each explosion, to such a flood of invective against

democratic Germany from my Communist companion as I have never heard from any other man. The last time I heard of that particular companion he was in prison serving a long sentence for his excessive energy in fighting against reaction.

The revolt collapsed. It would have collapsed even if the Reichswehr had never fired a shell, for the local Soviet had no real authority. Among the odds and ends that I can never persuade myself to burn is a pass it gave me to enable me to visit the " front " in a commandeered car with a large red flag on the bonnet. In record time we reached the headquarters of the brigade operating against the Reichswehr troops in Wesel, but we were immediately arrested by the Chief of Staff, who refused to recognise the Essen Soviet. Under his orders, we were hurried back to Army Headquarters, preceded by another car with two rifles pointing suggestively over the back, and accompanied by a corporal who stood on the running board of our own car with a revolver in his hand. The last I saw of the Red Guards was a few days later when the Reichswehr, having broken their pledge not to cross a certain line, marched into Essen. As they came in from the north, I and a rabble of Red refugees and looters left on the way south. I call them

a rabble, and so they were ; and yet most of them would have been decent fellows enough if they had ever had a chance—just as decent as the youngsters on the other side who had gone straight from school into von der Goltz's Baltic volunteers, where they learnt how to murder the " Red Swine " in the belief that, by so doing, they were upholding all that was good in Germany. This is how the November Revolution had seemed to someone on the other side, a sixteen-year-old cadet from the Royal Prussian Cadet School who later played a small part in the murder of Rathenau :

" I had piled up on my table the things which might help me to pull myself together : my father's photograph taken in uniform at the outbreak of the war, the pictures of friends and relations who had fallen in the war, my brother's scarf, his sword, his shoulder-straps, a French tin hat he had sent home, his pocket-book with the bullet-hole through it—the blood on it was dark and patchy now—my grandfather's epaulettes with their heavy tarnished silver tassels, a bundle of letters written from the front on musty paper ; but all that had lost its meaning for me. It could not affect me now. It was connected with the days when flags had hung from every window for our victories. Now there were no more victories, and the flags had lost

their glamour. Now everything seemed to be falling in ruins around me and the road which I should have followed was blocked. I was bewildered by the events which were crowding on me, whose meaning I could not interpret. All I could realise was that the world I had known, of which I was a part, to which my youth had been pledged, had vanished, never to return. . . .

"At last I went out into the street. . . . I suddenly heard sounds of a disturbance in one of the main streets, and resolved to find out what was happening. I felt very nervous, but I set my teeth and said 'Buck up!' to myself, and again 'Buck up!' as I heard scraps of shrill singing and shouts from many throats, sensed confusion and tumult. A gigantic flag was being carried in front of a vast procession—a red flag. . . . Tired multitudes plodded after the flag; women were in front in voluminous skirts, their grey skins hanging slackly over sharp cheekbones. Hunger seemed to have hollowed them out. From under their dirty, ragged head-kerchiefs they sang in trembling voices a song whose martial rhythm was ill matched with their weary tread. The men, old and young, soldiers, workmen, small shopkeepers, walked with dull, tired faces, in which there was yet a hint of sullen resolution. . . . So

marched the army of the Revolution. The wild dreams of reform, of blood and barricades, were to be realised by this grey rabble ! . . .

" A motor-car came along, with sailors on the running-board, sitting on the radiator, waving a red rag like a pennon. Some of them were looking round for mischief to do, shouting hoarsely ; the women yelled to them and pointed. What were they pointing at ? At me ? Were they pointing at me ? Here was the danger ! Instantly the thought rose in my mind that whatever happened I must not flinch. I felt for my sword and remembered that it had not been sharpened. However, I kept my hand on the pommel and squared my shoulders.

" A soldier walked past me, a young fellow, with no belt, wearing brown gaiters and eye-glasses, carrying a despatch-case, and with the shoulder-straps still on his greatcoat. They went for him—one of them, an artilleryman, broad and thick-set, with heavy riding-boots and a red cockade in his cap. ' Here's another of 'em ! ' he yelled as he landed the young soldier one in the eye with his fist. Then he tore off his shoulder-straps, so violently that the boy stumbled and nearly fell, went ashy pale, and stammered, ' But why, in God's name, why ? '

" The swine ! I thought ; the cads ! At that instant the gunner's eyes fell upon me too. He

had little sly eyes, an unshaven chin, and bristly hair. He put up his fists—big, red, hairy fists. I looked round quickly. The crowd had formed a circle round me—there were women amongst them—and a man in a bowler hat waved an umbrella at me—somebody laughed—several people laughed—but I only thought of my shoulder-straps. Everything depended on those shoulder-straps—my honour. How absurd; what did they matter? Yes, they were all-important! I drew my sword. Then the fist was planted in the middle of my face.

"For a moment I almost lost consciousness and blood flowed over my chin. Hit him, I thought, there's only one thing to be done—hit him! I did; but the artilleryman laughed and spat in my face. A stick struck the back of my neck and I fell. Someone kicked me, then the whole crowd seemed to be kicking and beating me. I lay and hit out as best I could in all directions, though I knew it was useless. They all laughed and jeered and hit me. Blood ran from my eyes and nose. Suddenly the tumult ceased.

"Someone came out of the Carlton Hotel—with my swollen eyes I could just see that it was an officer. He was tall and slim and wore the blue uniform of a hussar. His cap was tilted jauntily and he had on patent leather boots

with silver lacing. On his tunic was the Iron Cross, first class, and in his eye a monocle. He tapped his boots and came straight towards the mob. The women were silent ; the crowd parted ; the man with the bowler hat vanished ; the gunner cleared off. The tall, elegant blue figure bent over me and gripped me by the arm. I stumbled to my feet and stood to attention.

" ' Stand at ease, boy,' he said. ' I've been a cadet too. Come along to my hotel.' I went with him, wiping the blood off my face and saying, ' Anyhow, they didn't get my shoulder-straps ! ' "[1]

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The Kapp " Putsch " was tremendously important, not only because it made the abyss wider between the extreme Right and the extreme Left, and added to the hatred both of them felt for the Weimar Republic ; it also aroused against the French a hatred which had hitherto lain dormant. According to the Peace Treaty, the German Government had no right to bring troops within a fifty-kilometre neutral zone, which included the Ruhr. An appeal for an exception to be made to allow the Reichswehr to restore order was sent to the Allies,

[1] *The Outlaws*, by Ernst von Salomon (Jonathan Cape).

and rejected. Nevertheless, the Reichswehr entered this zone, and the French retaliated by an unexpected and, as far as one could see, a useless occupation of Frankfurt and its surroundings far away to the south. I had arrived in the city the night before, and I was first made aware of the occupation by the sight of a coloured soldier walking down the corridor in my hotel and spitting against the wall. The express trains were sent out empty, even the allies of the French being allowed in them only on the borders of the newly occupied zone, and amongst other little annoyances the inevitable censorship was introduced. I wandered around the whole morning looking for the censor's office, and one young French officer of whom I asked the way in the street came to my aid so spontaneously that half my indignation disappeared. He did not know where the censor's office was, but he had an official-looking rubber stamp in his despatch-case. We put my telegram up against the wall of a house, he thumped his stamp upon it and scrawled what might have been a signature, the post office accepted it without question, and the only unofficial message to leave Frankfurt that day sped on its way to London. But the Germans glared sullenly at the coloured troops on guard over their machine guns at strategic points in

the city, and they have not forgotten to this day.

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Endless wrangling about German reparations led to conferences all over Europe—Spa, Boulogne, San Remo, Cannes, Genoa, and, for all I know, other places as well : they are best forgotten. The task was an impossible one, for the experts had always to base their calculations on how much Germany ought to be made to pay—a political matter—and not on how much she could pay—an economic one.

"With its weight, its uncertainty, the methods of its discussion and its enforcement," writes Sir Arthur Salter of the reparation problem, "the passions which it has expressed and aroused, it has been like an Old Man of the Sea on the back of a continent struggling to get to its feet, after four years of prostration and enfeeblement. It has been a principal obstacle to every attempt at recovery. . . . The cash results have not been proportionate to these consequences."[1]

During the Versailles Conference, politicians varied the figure between £5,000,000,000 and £50,000,000,000. They had not then begun to think how absurd it was to expect a country which had carried on to the last gasp to pay

[1] *Recovery*, by Sir Arthur Salter (G. Bell & Sons).

not only the whole cost of repairing the devastated territories, but also various extras such as its enemies' pensions ; nor did they realise the fairly obvious fact that Germany could ultimately only pay in goods which it would ruin us to receive. If payments were actually made in gold, Germany, to get the gold, must manufacture large quantities of goods at a cheap rate so as to undersell the British manufacturer abroad. If payments were made in goods, the damage to the British manufacturer was a little more obvious, but the result was much the same. The actual money received might enable the British Government to subsidise British industry, the only effects of which were to make it easier for Britons to compete with the Germans and more difficult for Germans to pay reparations. These truths should have been obvious ; long before we recognised them as truths, German Socialists, in their desire to export enough to pay their reparations, had agreed to disastrous reductions in the standard of living of the German workers, and the French, over some reparation default, had committed their greatest blunder since the war—the occupation of the Ruhr in the autumn of 1923.

The German policy of passive resistance to this occupation was disastrous, but it won

much sympathy in Great Britain at the time. We disliked this French attempt to fetch reparations for themselves, and we admired the stubbornness with which the German Government, urged on by Ruhr industrialists like Stinnes, printed more and more paper money in the attempt to keep the country alive while France pressed on its jugular vein. David Low, always the best mirror of British public opinion, drew a cartoon showing French carts laden with German soil creaking home to France surrounded by soldiers with fixed bayonets. To what extent Germany deliberately debased her currency in order to avoid reparation payments is a matter which could be discussed for hours and without result. To quote Sir Arthur Salter again, " Every Minister of Finance, whether in France, in England, in Czechoslovakia, or later in Germany, who stabilised a fallen currency had to impose the most drastic sacrifices and to fight his way against strong opposing forces. No one of them could have carried out this policy if, while the sacrifices would indubitably fall on the country itself, the advantages would have largely gone to foreigners—and foreigners not loved. Since the stabilisation of the mark in gold would have been inevitably followed by increased demands for reparation payments, this was the

case with Germany—and no further explanation is necessary."[1]

In any case, wherever the blame lay, Germany suffered, and suffered far more severely than she had done even during the war. Confidence in the mark was kept up for a long time by foreign speculators who believed it must recover ; even I, in my small way, and without indulging in atrocious speculation, collected nearly enough marks, on frequent visits to Germany, to make me a wealthy man with the mark at par. But once that confidence had gone nothing could stop the ghastly business.

" The occupation of the Ruhr," writes Dr. Delisle Burns, " united all parties in Germany in support of their Government, which thereupon issued orders for organising passive resistance. At one time about 10,000,000 persons were idle in the Ruhr, most of them receiving funds from voluntary or official sources. The coal which Germany needed was largely supplied from British mines at prices ruinous for Germans. The employers in the Ruhr area seized the opportunity to lengthen the working day ; but production steadily declined, and the German currency fell rapidly in value. On January 10th, 1923, the mark

[1] *Recovery*, by Sir Arthur Salter (G. Bell & Sons).

was 48,000 to the pound ; by February it was 250,000 ; by June it was 480,000 ; by July 4,800,000 ; and by September 480,000,000."[1]

In such circumstances a country goes mad. Nobody will ever be able to estimate the social and moral effects of the inflation. Even the old story of the three brothers becomes no exaggeration. One, you may remember, was very careful, and put all his fortune into Government stock ; the second spent most of his money in order to fill his wine-cellar ; the third went to a lunatic asylum before the war. During the inflation the first nearly starved, because, with all his carefully hoarded money, he could not buy a square meal. The second brother sold the empty bottles in his cellar for enough money to keep him in relative luxury. The third brother was released from his asylum, and among his belongings that were handed back to him was a gold twenty-mark piece. Knowing nothing of the war and the inflation, he handed this coin to the cab-driver who brought him home. The cabby, bewildered, drove him to a bank. There they offered the man so many million paper marks in exchange for his coin that he decided he could not yet be cured, and went back sorrowfully to his asylum.

[1] *A Short History of the World, 1918–1928*, by C. Delisle Burns (Gollancz).

People coming back from the bank with millions of paper marks in suitcases or wheelbarrows. People paying for seats at a theatre with eggs or pats of butter. Shopkeepers who were compelled by law to keep their shops open a certain number of hours a day and who prayed that they might have no customers to buy their goods. Money that lost half its value in twelve hours. People who had always been wealthy slinking down to shabby haunts near the Alexanderplatz where they might be able to sell watches or signet-rings or jewellery for food or articles instead of for that hated money. *Valuta ! Valuta !* That cursed word everywhere. A woman I knew had saved, year by year, to assure her son's welfare. Her capital would have bought enough furniture for a decent house. Three months later it would not pay her tram fare. An Englishman who, before the war, had lent £6,000—in marks, of course—on a mortgage in Frankfurt found that his marks, when they were repaid, were worth about 17*s.* 6*d.* in English money. The whole middle class of Germany—all the stout, kindly people who used to live in houses with curtains and tassels and scores of photographs, whom one used to meet on excursions with their thick sausage sandwiches in grease-proof paper, whose ambition it was to have a son who could

go to a university and get his face scarred in a duel—the whole middle class was wiped out in the space of a few weeks.

I once went—in 1926 or thereabouts—to an apartment house in Berlin to ask after some friends. The hall porter could not help me. I told him they had lived there for twenty years and I had last heard of them in 1922. He looked at me with contempt for my ignorance. " But that was before the inflation," he said, with as much finality as if he had said " before the flood."

It would be easy enough to give instance after instance which might arouse a sentimental sympathy with the Germans at the time of the inflation. But there is little room for sentiment in a book which seeks to explain the background of the Nazi movement. One or two details of the inflation period have been put down here because so much of the resentment against the Jews, the industrialists, and the big multiple stores dates from it. Upwards of £40,000,000 was paid to industrialists in the Ruhr to compensate them for their discomforts during the French occupation, and, despite the connections between Hitler and Thyssen, the great Ruhr magnate, the Social-Democrats are blamed for agreeing to such payments, and the big industrialists may yet be blamed for

accepting them. And the abolition of middle-class savings, as a result of inflation, has given Hitler his millions of supporters. " The biggest fact of the new Germany," writes W. Horsfall Carter, one of the first students in this country to realise Nazi potentialities, " is the complete detachment of her middle class from the ordinary ' capitalist ' moorings. Those German families which were putting by their modicum of savings for old age, those professional men who depended partly on family reserves, saw the whole basis of their economic life swept away in the inflation. To-day, out of 65,000,000 Germans, only 2,500,000 possess capital exceeding 5,000 marks (£250), while of the 32,500,000 who are in employment ninety per cent earn less than 200 marks a month (£120 a year)."[1]

A final point to be brought out in connection with the inflation is that when Herr Stresemann formed a Government which put an end to the hopeless policy of resisting the French by supporting passive resistance in the Ruhr, an outbreak occurred in Munich, under the leadership of General von Ludendorff and Herr Adolf Hitler. The revolt was a failure, and Hitler went to prison for it, but it marked his real entry into politics.

[1] The *News-Letter*, June 24th, 1933.

CHAPTER III

FROM DAWES TO HITLER

GERMANY, after the inflation, was ready for anything. One cannot too often remind non-Germans of the bewildering effect the collapse of Imperial power had in a country where there had been almost unlimited confidence in God, the Kaiser, the Army, the Bureaucracy, Big Business, and everything else respectable and solid enough to be written with a capital letter. There had been a strong Socialist Party in Germany before the war, but it was all part of the established order of things. Its rôle had been economic rather than political—the greater its party membership the more pressure it could bring to bear upon employers. Believing in Karl Marx, it waited quietly for the inevitable collapse of the capitalist system. The collapse, when it came, found the Socialists unready to take full advantage of it. We have already seen how their failure to make a clear sweep of reactionary teachers, judges, and civil servants paved their own road to the hell of the concentration camps. They had no inspiration

which could revive the morale of the German middle and lower classes.

M. Pierre Viénot, a French deputy, gives the best description I have read of the effects of this collapse.[1] Until 1914, Germany lived "engulfed in complacent material well-being, without problems and without disquiet, in a profound sense of order. Was this security shaken by the war? Hardly. Doubtless a youthful spirit of reform showed itself among the men at the front, even before they began to feel any apprehension as to the outcome of the conflict. The numerous letters of soldiers published since the war testify to this. But the great mass of the people, in spite of their hardships, and the political leaders themselves, accepted events without comment. Even the question of responsibility, which played so essential a part in the public opinion of democratic countries, hardly seems to have pre-occupied German public opinion, at any rate during the earlier years of the war. The war was part of the established order, and, painful as it was, it aroused no problem. Then suddenly, in a single month, it was all swept away. No more victory, no more Kaiser, no more army, no more ruling classes, no more Government. A complete collapse. What had been indisputable a few

[1] *Is Germany Finished?* by Pierre Viénot (Faber & Faber).

weeks before now had no meaning. At the same moment anything became possible, even Bolshevism, which Germany experienced in all its early phases. From one day to the next the whole of life, the whole world, showed itself in colours which were more than half incomprehensible. We have no idea in France of the moral upheaval caused by the defeat and revolution in Germany. Because there was no Commune in Germany—although 2,000 people were killed in the disorders of the first few months following the armistice, without counting those of the Spartakist outbreaks in succeeding years—because Germany, at its wit's end, reacted against the collapse of order by abandonment and passivity, and not, for example, by a passionate and creative wave of democratic feeling, we imagined that it was not touched to its depths by what had happened, and that it remained purely and simply 'Germany.' A grave mistake. To understand the importance of the German revolution is to possess the key to the understanding and interpreting of Germany to-day. The majority of French people ignore it. Defeat, revolution. . . . They laid hands upon and overturned all who read the newspapers. So rude and unexpected was the shock that they destroyed for a long while to come the sense of fixity, the permanence

of values, and received ideas. But what are we to say of inflation? One must have lived through the extremities of inflation, the madness of milliards, the utter instability that they engendered, to understand the moral repercussions of such a crisis. Those who passed through it without the support of foreign money know what chaos is. And the whole of Germany passed through it. Let nobody imagine that this purely material fact could lead to material misery, and that then, when exorcised, and when the misery was healed, it left no traces. The effect of such a memory upon a simple mind is never corrected in the course of a lifetime. Inflation made every German experience the impossible. It destroyed in him the notion of certainty. If *that* was possible, anything is possible."

. . . . . .

We did not at the time realise how the defeat and the inflation had combined to destroy all standards and all bases of judgment, especially among the Germans of the younger generation. For, unexpectedly enough, there came a sudden period of prosperity. The Dawes Plan was accepted, the mark was stabilised, the humiliating treaty provisions were pushed into the background and temporarily forgotten. A

nightmare dispelled by the dawn of hope. Foreigners were at least as anxious to lend as Germans were to borrow. The prosperity, coming so soon after the appalling poverty, went to everyone's head. Physically the younger generation recovered, morally it became more unhealthy. A prisoner who has spent the greater part of his life in a dark cell, with no certainty as to his final sentence, cannot stand the sudden glare of sunshine. But nobody thought about that.

Municipalities floated loans as easily as Governments. Everywhere one went were new town halls, fine machines in futurist factories, swimming baths that were the envy of Europe. We all came to the conclusion that modern warfare involved woe to the victors rather than to the vanquished. The middle classes, having lost their savings once, were not going to be caught a second time. They spent what they got, and enjoyed life. Youth, turning away from this gorgeous display of materialism, sought, without much success, for an idealistic outlet in art or in vice. The National Socialist movement did not grow during that time, but it developed. Its members became more and more resentful against a society which attached so much importance to money, which they had not got, to internationalism, which they did not like, and to the arts, which they did not

understand. A movement, which we have come to look upon as the most extremist in Europe, was in revolt against the extremes of the prosperity period. Its members protested (without effect) against a system which, in their view, was turning Germany into an American " colony," and determined to go in for " economic nationalism " if ever they had the chance.

Between 1924 and 1928 some £220,000,000 came from the United States, and Sir Arthur Salter puts the total influx of foreign capital during that period at £750,000,000. The bankers—all Jews in Nazi belief—prospered exceedingly, but this borrowing was disastrous to the country's national economy. Far too much attention had to be paid to export trades in order to pay not only reparations but the interest on these unnecessary debts. Worst of all, Germany " rationalised " her industry to an extent unheard of in any other country except the United States, and, like the United States, aggravated her unemployment problem in doing so. It has been reckoned that nearly two million workers failed to find jobs owing to the introduction of labour-saving machinery during that period.

Suddenly the crisis began in New York. Businesses had been so over-capitalised by commercial travellers hawking stock from house

to house in the United States that they burst. Panic set in. People wanted to realise while the going was good, or not too bad. The comforting stream of credit that had flowed across the Atlantic dried up in a day; worse, it began to flow the other way as short-term credits were called in. There began the period which ruined the chances of German Social-Democracy. The territory lost by Germany under the Versailles Treaty had deprived her of some of her most valuable raw materials.

"In coal-mining, the area ceded had produced 15.7 per cent of the value of the 1913 output; in iron ore, 48.2 per cent; in the iron and steel industry, an average of about 19 per cent; in zinc ore and smelting, 59 per cent; in lead ore and smelting, 24 per cent; in sulphur, 12 per cent; and so on. In addition, 15.5 per cent of the arable land area was ceded, and about 12 per cent of all the livestock. . . . The Germany of 1920 was thus very different from the Germany of 1913. She had lost or ceded 13 per cent of her 1913 population; 13 per cent of her European territory, all her colonies, and about 15 per cent of her total productive capacity."[1]

She had never had a real opportunity of

[1] *The Recovery of Germany*, by J. W. Angell (Yale University Press). These figures include the Saar Basin, the ultimate fate of which has to be settled by plebiscite in 1935.

discovering what permanent changes in her standard of living these treaty provisions would involve. Now the world economic crisis pushed such an opportunity off the map. Salaries and wages must everywhere be reduced. And the Social-Democrats, who had played the most important part in German politics since the war, found themselves saddled with the unpleasant job of telling their trade unionists that they must go hungry again in order to prevent the collapse of capitalism. From that time Nazi hopes rose.

During the prosperity period, home affairs had influenced foreign affairs. With the Dawes Plan accepted, reparations were out of the way. Politicians could talk politics again, instead of finance. Sir Austen Chamberlain, as Foreign Secretary, had turned down the German "protocol," drawn up by his predecessor in office, Mr. Arthur Henderson. He must put something in its place to reassure France that the failure to ratify the Anglo-American guarantee of her frontiers, given during the Peace Conference, did not mean that France stood alone. British public opinion would not stand for a revival of the *entente cordiale*, but he was dealing with men who also wanted to get something done—Briand, Stresemann, as his opposite numbers in Paris and

Berlin, and Lord D'Abernon as British Ambassador in Berlin. In October 1925, he went out in a motor-boat, called the *Orange Blossom*, on Lago Maggiore with the representatives of the principal European Powers, and stayed there until they had hammered out the Locarno agreements. The British and Italian pledge to come to the immediate help of France if she were attacked by Germany, or of Germany if she were attacked by France, should have given France her much-desired feeling of security.

As the agreements involved Germany's promise never to reclaim Alsace and Lorraine and never to try to alter her eastern frontiers except by peaceful means, they aroused the resentment of the German nationalists, but this opposition would not have mattered if the German moderates had been able to prove they were living in a brave new world. But that proof was not forthcoming. Locarno did not give the results that had been hoped of it. It is true the Allies evacuated the first of the three zones of German territory occupied under the Versailles Treaty, but the Germans argued that, under this same treaty, the evacuation should have taken place months before. It is also true that the Allies invited Germany to become a member of the League of Nations with a permanent seat on the Council, but

there was a subsequent muddle about this admission which took away any enthusiasm the Germans might otherwise have felt.

Germany had little reason to like the League. The League Council had been mixed up in the decision which gave a large part of Upper Silesia to Poland. The League Council had to appoint the five members of the Governing Commission which is to rule over the Saar Basin until the plebiscite in 1935. The League Council had to appoint a High Commissioner in the Free City of Danzig to keep the peace between Germans and Poles. The League Council had to protect German minorities abroad under treaties that gave it no very adequate machinery for doing so. They were tasks that, for the most part, had been thrust on to a still non-existent League by tired and harassed delegates at Versailles, but it was only natural that the League's future should be compromised in German eyes by its inheritance from the past.

But there was to be one great advantage about having a permanent seat on the League Council, which enabled Herr Stresemann to swing his countrymen out of their isolation—the only occupants of these permanent seats were Great Powers. Germany, by coming into the League, would be raised in the eyes of the

world to the same level as Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan.

To a people who were so sensitive about the marks of inferiority branded on them at Versailles, this bribe was an important one. The only sad thing about it was that it went astray. The French wanted the balance heavily weighted against the Germans, and thought it would be a grand idea if there could be another permanent seat, reserved for Poland. Spain told Sir Austen she would like one. Brazil too. The admission of these "near Great" Powers would have destroyed the exclusiveness which had given this little group of permanent members their attraction. The Germans were not going to walk into what appeared to be an ambush ; it was too humiliating to be given to understand they could only be admitted to a "packed" Council. An unholy row followed. The Assembly summoned especially to welcome Germany could not do so. Spain left the League for two years, Brazil left it for good, and Poland was consoled only by the institution of a system of "semi-permanent" seats which would allow her to be a member of the Council for two or more consecutive periods of three years each. German nationalists chuckled to themselves at this very useful evidence that the League was an

Allied concern designed to keep Germany down.

Nevertheless, Briand and Stresemann trusted each other. This great hope of European co-operation must not be smashed by a question of prestige. Stresemann held true to his policy, and Germany came into the League in September 1926.

Nobody who was there is likely to forget the scene. Delegates behind rows of desks and looking like elderly candidates sitting for an examination. Near the front, half a dozen empty chairs. The Assembly went through the procedure of voting Germany's admission—" Afrique du Sud . . . Yes ; Albanie . . . Oui ; Australia . . . Yes ; Autriche . . . Oui . . ." and so on, all the way through the nations to Venezuela. Germany was elected a Member of the League of Nations. The German delegation filed in to its seats, amidst great applause. Gustav Stresemann came up to the platform and faced the delegates in the ugly Salle de la Reformation, where the Assembly used to meet. A fat, bald man with small, piggy eyes—almost the German of war-time caricature, except that his eyes sparkled with humour and intelligence. A man with a real gift for enjoying life, and as fond as his friend Aristide Briand of good food and a good joke. A man with a harsh

metallic voice, that yet could be oddly stirring —it was on that day when Germany was admitted to the League, for, although he appeared calm and self-possessed, he was intensely moved. Just before he came to the platform he turned to a friend and said: "*Ich werde es nie können*" ("I shall never be able to get through with it"). He stood there before the world as an equal, the first German to do so since the war. I was sitting just behind him, and I saw how, as he spoke, the drops of perspiration ran down his bald head and trickled through the sparse hair at the back.

That day, too, was the greatest of Briand's career. Even the most bitter cynic was moved by that deep, impassioned, magnificent voice:

"Those who indulge in irony and detraction at the expense of the League of Nations," he said, "who daily cast doubt upon its soundness, and time after time proclaim that it is doomed to perish, what will they think if they are present at this meeting? . . .

"Peace for Germany and for France. That means that we have done with the long series of terrible and bloody conflicts which have stained the pages of history. We have done with the black veils of mourning for sufferings that can never be appeased, done with war, done with brutal and bloody methods of

settling our disputes. True, differences between us still exist, but henceforth it will be for the judge to declare the law. Just as individual citizens take their difficulties to be settled by a magistrate, so shall we bring ours to be settled by pacific procedure. Away with rifles, machine-guns, cannon ! Make room for conciliation, arbitration, peace !

" Countries do not go down to history as great solely through the heroism of their sons on the battlefield or the victories that they gain there. It is a far finer tribute to their greatness if, faced with difficulties, in the midst of circumstances in which anger all but drowns the voice of reason, they can stand firm, be patient and appeal to right to safeguard their just interests.

" Gentlemen of the German delegation, our nations need give no further proof of their strength or of their heroism. Both nations have shown their prowess on the battlefield, and both have reaped an ample harvest of military glory. Henceforth they may seek laurels in other fields.

" Henceforth our road is to be one of peace and progress. We shall win real greatness for our countries if we induce them to lay aside their pride, if we persuade them to sacrifice certain of their own desires in the service of

world peace. This sacrifice will not diminish, it will increase their prestige."

It reads dully enough in English. It was the most inspiring use of a man's voice that I have ever known. I was not by any means the only sentimentalist who was moved to tears. Surely, we said to ourselves, Europe had turned the page on the blackest chapter of her history? Surely the war at last was over?

. . . . . .

Not a bit of it! The Stresemann policy did not lead to the improvement that had been expected. There were delays over disarmament and difficulties over reparations. Hitler worked out that, under the Dawes Scheme, Germany had to pay "80 marks a second, 4,800 marks a minute, 288,000 marks an hour," and every German, who hitherto had thought of these payments as a terrible lot of noughts in a row, suddenly felt an ominous lightening of his own purse. Later, when the Young Plan at last fixed the total sum that Germany was to pay, nationalists were able to point out that a child born on Armistice Day would be almost seventy before it finished paying reparations for a war of which it had known nothing.

The fall of prices throughout the world increased the burden of debt. The tariff barriers

with which each nation tried to protect itself made it impossible for Germany to export enough to continue her reparation payments. The French delay, in agreeing to the Hoover moratorium in 1931 for debts and reparations, brought Germany so near to a fresh financial collapse that foreigners went on withdrawing money from Germany by every possible method. In the hope of keeping up exports, the Brüning Government backed a policy of reducing costs of production almost to " dumping " levels. This involved, of course, a steady reduction in wages, and an equivalent reduction in the purchasing power at home. The six million unemployed, naturally enough, turned in despair to Hitler, who damned the " system," reminded them that the Socialists, who were supposed to have their interests at heart, were parties to it, and argued that this suicidal policy had not won compensations in foreign policy. The Third Rhineland Zone had, it is true, been handed back to Germany five years before the Allies were compelled by treaty to evacuate it, but the German moderates had been afraid to boast of this victory. They no longer had the courage to fight against reaction ; they only tried to act as a brake on it. In this, as in almost every other case of concession, the gesture was made a few months

too late ; it appeared to be one of weakness rather than of generosity on the part of the ex-Allies. Ever since the armistice, the French clocks had been a little too slow, the German ones a little too fast. A conciliatory Government in Berlin has generally coincided with an uncompromising one in Paris, and vice versa.

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Brüning could not depend upon Parliament to back up his policy of fulfilment, even though he modified it very considerably to take the wind out of Nazi sails. He prepared the way for dictatorship by a generous use of Article 48 of the Constitution, which gives the President and his Chancellor the right to govern by decree when the Reich is in danger. In his hope of cutting down expenditure he came into conflict with the East Prussian Junkers, who for years had received pleasant subsidies from the Government. These subsidies were only supposed to go to estates that were in temporary difficulties, and that would normally be solvent; actually they went, in part at any rate, to keep hopelessly bankrupt aristocrats in luxury. Dr. Brüning, and General von Schleicher, who was to come later, wanted to split up these bankrupt estates and to carry out an enquiry into the spending of the *Osthilfe* funds. (Previous

Governments had been encouraged to vote some six or seven million pounds by a cleverly fostered sympathy for landowners who had been cut off from the Reich by the Polish "Corridor.") These funds were to have given employment by setting more people to work on the land, but only fourteen per cent had gone to peasant proprietors with less than 50 acres, while sixty per cent had gone to landowners with over 250 acres. The thing had become a scandal. There must be a limit somewhere, said Brüning and Schleicher. There was not, or neither of them remained in power long enough to find it. A grateful nation had given the old Marshal von Hindenburg an estate which happened to be in East Prussia, and it is quite probable that the indignation of his neighbours against any Government in Berlin which threatened their property had its effect on his attitude as President of the Republic. He withdrew his support, first from Brüning, and then from Schleicher. The latter's discomfiture was all the more rapid because he had displayed Socialistic tendencies—he had been talking to trade unionists and all that sort of thing—and therefore the industrialists in the Ruhr were out for his blood as well.

The actual intrigue which unexpectedly brought Herr Hitler into office as *Reichskanzler*

has never been properly explained. The story of those last few months of German democracy is full of confusions and incongruities. There had been three parliamentary and two presidential elections in one year, each of which had added to the difficulty of forming a stable government. At the election in November 1932 there were twenty-seven parties in the field, and all that I could find out about most of them, after a careful study of their posters, was that they wanted the elector to " help Hindenburg " by voting for them. The one salient fact in that November election was the loss of some two million votes for Herr Hitler, and everybody agreed that when such a movement began to decline it would lose power very rapidly. When the *Führer* had received his maximum of votes in July, President von Hindenburg had bluntly refused to make him Chancellor. Why did he do so in January? At the November election the Nazi campaign was so bitter against Herr von Papen that there was no ammunition left over for use against the Communists. He is in private life a very amiable individual ; the Nazis made him the most hated man in Germany, and he was pushed out of office. Why, a month or two later, should he have been plotting with his industrialist friends to overthrow Schleicher

and to bring in his arch-enemy, Hitler? Surely not because he wanted the invidious position of Vice-Chancellor in a Nazi State?

And, after all, what does it matter? On January 30th, President von Hindenburg summoned those unexpected allies, Hitler, Papen, and Hugenberg, and made Hitler, his own bitter opponent at the presidential elections only a few months earlier, Chancellor of the German Reich. That evening thousands upon thousands of enthusiastic Nazis marched up the Wilhelmstrasse to salute their leader. The old Marshal, standing at a near-by window, passed almost unnoticed. After fourteen years of untiring effort, Adolf Hitler had won his victory.

CHAPTER IV

HITLER CLIMBS TO POWER

UNTIL very recently the number of Nazi voters has varied in direct ratio to the number of empty bellies in Germany. Here are the figures for the Reichstag elections before Herr Hitler became Chancellor :

May 1924 .	1,918,310	votes,	with	32	seats	in	the	Reichstag.
Dec. 1924 .	906,946	„	„	14	„	„	„	„
May 1928 .	809,541	„	„	12	„	„	„	„
Sept. 1930 .	6,406,397	„	„	107	„	„	„	„
July 1932 .	13,733,000	„	„	230	„	„	„	„
Nov. 1932 .	11,767,010	„	„	196	„	„	„	„

We have already seen that in 1923 and 1924 the country was reduced to absolute chaos and misery by the Ruhr occupation and the inflation that followed it. The Nazi movement leapt from insignificance to importance. But by December of 1924 the Dawes Plan had been drawn up. The stabilisation of the currency brought fresh hope, and Herr Hitler lost more than half his voters. During the years of relative prosperity, when loans were easy to obtain and the Stresemann policy led to fairly cordial relations with other countries, the

Nazis made no progress. Indeed their poll in May 1928 was smaller than it had been in December 1924. But then came the death of Stresemann, the world crisis, and the growth of unemployment. Empty bellies again, and the discovery that the spirit of Locarno had evaporated. In September 1930 the voters were multiplied by eight. The crisis deepened, and in less than two years the figure of 107 seats in the Reichstag increased to 230. Over thirty-seven per cent of the electors had voted for Herr Hitler. The subsequent drop of two million votes between July and November 1932 was due to three factors which counteracted the advantage to Hitlerism of the economic crisis. There had been negotiations to bring the Nazis into the Government (during which Hitler had demanded the same power as Signor Mussolini, and had bluntly been refused it), and their breakdown disappointed many luke-warm supporters. The big industrialists who had put money into the Nazi funds more or less ceased to do so when their own friend and ally, Herr von Papen, became head of the Government. And so many elections had left the party badly in debt. At most street corners, Nazis and Communists stood, shoulder to shoulder, collecting money to fight each other in the election campaign,

and S.A. men did a fairly good trade with Hitler post-cards in the cafés, but such contributions could not go far to keep a nation-wide machine in decent working order. And Herr Hitler had by that time built up a machine which has no rival in any country in the world.

You would never believe it to look at him. I can remember every detail of my interview with Signor Mussolini a few moments after he had returned from the Quirinal Palace as Prime Minister. I can remember every detail of my first interview with Lord Northcliffe. Of the forty minutes I spent in Herr Hitler's study in the Reichskanzlei, I can remember very little. A tall vase of flowers in one corner, near a large desk (though not so large as Signor Mussolini's). Quiet, modern furniture—the same, I believe, as had been in the room five months before, when I had been to interview Chancellor von Papen. Hitler, quite amiable, but with nothing terribly impressive about him except his large, brown eyes—so large and so brown that one might grow lyrical about them if he were a woman—and his habit of shouting as though he were addressing a public meeting. A little fuller in the face, and a little wider in the moustache than I had expected. And a certain simplicity and honesty about him which

were definitely attractive. When I had an opportunity to ask him a question, he waited a few moments as though he were listening. My mind wandered to that other peasant, Joan of Arc, and to her useful habit of " hearing voices."

Hitler is not a peasant, for his biographers tell us that his father " by stubborn energy had raised himself to the rank of a customs official," in the little town of Braunau, on the Austro-Bavarian frontier. But he is still near enough to the soil to have a link with the mass of the people that can never be forged by more sophisticated politicians. It is as unfair to quote his book, *Mein Kampf*, at him now that he is in power, as it would be to quote the writings of many of our pacifists, from Mr. H. G. Wells downwards, when they worked for the Ministry of Information or some other propaganda department during the war. I myself wrote a book of war sketches so lurid and fervent that whenever I remember it I pause to thank Heaven it is out of print. Herr Hitler's book was written while he was in prison serving a sentence for fomenting revolution, and its title – *My Struggle* – should warn one not to expect the reflections and reminiscences that might be jotted down by a respectable politician with a distinguished university career

behind him and a whiskey and soda by his side. But, even when all allowances are made, it contains a great deal that must strike every British reader as absurd. The more one reads of the *Führer's* career, the more one realises that his success is due not to intelligence as much as to an amazing instinct. No editor of a " stunt " newspaper has ever guessed with such accuracy what the public wanted. That instinct, supported by as much care in planning a campaign as could be shown by the most energetic advertising manager, by a deep loyalty to his friends, and by an unfailing optimism, has brought the membership of his party from seven in 1919 to nearly four millions at the present time.

Young Hitler preferred the idea of becoming an artist to that of searching through people's luggage at the frontier. Fate settled things for him ; both his parents died, and at the age of seventeen he set out for Vienna " with only a suitcase with clothes and linen in my hand, but with an invincible determination in my heart. What my father had done fifty years before, I hoped in my turn to drag from the hands of Providence ; I, too, wanted to become ' someone,' as long as it was not an official."[1]

Vienna disappointed Hitler as much as it

[1] *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler.

enchants most other people. In the first place he could not pass into the Academy of Arts to study painting. His work was quite good, but he was advised to study architecture instead, and he had no money to do so. He learnt what it meant to go hungry, and eked out a poor sort of existence as a builder's assistant. Unless his book exaggerates, he learnt even then to hate Jews and trade unionists, and to love everything to do with Germany. His description of his first awakening to the Jewish problem has been so often quoted that I hesitate to quote it again. And yet it is too typical of Hitler's outlook to be missed. " One day as I was walking in the inner town I unexpectedly came across an individual in a long caftan and with black side curls. My first thought was: Is that a Jew? . . . I watched the man stealthily and carefully, but the longer I looked at that odd face and studied it feature by feature, the more the question in my brain changed. It became: Is that also a German? " This question set him on to reading books—not always the most authoritative ones—about the Jewish race, and to discovering how great an influence Jews had in the Press, the theatre, and the arts. They were, he decided, poisoning the German race. " By fighting against the Jews," he wrote, " I am doing God's work."

But the time in Vienna had other influences upon him. It made his National Socialism inevitable. There is one short passage in his life which is very significant: "The Royal House (of Hapsburgs) was becoming Czech in every possible way; and it was the hand of the goddess of eternal justice and inexorable retribution that caused the most deadly enemy of Germanism in Austria, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, to fall by the very bullets which he had himself helped to mould. And he was the chief patron of the movement, working from above, to make Austria a Slav State!"[1]

That passage is significant because it helps to show why Hitler became anti-democratic. The German race was only one of many in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Young Hitler, wandering about among the poorer people of Vienna, was horrified to find that, in this German city, the workers talked Czech, Hungarian, Croatian, and Heaven knew what else besides. Democracy in the Hapsburg Empire would put Germans in the minority, ruled over by Slavs! Never! Down with Democracy!

But it must also be remembered that Hitler's father was an official, and most officials, even minor ones, were at loggerheads with Social-Democracy, which in Vienna was the most

[1] *The Times*, July 24th.

" Marxist " in Europe. It is very probable that the young Adolf grew up with bitter prejudices against Socialism, and yet, when he himself became a workman, his resentment against the way the labouring classes were treated drove him towards the Socialist doctrine. And the only way out of this dilemma was to become a National Socialist—a man who was both a nationalist and a radical, who hated Social-Democracy because he was the son of an official, and Democracy because the Slavs in the Hapsburg Empire would have outnumbered the Germans. Although ten years were to go by before Hitler came across the half-dozen members of the " German Workers' Party " which he was later to change into the " National Socialist German Workers' Party," he was a National Socialist before he left Vienna.

As soon as he could manage it, he gave up mixing mortar and carrying bricks, and moved to Munich. When the war broke out he obtained special permission to serve in a Bavarian regiment instead of returning to his native Austria. Already he thought of Germans as " my people." He became a corporal in one of those nice, comfortable Bavarian regiments which gave such joy to their opponents when they came into the line instead of the more

aggressive and active Prussians. He fought well, and won the Iron Cross. When the collapse came he was in hospital, recovering from a British gas attack somewhere south of Ypres, and, according to his own account, he wept to hear of the armistice, just as he had thanked God at the outbreak of war.

If I had had the chance during my interview, I should have liked to ask Hitler when he first believed he was to " save " Germany. As soon as the war ended he began playing with the idea of founding a political party of his own. He returned to his regiment in Munich, and he was sent to find out about a new " German Workers' Party," which then had six members. He was interested, but when he was asked to become number seven his first instinct was to refuse. " It was not my intention," he wrote, " to join an existing party ; I wanted to found one of my own."[1] However, he joined up, became secretary and organiser, wrote out invitations to meetings, and saw the party membership mount to thirty-four. When he could afford to put an advertisement in a local paper, two hundred people turned up at a meeting.

One begins to see how his instinct helped him. Hating Socialists and all that the Weimar

[1] *Mein Kampf*, by Adolf Hitler.

Constitution stood for, he chose the only weapon against them which might arouse a few Germans out of their lethargy. The Republic, he argued, with a good deal of truth, had not come spontaneously into existence ; it was merely a dodge to please President Wilson, who had talked so much about democracy. Having tricked Germany into choosing a form of government she did not want, the Allies had compelled her to sign a peace as harsh as any that could have been imposed if the Kaiser were still on the throne, and the " Marxists " had proved themselves traitors by accepting the responsibility for it. By such arguments he was able, in the space of a few months, to increase his audience from two hundred to two thousand. Business was looking up. The twenty-five points of the programme of the new National Socialist German Workers' Party were accepted, and are still considered as unchangeable, although " interpretations " of some of them would seem rather to alter their sense. For example, the very important Article 17 runs as follows : " We demand land-reform suitable to our national requirements ; passing of a law for confiscation without compensation of land for communal purposes ; abolition of interest on land loans, and prevention of all speculation in land." To which Herr Hitler

added the following explanation in April 1928 : " It is necessary to reply to the false interpretation on the part of our opponents of Point 17 of the Programme of the N.S.D.A.P. Since the N.S.D.A.P. admits the principle of private property, it is obvious that the expression ' confiscation without compensation ' merely refers to possible legal powers to confiscate, if necessary, land illegally acquired, or not administered in accordance with national welfare. It is directed in accordance with national welfare. It is directed in the first instance against the Jewish companies which speculate in land."

Even in this programme, put forward as early as February 25th, 1920, in the famous Hofbräuhaus in Munich, there appears the significant Article 4 : " None but members of the nation may be citizens of the State. None but those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. No Jew, therefore, may be a member of the nation."

There is the equally significant Article 11 : " We demand the abolition of incomes unearned by work," while a later paragraph also demands the nationalisation of all trusts —two points which must sometimes have worried many of the party's wealthy supporters.

For wealthy supporters came along without

much delay. Hitler was getting a following for his swastika flag, and he was building up an army—S.A. (*Sturm-Abteilung*) men were to keep order at meetings and so on, while the more exclusive S.S. (*Schutz-Staffel*) men had to protect Hitler and the other leaders of the movement. Such an organisation might be very useful as a means of breaking the power of the trade unions and of a democratic Government which paid a great deal of attention to social legislation—so much, as history later showed, that Socialism cut its own throat ; it worried only about bread, and an ungrateful people preferred circuses, flags, demonstrations, brown shirts, and all the paraphernalia of Hitlerism. This same democracy had drawn up a constitution giving the vote to everyone of twenty-one years of age, and had thereby made a present of thousands of voters to the Nazis and the Communists, whose programmes appealed much more to youth than did the rather stolid materialism of the Social-Democrats.

The big industrialists were not going to leave Socialist influences unchecked. They began to subscribe to the Nazi Party, whose programme, apart from the few alarming paragraphs quoted above, promised all things to all men. And thus it came about that for years many of the leaders of the party were friendly with

the Ruhr industrialists, while the rank and file remained revolutionary. Since the party's appeal was to the emotions rather than to the reason, these contradictions did not matter until the victory was won ; they are responsible for the fact that, after more than half a year in office, the Nazi Government has still to show whether it will swing to the Right or to the Left.

The French occupation of the Ruhr and the inflation gave Herr Hitler many more supporters. His method of attracting them again illustrates his instinctive understanding of their feelings. It was perfectly obvious that the policy of passive resistance had hurt Germany more than it had hurt France. As a weapon it had brought exhaustion, almost death, to its users. The only thing was to cut the losses. Everybody's reason recognised that the Government must bow the knee to the French, but everybody's feeling revolted against this acceptance of defeat. The Nazis had none of the responsibility, but they made great capital out of attacks against the politicians who had accepted the inevitable. They proved once more that their party was built up on hunger and despair.

Herr Hitler even tried to overthrow the Republic, so great was his indignation. He

began it by firing his revolver at the ceiling during a meeting in a Munich beer-hall, and announcing that the national revolution against the " Berlin Government of Jews " had begun. His principal partner in the escapade was General von Ludendorff. More than a dozen Nazis were shot down by the military ; Goering, who had already become one of Hitler's closest friends, was badly wounded, but was smuggled away to Italy by friends, who carried him on a stretcher across mountain paths ; Hitler and Ludendorff were arrested. The latter was acquitted. Hitler, after making one of his strongest fighting speeches at the trial, was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. After eight months in the fortress of Langsberg, during which he wrote *Mein Kampf*, he was released. Little of his party remained, but with the same optimism and energy he began to build it up again. His method was the same, and his power as a speaker—a spellbinder would be a more accurate description—was steadily developing. But he had hard years ahead of him, since Stresemann's policy of conciliation and America's desire to lend money were making the German less ready to listen to his attacks on the Government and the ex-Allies. " The German," he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, " has no idea how much the

people must be misled if the support of the masses is required." This reflection is, according to Edgar Ansell Mowrer, cut out of the more recent editions of the book. Whenever the *Führer* has " misled " the people he has had just enough truth behind his arguments to get away with it. Reason plays a small part where prejudices are involved ; people in the last resort believe what they want to believe, and Hitler has managed to lull the critical faculties of even so well-educated a people as the Germans, because he felt what they felt and only played upon those prejudices which had a certain justification.

Germany is one of the greatest exporting nations in the world. And here we have Nazi leaders talking of making the country self-supporting and of letting foreign trade go to the Devil. Surely an absurdity ? Assuredly an absurdity, but with enough sense behind it to win over voters from the more moderate parties. In the first place, whether we like it or not, this " economic nationalism," this tendency to be as nearly self-supporting as possible, is universal. Reason is against it, for we have machines with so great a power of production that they can only prosper with a world-wide market, but instinct and prejudice are for it. It makes no difference that

among certain insects instinct leads to race suicide. Hitler feels—at least, so I imagine—that a man can have no deep roots except in the country ; pavements and streets are a poor nurturing ground for patriotism. He feels that excessive interest in foreign trade reduces the standard of life owing to the constant competition to reach lower selling prices than one's neighbours. He feels that Germany, in order to pay reparations, has developed an export trade which puts the home market out of gear. He would only need to quote the difficulties experienced by Cuba, because she can no longer export sugar and tobacco at a decent profit, or by Chile, because other countries now use synthetic nitrates, in order to turn his audience *against* the Governments which have concentrated on the payment of reparation " tribute," and *for* a policy of making Germany more nearly independent. He feels, too, that every Communist who owns an acre of land ceases to be a Communist.

Rationalisation of machinery, the abolition of useless competition by the development of cartels and trusts, have gone further in Germany and the United States than in any other countries. In both they have increased unemployment to a terrifying degree. It may be reasonable to prepare in this way for the

millennium when tariff barriers have disappeared, but Hitler's instinct led him to attack trustification, multiple stores, "international" capitalists, and, since the export trade was so much in Jewish hands, everybody who was "non-Aryan." Every little shopkeeper who felt himself threatened by the branch store of Woolworths or Hermann Tietz of course gave Hitler his vote. Although the instructions for the anti-Jewish boycott on April 1st insisted that Woolworths was not a Jewish firm and must not, therefore, be interfered with, brown-shirted pickets stood at its doors, and posters urging people to buy elsewhere appeared on its windows. Hitler, the legend grew, was going to defend the weak against the strong, the worker against the capitalist who replaced him by machinery in order to increase his own profits. Hitler was going to lead the nation back to a simpler and a saner life, and to put an end to *Kultur-Bolschewismus*, which filled the bookshops with erotic literature. Hitler was going to clean up the administration, for there had been an excessive number of terrific scandals involving high officials and millions of pounds sterling. The criminals, of course, were not all Jews, but enough of them were to furnish the Nazis with fresh anti-Semitic material, and to bring the Brown

Shirts thousands of young and receptive recruits.

" No one who lived through the period from 1919 to 1926," writes Mr. Mowrer,[1] " is likely to forget the sexual promiscuity that prevailed. If anything, the women were the more aggressive. Morality, virginity, monogamy, even good taste, were treated as prejudice. . . . Throughout a town like Berlin, hotels and pensions made vast fortunes by letting rooms by the hour or day to baggageless, unregistered guests. Hundreds of cabarets, pleasure resorts, and the like, served for purposes of getting acquainted and acquiring the proper mood. The general atmosphere was not so much vicious as sexually casual. It reflected a society in which sex had entirely lost any connotation of theological or even ethical sin. Obviously enough, the physicians, as part of this society, could not but share the prevailing views. . . . Abortion was regularly undertaken by any number of otherwise entirely respectable surgeons. Its low price was the proof of its universality, for disaster could lead to severe punishment." Mr. Mowrer goes on to insist that " public morals were in no sense worsened thereby." Sexual excesses and perversions of one sort and another were very prevalent,

[1] *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, by E. A. Mowrer (John Lane).

but there was, on the other side, a development of the youth movement which made Germany the nearest approach to Heaven for people who want to spend their time in the open air.

But the older generation of lower middle-class people could not understand. The Germany of their youth had been so excessively strict and *fromm* that the pendulum inevitably swung too far the other way. They looked to Hitler (a vegetarian, a teetotaler, a non-smoker, and, as far as one can see, a man who has no fun of any kind !) to save Germany's morals. And, since the great majority of doctors were Jews, they readily believed that the Jews were trying to contaminate the moral health of their children.

The inflation, as we have already seen, gave ample opportunity for attacks on the French, who were considered to have caused it, and on the German Government, which surrendered when further resistance had become hopeless. It also increased ill-feeling against big business in general and against Jewish business-men in particular. It was felt that men like Stinnes, the greatest of German organisers of trusts, had done very well out of the inflation, although the State was driven into bankruptcy. It was also felt that the Jews, with their superior business

links with foreign countries, had had a great time buying up German property with worthless money. There was just enough truth in these accusations to prove that Herr Hitler, in making them, was a master in the art of propaganda. He knew what the public wanted before the public knew it.

Then there was the question of uniform. To the foreigner there was something a little comical about a middle-aged man with a shirt of a peculiarly ugly yellow-brown tinge, a broad black belt round a protruding stomach and badly cut breeches. To the German such a man was a harbinger of better times, when there would be a more orderly country, with no scandals in business, no excesses in sex, and no bargaining between numerous political parties, each too obviously out to serve its own ends. A tunic over the brown shirt would have improved the general appearance, but tunics cost money, and the rank and file of the Nazi movement was desperately poor. Besides, the Leader himself wore no tunic—even on that crowning day of his career in March 1933, when Parliament voted him full powers to govern the country for four years, Hitler contented himself with his khaki shirt and breeches. Brass bands, swastika flags and badges, saluting and strong discipline, had a

wonderful effect as propaganda at a time when morals were becoming too loose to be attractive and standards were sinking almost out of sight. If S.A. men did not attend a certain number of parades and meetings a month they were turned out of the party. As they ran round on mysterious errands their busy air impressed the simple civilian, and made him feel that great things were happening or were going to happen.

And, knowing this German passion for organisation, the machinery of the party was worked out in such detail that few Nazis themselves can describe it to you. Below Hitler were two big departments. One dealt with foreign affairs, the Press, penetration of labour organisations, bureaucracy, municipal affairs, war invalids, and women. The other tackled such questions as agriculture, settlement on the land, finance, trade, race, culture, eugenics, music, the cinema, broadcasting, the theatre, compulsory labour, and so on. Then there were medical, legal, teachers', and students' associations, and the Hitler Youth, which, like the Italian Ballilla, aroused the enthusiasm of the child as soon as he was out of his nursery. And, apart from all this, there were the S.S. and the S.A., with their motor sections, their cyclist corps, their radio service, their

divisions, regiments, battalions, and so on—an impressive thought and spectacle to a people who liked that sort of thing. And if they do like it—well, we like our Public Schools and gossip about our aristocrats, and yet our system is not so feudal, nor the German so military, as the foreign observer might believe.

At the head of this huge organisation sat Hitler in the Brown House in Munich. A neat arrangement attached a few S.S. men, picked especially for their devotion to him, to each S.A. district commander, so that it was a relatively easy affair to check any local leader who became too big for his boots. As for the men at the top—Goering, Goebbels, Gottfried Feder, and Roehm—they might dispute among themselves, but their loyalty to the Leader was as constant as his to them. By degrees the simpler folk in the country built up such a legend around him that they appeared to confuse him with God. Since the Kaiser's departure for Holland at the end of the war, there had been nobody on whom they could concentrate that devotion you find only in countries where democracy is still a novelty. Poor President Ebert had been as uninspiring as he had been honest. Field Marshal von Hindenburg had been magnificent in the days when patriotic Germans hammered nails into his wooden

effigy opposite the Reichstag, but he was getting a little old for the job. What about Adolf Hitler?

In November 1932, I spent over an hour in the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin gossiping to a young Nazi who was selling framed photographs of Herr Hitler. He was not a very interesting young man, but I wanted to see the expressions on the faces of his customers. Ten months later I stood in Trier Cathedral and watched the pilgrims, who poured into the city at the rate of thirty thousand a day, to file past the cloak which is supposed to have been worn by Jesus at the Crucifixion. I cannot profess to be an expert in mob hysteria, but I doubt whether anybody could have detected a marked difference between the people who bought Hitler's photograph and the people whose rosaries were pressed against the Holy Cloak. While I was in Trier I got into conversation with several of these pilgrims. There had been a time when the relations between the Vatican and the Wilhelmstrasse had been strained. In Munich, the birthplace of Hitlerism, there was open discontent in the spring of 1933, not only because the heavy tax on would-be German tourists to Austria dealt the Munich tourist industry a heavy blow as well, but above all because of the way in which

Nazis had ill-treated young delegates to a congress of Catholic apprentices in that most Catholic city. But the ratification of a concordat between Germany and the Vatican—Hitler's most important achievement in foreign affairs—had put an end to most of the Catholic resentment. One lady whom I met—in a Trier wine-house I regret to say—turned out to be quite a prominent women's organiser in the Nazi Party. I became involved in a discussion that was at times alarming, for I was using arguments that are fairly familiar abroad, but that sounded very dangerous and subversive in Germany. I half expected some listener at a neighbouring table to have me arrested or beaten up. With this lady was a more elderly friend from the provinces. She left me in no doubts as to her allegiance. On her large bosom she carried a cross that showed she had come on the holy pilgrimage, but she wanted any enemy of the Nazi régime to die a rapid and unpleasant death. No Christian sentiment about her. Whenever I ventured upon a criticism of Nazi legislation, she would turn to her friends—leaving me, a little ostentatiously, out of the conversation—and remind them that all this talk was quite unimportant. "Hitler will save us," she declared. "All this discussion doesn't matter, for Hitler will save us."

It would have been as futile to argue with her about Hitler as about God. She *knew*, and nothing else mattered.

A few days later, again, I hired a canoe and slid down between the hills of the Mosel —beech-covered where the hills faced north, soft blue with sprayed vines on every southern slope. Every few miles is an inn affiliated to the *Deutsche Kanu-Verband.* In most places I was the only traveller who worried about the luxury of a bed—even though it never cost more than two shillings a night ; everyone else slept under canvas. But this social difference did not prevent the people I met from asking two questions. One would be a friendly question about the day's trip. How had I managed over the rapids, or against the headwind between Berncastel and Graach, or over that long, calm stretch where the only movement on the water was caused by some fish rising for a lazy fly ? That would be the one question. The other was unvarying. Did I not think that Hitler was the greatest man who had ever lived ? Had I bluntly said " no," I should have felt like the man who sets out to destroy the illusion that Santa Claus comes down the chimney.

In one last respect Herr Hitler's instinct brought him thousands of followers. This

" purity of race " business. And here I cannot even pretend to understand the Nazi arguments, although a friend has sent me numerous articles on the subject with words of thirty letters in them. However much those of us who believe in the League of Nations idea may tell ourselves that people are alike all the world over, there are certain racial differences that would remain even if frontiers were to disappear. The German will always be a strange sort of mystic who, on certain points of argument, will disappear behind a smoke-screen of words that are unintelligible to everyone else. It is as inevitable as the volubility of the Italian. At times all this talk of Wotan and the old pagan gods leads one to expect that Germany will turn away from Christianity altogether, will throw it off as a foreign importation invented by Jews and Latins. The harvest thanksgiving on October 1st revived customs that had passed into disuse centuries ago. There is a strong movement on foot in the Protestant Church to abolish the teaching of the Old Testament altogether, since it deals with non-Aryans, and to revert to the heroes of Teutonic mythology. It is not a matter of chance that Wagner is the composer most in favour with the Nazis.

" Only when the pure Aryan arises once

more," I read in an odd little paper, the *Arische Rundschau*, " will the great collapse come to an end. Only then shall we stride forward into a new, sun-lit day. Only then shall we be freed from all internal and external needs." It is true, the article goes on to explain, that the blood of those who, centuries ago, came down from the north to " become masters of lands and people and to build up a magnificent culture " has been mixed with the blood of " inferior " races. Mediterranean, Mongolian, and Negro blood were mixed in Aryan veins owing mainly to the advent of the Jews, " the most dangerous element of all." All that can now be done to purify the race again is to make sure that Aryans only marry Aryans and to think so much about this question of the Aryan race that the soul will affect the body—that is as fair a summary of the argument as I can make —for " we all have the Aryan concealed in us. He is the image of God."

Similar extracts from quite responsible newspapers could be made by the thousand. But they would not help us to understand a perfectly sincere mysticism that has been one of the greatest sources of Nazi strength. A long time ago a Nazi explained to me proudly that, to be admitted as a member of the S.S., he had had to prove that his grandparents on both sides of

his family were pure Germans. And it is easy to see how this talk of blood and race has done its share in reinforcing an anti-Jewish feeling that has never been far below the surface in Germany, even though so many Jews had learnt to look upon Germany as the nearest approach to a fatherland that they possessed. In 1793 the philosopher Fichte wrote of the Jews that they were a hostile people " in permanent war with everyone else," and after the Napoleonic and the Franco-Prussian wars the pogrom spirit had swept over Germany. In 1879, *Germania*, one of the most reputable papers, wrote : " The German people have at last opened their eyes to the fact that the real struggle for culture, for civilisation, is the struggle against the domination of Jewish ideas and money. In every political movement the Jews play the most radical and revolutionary rôles, thus carrying on a war to the bitter end against everything that is legitimate, historical, and Christian in the national life of a people." And within four months of the armistice a group of officers at Potsdam had formed a " League of Fighters against Jewry." Long before Herr Hitler and his little party in Munich had drawn up their programme, leaflets were fluttering through Germany to blame the Jews for the German collapse. " For

fifty months," ran one of them, quoted in *Le Temps* of June 5th, 1933, " we have held out honourably and undefeated at the front. We return home after being foully betrayed, and what are we offered? The hegemony of the Jews. Their participation in the war has been negligible. Their participation in the Government is already eighty per cent. Their proportion of the population is one point five per cent. Wake up, comrades ! "

It mattered less that these figures were inaccurate than that they were believed. The Jewish population of Germany certainly does not number more than one per cent of the total, and, according to a report of the American Jewish Committee, there were only five Jews out of 255 Ministers in the nineteen Governments formed since the establishment of a German Republic, and the same report asserts that during the past six years there was not a single Jewish Cabinet member in the Reich. But, again, figures matter less than prejudices ; besides they can always be countered by other figures. The Nazi adviser on foreign affairs, Herr Rosenberg, for example, who once declared that " we must display the head of a well-known Jew on every telegraph post from Munich to Berlin," assured the members of the National Socialist Congress at Nuremberg that

" the proportion of Jewish barristers in Berlin was seventy per cent ; in most of the hospitals of Berlin the proportion of Jewish doctors varied between sixty per cent and ninety per cent. Nearly all the big banks were in Jewish hands, and the Press in Berlin and neighbourhood and in Frankfurt was almost entirely controlled by Jews."

We shall come to this Jewish problem more in detail a little farther on in this book.

. . . . . .

One more feature of Herr Hitler's propaganda must be mentioned. In every country where there is considerable unemployment there is a reaction against the emancipation of women. We know how often in our own country a woman may not remain on in a job if she gets married. This prejudice would in any case be stronger in Germany, where the percentage of unemployment has been more than twice as serious as ours. And, as might be expected, Herr Hitler, whose pre-occupation with this question of unemployment is constant, has very definite ideas about the rôle of woman. These ideas are all the more definite because two other factors add popularity to the demand that a woman's job is to stay at home and produce babies. One is the desire for as many

fine " Aryan " babies as possible to wipe out the influence of such Jews and other " inferior " people as remain in Germany. The other is the puritanical reaction—and in many ways a very healthy one – against this general laxness of morals to which attention has already been drawn. And so back with woman to her children, her church, and her kitchen. In the words of Dr. Emmy Wagner,[1] one of the principal organisers of the " reconstruction of German womanhood " : " National Socialism looks upon marriage and motherhood as woman's real mission. Woman must share her husband's thoughts and feelings, but she must never consider herself on an equal footing with man ; this, in our opinion, tends to destroy family life. . . . We don't forbid an occasional cigarette at home, but, if we don't change what we consider social disfigurements in public, all real culture will go to the wall. We are absolutely drastic in Government departments, and any employee of the National Socialist Party who ' makes up ' or smokes is instantly dismissed. . . . Furthermore, in the Hitler Girl Groups, each of which is in charge of a leader, any young girl between fifteen or sixteen who goes in for flirting with boy friends

[1] In an interview given to the *Sunday Graphic* of September 17th, 1933.

is not allowed to remain a member. This rule is designed to place sex in the background, and Frau Paula Siber, who is in charge of the German Ministry of the Interior which deals with the feminist question, insists that, during the period of adolescence, boys and girls should be segregated in order to allow them to develop in their own particular way. There should be no co-education. . . . We do not wish to force culture, and we shall always make use of persuasion. But if persuasion fails, then the women's movement, which is in direct touch with the Government, will insist that the State uses its unlimited authority for the benefit of the community."

I discussed these ideas with a young woman in shorts and a bathing-costume who crawled out of her tent to ask me for a cigarette during my canoe trip down the River Mosel. She was an enthusiastic supporter of Herr Hitler and I protested that she ought no longer to smoke in public. "There's exaggeration everywhere," she said. "Even in Heaven there'll be an excess of harp-playing. Don't worry too much about details or you'll lose sight of the horizon. And on the horizon we Nazis see a better Germany, but for the moment we've got fever and it upsets our view. Can you give me a match, please?"

I gave that girl a match, for she was talking sound sense. It is not enough to dig out the historical causes for those features of the Nazi programme which must appear to the non-German as exaggerated, unjust, or absurd. One has also to remember that the German Revolution has hardly begun. The fever still distorts and emphasises. And, since no revolutionary movement in history has contained more divergent or contradictory currents, we may have to wait for some time before we can pass a reasoned judgment upon the Nazi régime. Even deeds are not so important as results.

Let me try to sum up the elements contained in the Nazi creed at the moment when Hitler became Chancellor. The motives behind it can be set down, I think, under ten separate heads :

1. The Nazi movement was based on despair. It has been reckoned that at one time eighty-five per cent of Germany's unemployed were in its ranks. The rank and file was, and is, revolutionary, for neither the old imperial system nor the Weimar democracy brought both peace and prosperity.

2. Apart from this desire for something new, there has been an appeal to particularist prejudices. In the first place, there is the resentment against the Jews because Marx was a

Jew, because the leaders in the various new experiments in arts and morals—good and bad—have generally been Jews, because the Jews survived the inflation period more successfully than the Gentiles, and because the Jews are always and everywhere damned when things go wrong.

3. There was resentment against the war and inflation profiteers, who were accused of lining their own pockets at the expense of the worker. Although the movement had received large funds from industrialists who wanted to smash trade unions, that resentment of the rank and file remained. It was coupled with a vague feeling that materialism does not matter much anyway—a feeling that is behind the German Youth movement.

4. There was resentment against democracy and Socialism because the parliamentary system, with proportional representation, led to endless and selfish party bargaining, and because the whole "system" was mixed up with a treaty which every German considers unfair, although their instinctive reaction against it has been tremendously exaggerated for political purposes. Germany is also close enough to Russia for the fear of Communism to be widespread and genuine.

5. There was resentment against France, for

using this treaty to keep Germany in a position of inferiority. And this, in turn, emphasised the inevitable desire of a defeated nation to win next time. Since the Army had played so important a part in German life before the war, the reappearance of uniforms and brass bands gave people the confident hope that this period of confusion, bewilderment, and misunderstood liberty was coming to an end.

6. There was the mystical belief in Germany's especial mission in the world, and a consequent desire to keep Germany for the Germans. The same sort of belief can be found in most countries, including our own. Vice-Admiral J. E. T. Harper was only voicing the belief of a great number of British subjects when he wrote recently in the *Morning Post* that the British Navy is the "greatest Peace Machine the world has ever known."

7. In the same way there was a reaction against "internationalism," "pacifism," and the League of Nations, which had already started with a handicap in Germany owing to its connection with the Saar, Danzig, and Upper Silesia. But, here again, the same sentiment can be found, if with less reason, in other countries. I save myself the trouble of hunting through masses of cuttings by again quoting from the same article by the same

admiral. "The League of Nations Union has probably done more damage to our Empire than the whole force of Germany did in the Great War." Or what argument, changed to fit German circumstances, could better this extract from a manifesto issued by the British Navy League and the Air League: "This country has already led the way in disarmament by reducing its Navy, Army, and Air Force, and we feel that further reduction on our part, without parallel reductions on the part of other Powers, will not only jeopardise the security of this country and the Empire, but will imperil world peace by rendering it impossible for Great Britain to meet her great obligations."

8. There was a feeling that the emancipation of women had gone too far, and might, if not checked, lead to a reduction in the growth of the better elements of the population. This was mixed up with a genuine puritanical reaction against the disappearance of all the old moral values in the chaos caused by the war and the inflation.

9. There was the great hope that the Hitler régime would diminish the army of unemployed, and this, in its turn, was mixed up with a belief that Germany must come to depend less upon an unstable foreign market and more

upon the production of her own food and other needs.

10. There was a strong reaction against the materialism of the age.

11. And lastly there was the widespread desire for a strong leader.

Now there is a certain justification for the prejudices and beliefs behind each of those eleven points. Non-Germans can understand them even when they do not agree with them. To what extent they are exaggerated and carried out with excessive or suicidal violence is another matter altogether. Many of us who have loved Germany in the past feel almost as though some chemical change had taken place in German blood. Others believe that the events which have taken place in Germany during the past twenty years have been so confusing and so momentous that it would be unjust to expect the reactions of the people to be the same as our own.

So much for the past. This was the Nazi movement that had carried to the Chancellorship of the German Reich a self-educated Austrian lance-corporal who only became a German citizen in 1932 (when he automatically received German citizenship on his appointment as Professor of Pedagogics at Brunswick Technical College). " Whatever fate may

hold in store for Herr Hitler," wrote M. Henri Rollin in *Le Temps* of June 5th, 1933, "one may take it for granted that the ideas he has been hammering into German heads for years will influence affairs for a long time to come, and that neither Moscow nor the big German industrialists or landowners will have reason to rejoice over his advent to power."

And that is about as far as it is safe to prophesy.

CHAPTER V

HITLER IN OFFICE

TO THE question, "What is Hitler going to do?" the only possible reply still is: "God alone knows." The one bond of union between the millions of men who look to him as their leader has been the desire to overthrow a system of government which, to their mind, was unsuitable for their country. Upon that there was general agreement; upon the form of government that would take its place there was likely to be such disagreement that the matter was hardly ever discussed. This lack of plan is not uncommon in revolutions, and a close friend of Signor Mussolini's once told me that when he came into power he could at first think of nothing to do with his army of blackshirts except to turn their attention to sports clubs, rather along the line of the Czech "Sokols"—whereas, of course, his whole system of government has been built up around them. Herr Hitler's difficulty in this respect is much greater, for there are always dangers about disbanding an army, and yet Germany's

ex-enemies very naturally would object to the conversion of the S.A. and S.S. men into an official militia. Besides, no revolution in history can have contained so many people of conflicting ideas as the National Socialist Revolution in Germany.

There are, as far as one can see, three main tendencies that are making themselves felt. It is difficult to know how much Hitler depends upon the people around him, and how much they depend upon him—difficult to know, in other words, whether he is just an animated and earnest figurehead or whether he has his own ideas of government and seeks people who feel the same way as he does. And consequently it is still dangerous to prophesy which tendency is going to win.

There are, in the first place, the people on the Right, the industrialists who have helped him in the past so that they might use him for their own ends. Then there are their opponents, young men of the middle or working classes who mean the Hitler movement to be a revolution and not a reaction. Thirdly, there are those whose only motive is hate, men so embittered by their defeat in war and by a long period of government by people whom they despised that they have no generous or constructive motives left. It is men in this third

category whose bullyings and beatings have done so much to discredit the whole movement while the struggle goes on behind the scenes to decide whether Hitler shall speak for the Right or the Left.

If you turn hopefully to the famous twenty-five points of the Hitler programme drawn up in 1920, you will find that they can be divided up into five sections—the first is to obtain power ; the second, to destroy " Marxism " ; the third, to " Nazify " the whole State ; the fourth, to unite all German-speaking peoples ; and the fifth, to purify the race by denationalising everybody in whose veins runs Jewish or other " non-Aryan " blood. In this programme, as in all Nazi literature, it is the race which is important, not the nation. How the " union of all Germans, on the principle of the self-determination of peoples, in one Greater Germany," is to take place without war is not explained, but foreign affairs must be dealt with later. As Herr Hitler said on January 1st, 1933 : " In a country containing six million Communists, seven and a half million Socialists, and a further six millions more or less infected with pacifism, it would be better to drop all talk about rearmament and equality of rights. The combating of Germany's internal decay is a *sine qua non* of her reconstruction."

"Marxism" was destroyed with a rapidity that made the world wonder. For roughly a year and a half after he became Prime Minister, Signor Mussolini's Government was a coalition one, with the Fascists in a minority, and there were thirty-five Fascists in a chamber of over five hundred deputies. Herr Hitler became Chancellor on January 30th, 1933, with one hundred and ninety-five Nazis in a Reichstag of five hundred and eighty-two deputies. His alliance with the Nationalists gave him a further fifty-one supporters, and elections to be held on March 5th were expected to increase his strength. But it was very uncertain that he would have an absolute majority. The Reichstag fire on February 27th gave him his chance, and he certainly took it. The Communists were at once accused of causing it, and within twenty-four hours all their leaders were safely in gaol. The Social-Democrats stood to gain as little as the Communists from such a fire at such a time, and their dislike of the Communists would certainly exclude them from any action in which the Communists were involved. But their newspapers were suppressed, their offices were occupied, and those of them who did not leave the country in time were arrested by the score and hurried off to share the pleasures of life in concentration camps with

any Jews, pacifists, or others who might conceivably oppose the Nazi "*Totalitätstaat.*" The other parties were encouraged to dissolve themselves, and hastened to do so with such a lack of dignity that they would stand small chance of a successful revival even if, by some miracle, the National Socialist movement were to disappear from the world to-morrow.

The Nationalists held on the longest. They thought, to begin with, that they were safe, for Herr Hugenberg, the blue-eyed boy of the Ruhr industrialists and the East Prussian landowners, was made Minister of Economics and Agriculture. What could be better? Financially the interests of these two groups were opposed, because the landowners wanted high import duties on food so that they could make a fat profit out of the produce of their poor soil, whereas the industrialists wanted cheap food so that they could pay the worker less and thus more easily undersell their rivals abroad. Also there was and still is, a ceaseless conflict between the indebted landowners and the industrialists who held the mortgages. Sooner or later Hugenberg, in his desire to serve them both, would have been split in twain, but for the moment all that mattered was that they and their class should gain and keep control of this Nazi movement which had

so providentially put a stop to Schleicher's flirtations with trade unionists and threats to break up East Prussian estates.

The Italian industrialists who, for much the same reasons, put up money to help Signor Mussolini to the premiership have often regretted their not-altogether-disinterested generosity. It is true their businesses had been brought near to bankruptcy by constant strikes, and one of Mussolini's earlier actions was to forbid strikes and lock-outs and to substitute compulsory arbitration. But, in almost every case when there were attempts to lower wages, the arbitrators have decided in favour of the workers. And, by methods that sometimes approach blackmail, the Fascists have won surprisingly large financial support from wealthy landowners for all sorts of schemes to drain land, supply water or electricity, and in other ways improve the lot of their peasant tenants or neighbours. I am firmly convinced that the German industrialists and landowners have made a much greater error of judgment. Whatever else may happen in Germany, their heyday is over.

Some weeks before Herr Hugenberg, their greatest hope, was driven to resign, I went for a very late lunch to the gigantic ground-floor restaurant of the Kaiserhof Hotel. The place

was empty save for a few waiters and one guest. A little man who sat in solitude and isolation in the very middle of the room. A little man with bristly hair and glasses. Herr Hugenberg, the man who thought to control Hitler. For the first time I felt a real sympathy for this lonely little man surrounded by empty tables, and it seems quite probable that a similar fate will come Herr von Papen's way when his usefulness to the Nazi movement comes to an end. He has made fiery speeches about the horror of dying in one's bed and the glory of producing children who can lay down their lives for Germany, but he is not of the movement, and never will be. He has been very useful—notably in drawing up the Concordat which gave the Nazis the Vatican's seal of respectability—but his uses may come to an end, and he with them.

As for uniting all German-speaking peoples, Herr Hitler cannot grumble about his progress inside the present frontiers of Germany. One afternoon in March the members of the Reichstag, sitting in the Kroll Opera House opposite the burnt-out skeleton of the Reichstag building, passed an Enabling Bill to give him full powers for four years. Herr Hitler sat in the front row where the first violins should have been. Captain Goering, as President of

the Reichstag, sat far back and high up, more or less where one would have looked for the big drum. The orchestra stalls were crowded with Nazi deputies in uniform, with a block of sullen, dark-coated Socialists on their right. At one moment during the debate Hitler looked up as though he were listening intently to some faint noise. I wondered whether he could hear—as I could in my remote gallery—the shouts of thousands of young Nazis who were waiting outside. "*Wir fordern das Ermächtigungsgesetz*" ("We want full powers for the Government"), they yelled. They certainly got them.

That Enabling Bill was passed on March 23rd. On April 7th a decree was passed which wiped out the autonomy of the different States of Germany by the appointment of *Reichsstatthalter*, or governors, whose word was much more law than anything laid down by the local Governments. Bismarck, when he united Germany, had tried in vain to lessen the power of these governments. After the armistice when their respective kings and grand dukes had followed the Kaiser into exile, the Weimar Constitution did away with many of their privileges. Hitler's *Statthalter* have done the rest. Had there been a few hours of delay, Bavaria would probably have proclaimed a

king, for she greatly resented the growing power of Protestant Prussia ; she would almost certainly have broken away long ago if the French, the Italians, and others had not objected so strongly to the *Anschluss* with Austria, which would have given Europe a new Austro-Bavarian Catholic kingdom. But "ifs" do not matter now. Legally, Germany is united for the first time in her existence, and the territory governed through these *Statthalter* will not even correspond with the old German States. That change is, perhaps, the most important that Herr Hitler has yet brought about.

"Nazifying" the State has been a little more difficult. Thousands upon thousands of officials have been retired on pension and Nazis have taken their places. The campaign against the Jews has left great gaps in the professions that are being filled up by Nazis. Nazis at first sat themselves down in scores of offices and tried to take over, but the whole economic system showed such signs of dislocation in consequence that they had to be checked, and checked so ruthlessly that a good many S.A. men had to follow their enemies into concentration camps. The attempt by untrained enthusiasts to run the complicated financial machine would have brought immediate

disaster, so men like Dr. Schacht and Dr. Kurt Schmitt (the minister of Economics) were brought in to advise or control. Any plan to lessen the power of the big capitalists, and thereby to content the more radical wing of the Nazis, had to be postponed. But postponement, as we shall see later, does not necessarily mean abandonment.

The determination to "purify" the race brings us to that side of Nazi activity which, in foreign eyes, is least excusable and comprehensible. Just as the "atrocity" side of the Russian and Italian Revolutions made it impossible for most of us at the time to realise that some big social change was taking place, so the treatment of Jews and pacifists has filled most of us with a horror which destroys all thought that the German Revolution may lead to even greater social changes than the Russian Revolution of 1917. Personally I am absolutely convinced that this is so. I cannot even pretend to guess how Germany will look in five years' time, but one of the most highly cultivated peoples in the world cannot come unchanged through four years of war followed by fifteen years of defeat, revolution, inflation, unexpected and unwanted liberty, and a second revolution.

This book, as I fear many readers will notice,

has had to be written in a hurry. It would not appear for months if I were to read all the literature that has been sent me about the Jewish question. It would never appear if I were to attempt to check the conflicting figures that have been published. And, in one way, these figures are unimportant. There is no difference of principle between the beating of ten men and of a hundred, between turning a thousand men out of their jobs and a hundred thousand. It all boils down to this : that the German Government of the day believe that the strength of Germany depends upon the purity of German blood. Every " non-Aryan " is looked upon as a foreigner ; being a foreigner, he must be excluded from a lot of positions that should be reserved for Germans. He cannot, for example, expect to occupy an important post in the Civil Service. That is a legitimate point of view. What is illegitimate is the way in which this point of view has, in many cases, been put before the victim.

The Germans argue that although the Jews only formed roughly one per cent of the population at the outbreak of the Nazi Revolution—and had done so for many years past—they had become much more obvious and more aggressive since 1918, either because they obtained much more influential positions in

the country or because they belonged to the most backward section of the Jewish race and came into the country from Galicia in the chaos following upon the war. I personally am conscious of no anti-Semitic feeling, but, after a visit or two to the Jewish quarters in Cracow or Kishineff, I should be tempted to agree, were I in power in Germany (and I thank God I am not !), to limit the immigration of these people very strictly indeed. I should do so, not because I felt anti-Jewish, but because they have lived for so long under oppression that their standard and their methods of living would undermine the standard of life of my own people. In other words, although I disagree absolutely and entirely with the German Government's Jewish policy, and have said so to every influential German I have met since the Hitler revolution, I can understand it to a certain extent.

The Jews, the argument goes on, had become much more obvious because so many of them had obtained important positions. According to one article that reached me in a roundabout way, but that came, I suspect, from Dr. Goebbels's new Ministry of Propaganda, there were nine Jews in the first Revolutionary Government after the armistice. Three Jews were members of the special court

to try Hindenburg and Ludendorff after the war was over. In 1928, fifteen Jews shared 718 directorships of German companies. In 1931, in the University of Breslau, twenty-five per cent of the professors in the philosophical faculty, over forty-seven per cent in the law school, and forty-five per cent in the medical school were Jews. In Berlin, fifty-two per cent of the practising physicians and 1,925 of the 3,450 barristers were Jews. Of the twenty-nine theatre directors in Berlin, twenty-three were Jewish. Nearly eighty-nine per cent of the city's stockbrokers were Jewish. The police commissioner and vice-commissioner in Berlin both had Jewish blood in their veins. And, against this increasing Jewish share in the control of the State, Germans like to remind you that eighteen per cent of the German soldiers and only seven point five per cent of the Jewish ones fell in the war. And so on, and so on. Other pamphlets and other articles may give different figures—they depend in some cases upon whether the possession of three "Aryan" grandparents or the fact that you may be a baptised Christian saves you from being condemned as a Jew. But the important thing is not whether the figures are rigidly correct, but that the German people believe them to be so.

The campaign against the Jews will continue, and the fate of Jewish refugees will present the other European States with a problem nearly as grave as that of the Russian refugees after the Bolshevik Revolution. There were at least ten times as many Russians, but they came at a time when unemployment did not haunt us as it does now. The problem will influence our opinion of Germany even more than it did our opinion of Russia, for few of us were on friendly terms with Russian princesses and grand dukes, while most of us who have ever been to Germany have among our personal friends people who are now in concentration camps or in exile. Besides, the Russian aristocrats were so much more responsible for their fate than are the little Jewish shopkeepers who are among the victims of the present Revolution.

April 1st, 1933, was a day which no German Jew will forget. The day of the boycott ! If its object was to preach hatred, it certainly succeeded. There were amazingly few " incidents." I visited almost every district in Berlin, the poorest as well as the richest, and I saw no man beaten or molested, but I came back to my hotel so overwhelmed with shame that people could be proud of so much bullying that I almost wept ; just as I had done thirteen years before when the French marched into

Frankfurt. The person who, in my experience, came the nearest to being beaten was myself, and that occurred when my temper overcame my cowardice and I protested against half a dozen Nazis who strode into a flower-shop on the Kurfürstendamm and cursed a young girl in charge because she had not closed the shop down. Whether I should have been molested I never found out, for my cowardice came back and I hurriedly produced my passport to prove I was a foreigner. But in a way the boycott was all the more depressing for being orderly. It was less excusable than an exhibition of schoolboy bullying would have been. And there were two thousand years of history in the eyes of the Jews who peered out through their barred shop doors while young Nazis pasted up insults over their windows.

The anti-Jewish campaign will go on, for the belief in the " Aryan " race is one of the most profound held by the Nazi leaders. And yet it will prove the greatest weakness of the Revolution, for nothing lasting was ever built on hatred. Herr Alfred Rosenberg, the Chancellor's adviser on foreign affairs, declared, in a speech before the National Socialist Party Congress in Nuremberg, that " nobody in Germany has ever been persecuted for his religious opinions. The German Government,

in the most chivalrous way possible, have excluded from the percentage [of Jews turned out of their jobs] those Jews who fought at the front or who lost a father or a son in the war. One cannot ask more from a tortured people placed under a rigid constraint from abroad without demanding that she shall never be true to herself." But how are these words to be reconciled with deeds?

Up to the present time (October 1933) measures have already been adopted to limit the employment of "non-Aryans" in very drastic ways. I take the following details from the September issue of *Industrial and Labour Information*, published by the International Labour Office in Geneva. The Act of April 7th, 1933, provides that any person in the public service who is not of "Aryan" descent shall be dismissed or, if entitled to a pension, retired. "A person is considered to be 'non-Aryan' even if only one of his parents or grandparents is or was of the Jewish religion. . . . An exception is allowed in respect of 'non-Aryans' who were established civil servants before August 1st, 1914, those who fought at the front during the war on behalf of Germany or one of her allies . . . and those who lost a parent or son in the war.—The scope of this Act is wider than its title implies, since it applies not only to

established officials, but to workers and salaried employees[1] in the service of the Federal Government, State or local authorities, public corporations and institutions or undertakings of the same standing, incorporated associations and other bodies except religious bodies, undertakings of which at least half the capital belongs to public corporations, and all social insurance institutions. The third Order also extends the scope of the Act to the judicature, solicitors, the teaching profession, including the staff of universities and higher schools (with the exception of Jewish teachers in Jewish schools or those authorised under current legislation to teach the Jewish religion in other public schools), the police and national militia (except officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers), and persons holding honorary posts. The position of 'non-Aryans' holding honorary posts was defined by a special order of May 18th, 1933, which provides that no persons of 'non-Aryan' descent may be allowed to perform honorary functions, particularly in the administration of social insurance and relief to war victims. Such persons are also prohibited from acting as counsel for or representing claimants other

[1] A later order of July 7th, 1933, allows exemption in respect of "non-Aryan" workers and employees who have been in administrative employment since August 1st, 1914.

than their own relatives in their relations with these institutions. In addition to these measures, the Act of June 30th, 1933, relating especially to public servants, provides that no person of ' non-Aryan ' descent may henceforth become a civil servant, and any civil servant who is married to or marries a ' non-Aryan ' must be dismissed."

Life is not much more attractive in the professions. All " non-Aryan " doctors must be removed from the panel of sickness insurance fund doctors unless they served at the front or in a military hospital for infectious diseases during the war, or lost a father or a son, and apparently this favour is only to apply to doctors who have practised continuously since 1914.

" It may further be noted that the Order prohibits ' non-Aryan ' doctors who are not covered by any of the above exemptions, and are therefore liable to be struck off the panel, from refusing their services pending official notification that they have been relieved from their functions. Another Decree of June 22nd, 1933, relates to medical experts and medical advisers serving on institutions for social insurance or relief to war victims. All medical experts must in future be of ' Aryan ' descent or be covered by one of the exceptions specified

in the Civil Service Act. In regard to medical advisers, ' non-Aryans ' may retain their posts only if they are seriously disabled as a result of the war.—While the Decree mentioned above debars ' non-Aryan ' doctors from working for the official sickness insurance funds, they have been similarly eliminated from the subsidiary funds by an agreement made on July 26th, 1933, between the Federation of Commercial Employees' Sickness Funds and the German Medical Association (*Hartmannsbund*) providing that the Medical Association shall remove from its membership roll the names of all doctors who fail to fulfil the conditions required of doctors to the official funds. Finally, the activities of ' non-Aryan ' doctors in the field of private insurance have also been very severely restricted in consequence of an agreement concluded between the Association of German Sickness Insurance Companies and the representatives of the medical profession. In future the companies will not pay the fees of ' non-Aryan ' doctors unless the patient who had recourse to their services is also of ' non-Aryan ' descent, and no ' non-Aryan ' doctors will henceforth be employed as medical advisers.—A recent decision of the Commissioner for the reorganisation of the medical associations prohibits ' Aryan ' doctors from

representing or being represented by 'non-Aryans' and the transfer of patients between 'Aryan' and 'non-Aryan' doctors. 'Aryan' doctors may not call 'non-Aryans' into consultation except in respect of a 'non-Aryan' patient insured under sickness insurance legislation."

The same rules apply to dentists. An Act of April 7th, 1933, authorised the competent organ of the judicature to expel from the Bar all "non-Aryans" as defined by the Civil Service Act. Apparently the conditions laid down in this Act will still leave 1,200 of the 1,925 Jewish barristers in Berlin, and this is so much more favourable than the original idea —that the number should be limited to 34, on the basis that the Jews form only one per cent of the population and there are some 3,450 barristers in Berlin—that it is looked upon as being a very generous measure.

Licensed patent agents, taxation experts, and customs agents also come off pretty badly, and great steps are being taken to "Aryanise" the film industry. The Joint Employment Exchange for Entertainment Artistes, the only authorised employment agency, decided on July 13th, 1933, that all film directors, producers, authors, cameramen, set-builders, and so on must immediately produce documents to

prove their racial origin, and no members of the profession will be considered for engagement unless they are of " Aryan " descent.

Lastly, there is the very important subject of schooling. " The Act of April 25th, 1933, to prevent the overcrowding of secondary and higher schools also indirectly restricts the future admission of ' non-Aryans ' to any professions for which an average or higher education is necessary. This Act introduces a quota for admission to all secondary and higher public and private schools, except compulsory schools. In regard to the admission of new pupils, a first Order in execution of the Act fixed the proportion of ' non-Aryan ' students or pupils uniformly throughout the country at one point five per cent of the total number. For those whose education is in progress the proportion may not exceed five per cent, and must be reduced if it is above this figure at present. It is also provided that the quota may be applied separately in each of the different scientific or occupational branches of the schools, higher schools, or university faculties. The definition of the term ' non-Aryan ' is the same as that laid down in the Civil Service Act, but an additional exception is allowed in respect of young persons with one ' non-Aryan ' parent or grandparent, provided that their

parents' marriage took place before the Act came into force."

And now a word as to method. There is nothing to be gained by printing long accounts of the sufferings of individual victims. The destructive side of the German Revolution has been so widely commented upon outside Germany that it already leads many people to condemn the whole German race as uncivilised and deserving of all that was said or written against it in the heat and bitterness of the last war. This book has two aims that are not in every case compatible with each other: it seeks to give an objective account of the German Revolution and also to plead for a little more patience and understanding on our part before we set ourselves up to judge it. There is enough hatred in the world already to justify me in writing as little as possible which might add to its volume. I might quote from dozens of accounts of Nazi brutality in this business of making Germany fit for "Aryan" heroes to live in. I prefer to take only two of the less sensational examples.

The one comes from an account, reprinted in *The Times* of September 13th, 1933, given by the *Dortmunder General Anzeiger*, of the treatment meted out to Herr Heinrich Hirtsiefer, who was for eleven years Prussian

Minister for Welfare, and who was paraded through the streets of Essen by two S.A. battalion commanders. The *Dortmunder General Anzeiger* used to have a European reputation before it was taken over by Nazis. Here is its description :

" There was great rejoicing at the return of Heinrich Hirtsiefer, who did not look as if he had suffered hunger, for his stomach had increased rather than diminished. In order to let the population share in the joy of seeing him again, a propaganda procession was quickly organised for this most beloved of all Ministers. The procession passed through the streets of the Old Town during the afternoon : Heinrich had put up an umbrella as protection against the sun and wore on his stomach a neat placard with the words, ' I am the hunger-victim Hirtsiefer.' He was escorted by S.A. battalion commander Wolters and S.S. battalion commander Schulz. And how the Esseners rejoiced to see Heinrich again ! Especially the youngsters, who formed the guard of honour. Heinrich need not complain of lack of popularity after this procession."

My second extract comes from a letter, published in *The Times* of October 14th, from Major-General Sir Neill Malcolm, and I quote from it because everybody who has met Sir

Neill Malcolm must have appreciated his reluctance to believe ill of anybody and his sanity of judgment.

" I believe," writes Sir Neill, " that there are very many right-minded Germans who know little or nothing of the administration of the concentration camps ; I believe there are others who do know and heartily disapprove ; I believe there are even members of the Government who are not fully informed. It is to these high-minded members of the German race that I would address this appeal.

" I do not propose to level general accusations at the whole administration of the camps, for we know from our experience of the war that there are likely to be both good and bad among the commandants and that probably the good predominate. But there are the bad.

" More good will probably be done by taking up a particular case, and it is for that reason that I select the treatment of Herr Ebert, son of the first President of the German Republic, whose acquaintance I had the good fortune to make in the troublous times immediately after the war, and to whom Germans owe far more than many of them are now willing to admit.

" Reliable information has recently reached this country that on September 17th Herr

Ebert and seventeen other prisoners were removed from Oranienburg Camp to a newly enlarged camp at Börgemoor bei Papenburg. Herr Ebert and Herr Heilmann were at once singled out for special treatment, were beaten with rifle butts, and struck until their faces were covered with blood. At the same time Ebert was made to shout repeatedly, '*Mein Vater war der Volksverführer*' ('My father was the misleader of his country'). Herr Heilmann has suffered even more cruelly.

"Further information is to the effect that, in spite of having been rendered unconscious on more than one occasion, Herr Ebert shows, or did show until quite recently, no sign of intimidation; a spirit which was no doubt extremely irritating to his tormentors. How long any man can stand up against such organised brutality is doubtful.

"It has been suggested that a committee of investigation might be sent either by the League of Nations or by this country to report upon these concentration camps. Personally, I should prefer that the matter should be taken up by that large mass of right-minded Germans to which I have already referred.

"The good name of their country is at stake."

Nothing can be said by way of excuse (and

it is especially doubtful whether German apologists help their country by excuse or denial when they take foreign *noms-de-plume* in order to persuade the unwary reader that they are completely impartial). There is just this to be said by way of explanation : apart from the general causes for the present neurasthenic condition of Germany, there are one or two reasons for the number of incidents in which Jews have been the victims. The S.A. men have for years been taught to hate, and the hatred has been concentrated against the Jews. For this hatred, of course, the leaders are to blame. You cannot work up a revolutionary movement without advocating action against somebody, but there have been very few signs that the leaders have tried to check this movement now that they are in power. Many S.A. men guilty of excesses have been sent to concentration camps as prisoners, but their arrest does not produce the needed effect on others, because no details are printed in the Press.

A second point is that, in the great majority of cases of beating and so on, the bullies appear to be very young men. The vein of sadism runs deeper in the German character than in that of most other peoples, as is proved by the quantity of their semi-medical, semi-erotic literature long before " Marxism " came to

"undermine" their characters. I am not sure that in any country overgrown schoolboys would deal particularly kindly with men whom they have been taught to look upon as the worst enemies of their nation, and over whom they have complete and unlimited power, power of life and death. For it has to be remembered that the state of mind in Germany to-day is exactly that which was found in all countries during the war. That does not mean that the Germans want war, or even think of war, against some other country; whether they do or not is a subject which will be dealt with later. But it does mean that they look upon Jews and Communists in just the same way as they looked upon the French, or as the French looked upon them in 1914 and 1915. One of the dirtiest things about war is the way in which it so distorts the magnificent passion of patriotism that kindly old Englishwomen believe they are doing right in hounding some other equally kindly old woman into an internment camp because she has a German name. We have to go back to all those wartime pettinesses we would rather forget before we can begin to understand the behaviour of many Nazis to-day.

A third and very important point is that the great majority of Germans, even the majority

in the S.A. troops, have no idea of these atrocities that have so lowered the reputation of Germany abroad. Most accounts have reached England through German refugees who have got out of the country in time. Their former neighbours do not know what has become of them, and feel it wise not to be too persistent in their enquiries. A German who has had difficulties with the S.A. is much less likely to talk to another German about them than to a foreigner. The wireless and the newspapers, both very strictly controlled, insist so often that this *Greuel propaganda* is entirely invented by hostile Jews that the average German comes sincerely to believe it. In the early days after the Reichstag fire, stories were put about, and reported in the foreign Press by Berlin correspondents who could get no denial from the authorities, of the murder of several prominent Communists who were later proved to be alive. And thus it became possible to discredit in the eyes of the German public British journalists who, to my own certain knowledge, have been scrupulously careful to check up their information, and who, in almost every case, have shown a courage to which I am glad to pay this small tribute. The *Daily Herald* and the *Manchester Guardian* have been banned in Germany for months, but the other British daily

papers are displayed ostentatiously on the bookstalls, anti-Hitler headlines and all. Their sale has, I believe, greatly increased, but, even so, they can reach only a very small fraction of the German public. If you do convince a German that all these stories of atrocities are not malicious inventions, he may get genuinely and deeply distressed, but he will argue that most of the Nazis he sees and knows are decent fellows, and that Hitler will put a stop to all that sort of thing when he hears about it. Besides, nearly 400 Nazis were killed during their struggle for power (the number of Communists is forgotten or never given), and a few S.A. men must "get a bit of their own back." It will be all right when Hitler knows. *Heil Hitler!*

I suppose Hitler does know. Someone who is generally very well informed told me that, when the Führer was first given evidence of "incidents" caused by his S.A. men, he showed great distress, and made a remark which sounds odd from a man who has almost unlimited power and influence if he cares to use them. "I had not wanted that sort of thing," he said (or is supposed to have said). Some months ago a Viennese newspaper published an article by an engraver, Reinhold Hanisch, who claims to have known Herr Hitler very well in his Vienna days. At that time, according to this article,

the future Chancellor condemned pogroms in Russia because " one can hate in the individual but not in the mass."

One last point about the Jews. A recent Jewish congress in Geneva estimated the total number of Jewish refugees at about 50,000. Even if this figure be doubled, there are half a million Jews who still remain in Germany—that figure, in its turn, must certainly be doubled if Jewish grandmothers and grandfathers now have to be taken into account. Many of these Jews, and especially those in the liberal professions, are having a very unpleasant time of it, for an unofficial boycott can drive them into the bankruptcy court. But I sometimes wonder whether their lot is improved by the concentration of public opinion upon the misfortunes of the ten per cent who got out of the country in time.

Last September a *Judische Kulturbund*, with its own Jewish Theatre, was formed in Berlin. The chief of the foreign service of the largest newspaper organisation in Germany is a Jew. One of the leading members of the German delegation to the League of Nations Assembly of 1933 was a Jew. And men like Dr. Goebbels are so fond of insisting that the present anti-Jewish campaign is only temporary that one feels its duration and its bitterness many depend very directly upon the influence of the exiles.

CHAPTER VI

"MEN MUST WORK"

A MOVEMENT which depends so much upon popular enthusiasm as National Socialism, which appeals to emotion rather than to reason, must achieve striking success or degenerate into an unpopular tyranny that clings to power until another revolution destroys it. The contradictory tendencies that must exist in the present German Government are responsible for a delay in formulating a clear-cut programme which is undoubtedly a danger to National Socialism. Signor Mussolini had good luck, since a wave of economic prosperity flooded the world almost as soon as he came into power. Herr Hitler has had bad luck so far, since the economic crisis, and the economic nationalism that has both caused and resulted from it, must make it so much more difficult to carry out even the most reasonable plans for reconstruction. His fate may be decided less by his own actions than by the duration of the present slight improvement in world trade. Meanwhile he did his best to protect

himself last March by declaring that he needed four years in which to put Germany on her feet. His warning was a wise one. Followed by all this careful propaganda to prove that the old régime was utterly corrupt, by the arrest of so many important people on charges of misappropriation of public funds, it has taught many Nazis the virtue of patience. "If Hitler can clear up this appalling mess in four years," a young enthusiast said to me recently, "he will have performed a miracle." Especially among people who in the normal way are accustomed to use their intellects as well as their emotions, there has been, during the past three or four months, a definite swing towards pessimism and disappointment. But this change cannot influence German policy while it does not spread to the masses, and it shows few signs of doing so.

It has been explained that the number of Nazi supporters has varied in much the same proportion as the number of unemployed. The movement will succeed or fail by the success or failure of its efforts to wipe out unemployment. Dr. Goebbels, the first peace-time Minister of Propaganda in Europe, whips up hope by declaring that there will be employment for everybody in less than two years. But if events falsify that promise it will still be possible to

remind discontents that the leader demanded four years.

When I interviewed Herr Hitler, I asked him about his plans for introducing compulsory labour. People abroad, I reminded him, feared that this system was a revival of militarism, upon which he became frankly annoyed. "Why will people abroad not realise," he demanded, "that I have no time to worry about foreign politics? There is only one problem that occupies all my attention—how to reduce unemployment. For men must work."

No country can be healthy, Hitler declared, in which any considerable section of the inhabitants does not work—either because these people are rich and do not need to work, or because they need work but cannot find it. In such a country the economic balance was all wrong; still worse, however, was the effect upon its morals. It is perhaps better to get men to build a house and then pull it down again than to leave them to loaf about the streets, forgetting how to use their brains and hands.

"How am I to give men jobs?" asked Hitler. "I cannot create work for them in or near towns, because it would be absurd for the State to enter into competition with private

enterprise. There are jobs to be done—marshes to be reclaimed, moorlands to be made cultivable, motor-roads to be built—but to do them I must move the men a long way from their homes. I cannot afford to pay them more than a few pence a day, and I cannot afford to have them running around the countryside getting into mischief. Often there is no local accommodation for them, and they have to live in huts. I must put them under discipline, and strict discipline as well. Their work is hard, but it is healthy. It gives them the sort of comradeship they or their elder brothers knew during the war. And, above all, it does away with class distinctions and differences. It unites the people. It must be made compulsory, but is that militarism ? "

There was no need for me to reply, for Hitler never waited for me to do so. He went on about this abolition of class distinctions which is one of the principal ambitions of the Nazi movement. It had already been encouraged by the voluntary labour service, which had made great strides even before Hitler came into power. In the summer of 1930 there were only 150 of these volunteers ; in the autumn of 1932 there were 250,000. The voluntary system has now been abandoned (since the National Socialists have taken over every form of Youth

movement) and between 300,000 and 350,000 young men are to be conscripted for compulsory service on January 1st. The original idea had been that more than one million young men would be called upon each year, and the scheme should have been put into operation months ago. But every pfennig is needed for plans that reduce unemployment and do not merely give temporary occupation to the unemployed. However, it is hoped to double the January figure on June 1st. The young men in this service have to sign on for forty weeks. During that period they receive only eight days' leave, they have to be up at 5 a.m. to do manual labour for six hours a day, and to use their brains listening to lectures for three. The Government makes a grant of two marks a day, about one half of which is spent on food, and about thirty pfennig of which comes to the worker in pay—the rest pays for equipment and materials. The life is very hard, but the only men I have talked to who have worked in the voluntary camps have certainly preferred life in them to the misery of being out of work and alone.

The French army (unlike the old German army or the Reichswehr of to-day) is an army of the people. That is to say, there is no officer class except in a professional sense, and an

officer's stripes do not imply any social superiority. The same remarks certainly apply to the German Labour Service, which, if and when it becomes compulsory and general, will be the greatest leveller that country of ranks and titles has ever known. As an example, one might quote the fact that law students are compelled to work in one of these camps in order to get a better understanding of their fellow men, and a would-be magistrate's career depends almost as much upon the report of his behaviour in camp as upon his examination papers.

"The millions who have been split up into professions," said the Chancellor in his May Day speech, "and kept apart by artificial class distinctions, who, foolishly clinging to profession and status, cannot understand each other any longer, must find once more the way to each other. . . . It is no use telling the labourer how valuable he is, or proving to the peasant the necessity of his existence. It is no use going to the intellectual, to the brain worker, in order to tell him how important he is. What is necessary is to teach each class and profession the importance of the others. For this reason we wish to go to the cities and explain to them the nature and the necessity of the German

peasantry, and to go into the country and to our intellectuals and tell them how important the German labourer is. We want to go to the labourer and to the peasant and teach them that without a German intellectual class there can be no German life, that they all form together one mighty body corporate; brain, spirit and fist; labourer, peasant and professional man. . . . We wish, at a time when millions of us are living without understanding of the importance of manual labour, to teach the German nation once more, through the institution of labour service, that manual labour does not degrade or dishonour but rather does honour to everyone who performs it faithfully and conscientiously, as does any other work. It is our firm determination that every German, be he who he may, rich or poor, son of a professional man or of a factory worker, shall once in his life be a manual labourer, in order that he may learn what manual labour is and that he may be able more easily to command because he himself has learned to obey."

Whether at the same time the organisation of compulsory labour will turn the youth of the country into soldiers again is another matter. Probably it will if the grievances which Germany nurses cannot be met and dissipated. It

does not help much to argue that these grievances are without justification if, as is generally the case in Germany, they are genuinely believed. Besides, mistakes and injustices do exist in the Versailles Treaty, and we know it. The British proposals now before the Disarmament Conference provide that the German Reichswehr, a small professional army, shall be replaced by a short-service conscripted army. It was owing to British insistence at Versailles that conscription in Germany was wiped out, and now we are doing our best to put it back again—but only, alas, after it has led, as it was bound to do, to a whole series of unofficial armies and to a struggle between them in which Hitler's S.A. men have been victorious. Only, too, after the prohibition of military service has made it appear much more attractive than it did to a generation that was compelled to march up and down the barrack square without the inspiration which may make even forming fours an ennobling performance.

There is nothing to be gained by falling into the same error again and exaggerating the military dangers of the proposed compulsory service. According to figures, which I believe to be accurate, only twelve of the thirty leading officials in the voluntary Labour Service organisation have held commissions in the army, and

only three of these have served since the war. Neither the head organiser, Dr. Stellrecht, nor his substitute has served either on the active list or in the reserve. The whole organisation is controlled not by the Minister of Defence but by the Minister of Labour. Eight per cent of the camp surveyors and other officers in the Labour Service have held regular commissions ; sixteen per cent served in the ranks in the war but have had no connection with the army since its end ; forty-five per cent have never been in the army or done military service of any kind. Now that the organisation is to be extended, the proportion of men who have had military training may, I suppose, increase, but the six hours of work and the marching and physical "jerks" which are part of the regular routine would not seem to leave very much time over for the more technical side of military training. It will undoubtedly be altered so that it does turn civilians into soldiers unless the international crisis can be solved without too much delay—before this book appears, for example.

"France in particular," declared Herr Seldte, the Minister of Labour, on August 21st, "still fails to realise that we in Germany have more than a million young men who are unemployed, who can find no occupation. Any

responsible Government must pay special attention to the younger unemployed, unless it is willing to allow the best section of its people to sink into need and misery. This labour service is a product of the hardships of our time. It is no military game, no romantic adventure. It is obvious the work can only be carried through if we have order and discipline. But this discipline has no military objectives."

Herr Seldte may exaggerate. Some accounts suggest that the Labour Service is less military than the Boy Scouts. Others would have us believe that the chief occupation is bomb throwing. Possibly the camps vary so much that one could discover both extremes among them. In any case I doubt whether we need yet throw up our hands in horror and declare that war is inevitable. Many Englishmen besides myself have probably been astonished and a little taken aback to find how many Germans, coming across photographs of our cadet corps in their illustrated papers, are convinced that we are busy preparing to fight. In any case the problem for Germany now is not whether employment should be of a military nature or not, but whether employment of any kind can be found for over several millions of unemployed.

The problem would be a difficult one even

if there were no world crisis. Within the last sixty years Germany has changed from an agricultural country with a population of forty-one millions to a highly industrialised one with a population of sixty-five millions. In 1882, thirty-four per cent of its inhabitants were engaged in agriculture; in 1925 this figure had dropped to twenty-two point three per cent. Valuable industrial and farming areas—Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar Basin, part of Upper Silesia, Posen, and Schleswig-Holstein were removed from the map of Germany. Thus a much smaller area has to support a much larger population, and there are no colonies to provide cheap raw materials or outlets for emigration.

Faced by this problem, a few grandiose schemes have been put forward, but may fail for lack of funds. Dr. Schacht, like Lord Snowden in the last Labour Government, sits on the money bags, and prophesies disaster if anybody approaches them. Germany, having once seen what disaster follows in the train of uncontrolled inflation, is naturally much more frightened of it than the United States. Some observers believe that the application made in September to the Bank of International Settlements in Basle for an alteration in the currency laws to enable currency to be issued on the

security of fixed interest bonds purchased by the Reichsbank in the open market—some observers believe that all this, which you (I hope) understand much better than I do, is clearing the way for inflation sooner or later. Dr. Schacht, who thus seems to be outdoing our own more advanced economists in putting the National Bank entirely under Government control, argues that " a president of the Reichsbank cannot practise any policy except that of the Government." If he is unhappy about that, he conceals it very effectively. He is now financial dictator, and will presumably remain so, at least until he has put through a conversion loan which will be comparable in importance to our own conversion loan of 1932.

I should not have begun to write this book had I reflected in time that I should be expected to express opinions on finance. I shall avoid doing so, after pointing out, for what it is worth, that Herr Hitler has, rather unexpectedly, turned for advice on finance and economics to business men, whereas Roosevelt has turned to the professors of his " brain trust " : wages have gone down in Germany while prices have risen, but, in a time of serious crisis and in a country with small reserves, it may be wiser to pay low wages in order to employ as many people as possible, and thus

lower costs, than it is to follow the American plan of raising wages and increasing costs. Where the hours are short and the wages are low in order to increase employment, the total spending power will nevertheless increase. The total pay-roll will go up, even though the worker's wages do not. And if he feels depressed, as he may well do, he will always have the consolation that the people in the compulsory labour service are in a still less fortunate plight. Throughout all the schemes for employment runs Hitler's conviction that even badly paid work is better than no work at all. The test whether his principal advisers are reactionary or not will come later when the wheels of industry are working again.

"It is evident," wrote the Berlin correspondent of *The Times* on September 25th, "that a violent attack on the capitalist system in its present form and a simultaneous attempt to substitute something new would invite that economic disorganisation during the coming winter which the Government is anxious to avoid. When Herr Hitler called a halt in July he apparently did so on the ground that a perilous winter burdened by a big unemployment problem was not the time for experimental tinkering at the whole national economic structure. Unemployment was the

urgent problem, and it was thought wiser to fight the winter campaign against it with the equipment of an established system, however decadent. But that does not mean that 'organic changes' may not be steadily prepared and even gradually and cautiously introduced, or that if the winter is successfully surmounted the general scheme towards a transformation of the economic system may not be resumed in the spring."

We still do not know how Hitler's greatest desire, that more peasants shall have land and fewer of them shall have debts, is to be fulfilled. As Herr Darré, the German Food Minister, has explained, a nation supports an army without questioning whether it will be used or not; still more should it support its peasantry without questioning whether it can pay its way for the moment or not. He does not yet explain, however, where the necessary credits are to be found to keep the farmer out of debt in the future. The first big step towards improving his lot was taken early in October, by the Reich Hereditary Farmsteads Law, which provides that no small holding of less than 310 acres, whose owner can prove that he is a capable farmer and an "Aryan," may be divided among heirs, sold, mortgaged, or seized for debt. This step will affect several

millions of farmers who will henceforward be flattered by the title of *Bauer*, or peasant proprietor, instead of *Landwirt*, or husbandman. The title may, in exceptional circumstances, be granted to a large landowner, but the whole object of the law is to encourage the peasant proprietor, and, presumably, to prepare the "Junker" landowner for a bad time coming when his estate will, at long last, be split up among unemployed colonists. It is not for nothing that the printers in Germany are busy turning out so many papers and pamphlets dealing with this problem of *Siedlungen* or colonies. And it is worth while remembering that the more Germany can colonise her own waste lands, the less time she is likely to spend grumbling because she has now no colonies overseas.

As for the other large Government schemes to give employment, the most important which has been begun is that to build 4,000 miles of motor-roads—six great roads that will be constructed under the control of the German railways, so as to avoid rail and road competition where possible. These roads are supposed ultimately to pay for themselves by means of road tolls, but here again arises the difficulty of putting up the money to pay for them while they are being built. It would not

now be easy for Germany to obtain credits abroad, even if money were as plentiful as it was in the days when she built all her new town halls and swimming baths. And Dr. Schacht declares that he wants none.

. . . . . .

But even though the Government is not so generous or so drastic as its more radical supporters had expected, it would, I believe, be a great mistake to assume that there will be a strong reaction against it. There are other ways of keeping up enthusiasm, and Herr Hitler knows most of them. One little example: On the first May Day under his Chancellorship there were enormous demonstrations, and the circuses were accompanied by bread. In other words, every worker had his holiday, and also his full pay. None of the business of going home to a wife with no political sympathies and explaining to her why working-class solidarity justified a reduction in that week's wages. Extracts from his speech on that day, which are printed elsewhere in this book, show the subtlety of his method. The worker is no longer told that he is a down-trodden proletarian who must live in perpetual discontent because his lot cannot be improved from one day to another. Instead, he is told that he is the salt of the earth, and that manual labour is much

more worthy of respect than anything to do with the brain. He goes home thumping himself on the chest, and telling himself what a fine fellow he is. This method may be neither new nor progressive, but it certainly satisfies the German in his present mood.

It is, of course, a continuation of the method by which as many as eighty per cent of Germany's unemployed, or so it has been reported, were once members of the Nazi Party. As a youth, disappointed because he could not gain admission to the Vienna Academy of Arts and had no money to study architecture, lonely because most of the workmen he met as a builder's assistant were Czechs, Hungarians, Serbians, anything except Germans, Hitler must have learnt in the most bitter school that the outcast needed sympathy as well as food. A man who came along to join the S.A. was given no pay, but if he was really hard up he received his brown shirt and an occasional meal for nothing. And, as one of them put it to me, the daily glass of beer tastes so much better, and its cheering effect lasts so much longer, when it is drunk in the company of a score of other fellows.

And so, on May Day, Hitler says to the workers :

" The millions of people who believe that the

kind of work which is done by the individual carries with it any special distinction are making a great mistake. . . . The fact that millions among us are working hard, year in and year out, without ever being able to hope to achieve riches, or even to be able to lead a life free from care, should show us that it is to them especially that we owe respect, for it is their idealism and their devotion alone which make possible the existence and the life of the community. . . . These millions who are demonstrating in Germany to-day will go home with a feeling of a newly won inner strength and unity. I know it, comrades. Your step will be firmer to-morrow than it was yesterday." And of course he is right.

. . . . . .

If there were nothing beyond these encouraging speeches, and the hope that there will be the possibility of finding money to finance the greatest public works in Europe, the outlook would be depressing for the Nazis. Fine words and fine promises fill no bellies, and the German workman, accustomed though he be to semi-starvation, has been promised so much. Hitler's speeches will have given him fresh courage, but there are others which will alarm him. In June, for example, Dr. Robert Ley,

leader of the Labour Organisation Department of the N.S.D.A.P. (the National Socialist Party, in other words), issued his *Fundamental Ideas on Corporative Organisation and the German Workers' Front*, in which he stated :

" The first task of corporate organisation will be to restore absolute leadership to the natural leader of the factory or, in other words, to the employer ; it will at the same time place full responsibility upon him. The works council in a factory will be composed of workers, employees, and employers, but it will only have a consultative voice. The employer alone can decide."

And, however inspiring the disappearance of all classes and the building up of a new State on a corporative basis may seem to men who are sick of class-warfare, there is something rather disquieting about Herr Grauert, Prussian Secretary of State, who declares that :

" Contractors, employees, and workers must work together like officers, N.C.O.s, and soldiers in the economic service of the Fatherland, whose increased wealth will also come back to them all in proportion to their capabilities."

But the National Socialists, even if they have not yet solved the problem of producing money out of the air, have not been afraid of partial or

temporary remedies. The State loan of 1,000 marks in credit coupons (not in cash) to any woman who throws up a job in order to get married has been widely talked about abroad—not always with compliments. But, according to the Germany Ministry of France, it has led to 100,000 marriages in five months. Then there is the encouragement to small capitalists to buy a car. Taxation on motor vehicles discourages as many would-be motorists in Germany as in England. Or, rather, it did. Now the fact that the purchaser of a car need never pay a pfennig in taxation on it has brought in so many orders that one well-known car factory, I was assured, cannot guarantee delivery under four months. Even if the resulting increase in employment and the saving in the " dole " does not compensate the Government for the loss of these taxes, the effect is impressive. Every new car on the German roads is there, you feel, only because of Hitler.

In one way and another, the Government claim that between January 1st and September 1st, 1933, unemployment was brought down by 1,886,000 to a total of 4,128,000. This very impressive reduction must not be taken, however, without a pinch of salt. Many thousands have been drafted into the Labour Service, where they are still a burden on the State, and will,

presumably, come back on to the unemployment rolls when their period of service is finished. The pressure or encouragement to women to give up the factory or the office for the kitchen at home has given another valuable opportunity to reduce the unemployment total, but that reduction gives no hint as to the number of homes where the income must have sunk in consequence almost to starvation level. Thousands of men who would otherwise be unemployed now have jobs in the party organisation, for which the taxpayer must find the money. Shorter hours, more or less imposed upon the employers, have brought many men into factories which may need some form of subsidy from the State to keep them from going bankrupt. And, lastly, there are the men who have stepped into the jobs of Jews, Socialists, Communists, and liberal-minded men who either have exiled themselves or have been put into concentration camps before they had the opportunity to do so. They, and the Jews who are being thrust out of business by what is expressively called the "cold pogrom," must, one imagines, number at the very least two or three hundred thousand.

Nevertheless, one big asset which the National Socialists can place on the balance sheet of world opinion, to offset part of the resentment

aroused by the Jewish business, is their very strenuous efforts to get men back to work. In many districts the local Nazi leaders are trying to put through schemes, some of which are so advanced that their capitalist victims must wonder why they ever supported a movement which, they believed, was going to free them from Socialism. The other day I came across the plans of the leader of the so-called "Socialist Self-Help" in the Palatinate, and I mention them not because they are unusually extreme, but because, on the contrary, I believe them to be typical of what is going on all over the country. The Nazi leader there has persuaded the industrialists to support a miniature Roosevelt recovery act. At least two provisions must arouse the envy of our own Labour leaders—a forty-hour week, and the raising of the school-age. There is to be no waiting until the Government can produce adequate subsidies; the money is all to be provided by private contribution. Every schoolchild, every teacher, everybody who has a job, will subscribe half a farthing a day. The fund will have the first call on all church collections. It will form a small tax on every glass of beer, on every cinema entertainment, on every excursion, and so on. The whole community is to learn, in the most practical way possible, that the nation's

unemployed cannot be segregated in a class apart.

Quite apart from such local schemes is the Government's *Winterhilfe*. The immediate task is to hold throughout the winter the ground gained during the summer. Apart from seasonal employment, much of the reduction in the unemployment totals has been due to public works out of doors. Winter brings that to an end, so the Government are setting aside 500,000,000 marks for subsidies to encourage house repairs and renovations. The property owner who feels he could do with a subsidy must first put up four times its amount out of his own pocket, but there are various concessions about taxes which should encourage him to do so.

But the great part of the money needed for winter relief is to come from private pockets. In no other country has "voluntary" become so nearly synonymous with "compulsory." According to the Nazi Welfare Office, "all presents for winter relief will be voluntary," but a "recommendation" to the Reichswehr troops, for example, that they should sacrifice one per cent of their pay is accompanied by a notification that "the sums will be retained and transferred by the paymasters," and only H. M. Bateman could satisfactorily portray the

private soldier who went to the orderly room to announce that he did not care to "volunteer" his contribution. Street and café collections were becoming something of a nuisance even during the election campaigns. They were the mildest foretaste of the present house-to-house collections. Workmen contribute the equivalent of one hour's work a month. The richer citizens are encouraged to arrange monthly transfers from their banking accounts to the central fund, and no doubt the local Nazis will have methods of assuring themselves that the transfer is worthy of the bank balance. On the first Sunday of the month, no German is expected to spend more than sixpence on his midday meal, and the money he saves thereby goes to the central fund. On the same day, the waiter in every restaurant has to sacrifice his tip. A sixpenny lottery will, according to Dr. Goebbels, "pursue a higher cultural aim," since each ticket will have with it five picture post-cards helping to illustrate "2,000 years of German history and culture."

The *Winterhilfe* scheme does nothing to help the economic life of the nation, except by keeping the unemployed above the level of hunger and moral depression. President Roosevelt might feel that it hardly deserves Dr. Goebbels's reference to it as part of a "gigantic

effort which has no equal in the whole world." But within a few hours of the opening of the "Fight against Hunger and Cold" more than 2,000,000 marks were subscribed. On the first Sunday in every month the unemployed man may feel a little awkward at the thought of all the millions who are eating a small and cheap meal on his account and all the thousands of waiters who will go tipless. But the chances are that he will feel—as Hitler means him to feel—that he is a citizen whom all the other citizens are anxious to help. Probably, too, he will support the words with which the German Chancellor finished his speech announcing the *Winterhilfe*:

"We have broken the international solidarity of the proletariat; in its place we must build up the living, national solidarity of the German people."

CHAPTER VII

GOERING AND GOEBBELS

GERMANY under National Socialism is only at the beginning of her revolution. It would be absurd to attempt a detailed analysis of the situation, since it changes so radically from day to day. All that I have done in the preceding pages is to put down a few details of events which seem for the moment to be significant, and to try to explain why they should have happened. As far as home affairs are concerned, it would not be safe to go beyond the following prophecies.

The National Socialist movement is going to stay where it is for a long time to come, and, in all probability, under the direction of Herr Hitler. The tendency to turn away from the rest of the world and to become as nearly self-supporting as possible will be maintained—last year, in this attempt, Germany produced 10,000,000 more bushels of wheat than Australia. This tendency will work in with Herr Hitler's own inclinations to turn Germany into a country of small peasant proprietors, and will make life difficult or impossible for the

owners of large estates ; their broad acres will be needed for colonists going " back to the land." The great industrialists of the Ruhr will be equally sorry that they ever put up money to help the lower middle-class party to power, for the peasant proprietors will need high tariffs so that they can pay their way, and these same tariffs will prevent the great exporting firms from paying theirs. The general standard of living will be low—far lower than it was during the prosperous time before " rationalisation " and the drying up of foreign credits, owing to the Wall Street collapse of 1929, gave Germany the gravest unemployment problem in Europe. But the indifference to the lack of material prosperity will be so genuine as to stagger the world. The anti-Jewish campaign will continue, but will only affect the Jewish intellectuals—already the tendency is to leave trade as much in " non-Aryan " hands as it was before January 1933, since it does not matter to an " Aryan " who sells him a collar across a shop counter, but it does matter to him who teaches his children or looks after his health.

And even those prophecies appear so rash that I am tempted to withdraw them, or at least to qualify them by arguing that they could only be fulfilled if Germany were withdrawn

from foreign influences or foreign pressure. And, again, I should have to add the proviso that Herr Hitler does not greatly change his counsellors for the next six months. There are many rumours of differences of view between them, and there are constant changes among leaders who are big enough to confuse the seeker after the true Nazi policy, but are not big enough to influence Hitler.

One may guess that Hitler will remain loyal to Dr. Goebbels and Captain (now, by one grand promotion, General) Goering, for his loyalty to his friends is, if one may be paradoxical, one of his greatest weaknesses, and they have both been with him since the early days of the Nazi movement. For the moment the one, as ruler of Prussia and German Air Minister, and the other as German Minister of Propaganda, are more actively influential than Hitler himself. But if ever it came to a dispute, it is Hitler whom the people want; without him the intoxication would give way dangerously quickly to an intense depression. Besides, although they may differ at times from the *Führer*, and still more from each other, there is no ascertainable reason for doubting the loyalty of these two men. So, if one wants to know more of the movement one must know more of them.

Goering will always have the adjective "brutal" attached to him ; Goebbels, the adjective "fanatical." The former seems to deserve it ; about the latter, one is a little less downright because he has a definite sense of humour, and an ability to laugh is unusual in a fanatic. He is a remarkable speaker—not far behind Hitler himself in his ability to work on the feelings of the crowd. The first occasion on which I saw him was in November 1932, a day or two before the elections which persuaded me (and not me alone) to conclude at the time that " the only hope for the Nazis now seems to be that they should become thoroughly staid and respectable, and be admitted to some coalition of the parties of the Right." I am a little comforted to see that I went on to suggest the danger of believing that the defeat of National Socialism at the polls meant a defeat of the two forces it contains, " the one being a strong feeling of nationalism, which very naturally loses no opportunity of emphasising those clauses of the Versailles Treaty which put Germany in a position of inferiority, and the other a vague sort of Socialism based on the feeling that the old men and the old methods which allowed Germany to drift into war should be replaced by the younger men who fought in it and the new ideas they have worked out as a result of

it. . . . For a time a great number of solid, sensible Germans were enthralled by Hitler; yesterday the number of his supporters dropped by over two millions, and the greater part of them voted for the middle-class parties, which, above all, want to avoid dangerous experiments." Ye Gods ! My only consolation is that at the same time the *Manchester Guardian* wrote : " The possibility of a Hitlerite dictatorship is, according to most observers, gone for ever."

At that election I went out on a cold, rainy Sunday morning to the Stadium at Neukölln, formerly the most Communistic suburb of Berlin. A few Communist flags hung limply out of the windows, a few more Social Democratic ones, and thousands of Nazi swastikas on their red background. True to the Nazi tradition that people do not believe in the value of anything they do not pay for, we had to produce our fifty pfennig at the entrance, and hundreds of young S.A. men were hanging around with photographs of their leaders and collecting-boxes. Some thousands of them were waiting in the arena, and to keep themselves warm they played " touch " and " leap frog " like a bunch of schoolboys. They reminded me of a rally of Boy Scouts who ought to be doing more serious work. One fat man, with gaudy epaulettes to show he was in the band, hopped

from one foot to the other, and, as I watched him, I wondered how Herr Hitler could ever have been so foolish as to invent a uniform without a tunic. The Stadium was not more than half full, and the loud-speakers, when they began to function, were so bad that I wonder to this day whether they were not installed by a mechanic with Communist leanings.

And then came Dr. Goebbels. It was difficult to hear all he said, but everyone else stood there enraptured. Although I had thought the main reason for Hitlerism was to combat Communism, he made no reference to that political creed in the half-hour of his speech. It was all directed against the Chancellor, Herr von Papen, and with such violence that their co-operation now is even more astonishing than the co-operation between Field Marshal von Hindenburg and Lance-Corporal Adolf Hitler. But whatever Dr. Goebbels said the people cheered.

I realised why on the second occasion when I heard him speak—when he gave his address during the League of Nations Assembly before a large crowd of journalists of all nationalities. He succeeds because of his burning sincerity. His audience was critical—no, unfriendly. Two days before, he had sat in the very front row of the Assembly and listened to the enthusiastic

applause given to Dr. Dollfuss because of his struggle to keep Austria free of Nazi influences. He had heard the titters that greeted his body-guard of elegant young men who formed up behind him when he stepped out of his car and marched him into the Assembly Hall. And, to add to his difficulties, many members of his audience could not understand German, and were therefore less likely to be impressed by his speech. Nevertheless, he succeeded to the extent that fewer people afterwards expressed the belief that Germany was bent on war at all costs and that some remembered how the first delegates of Fascist Italy had also aroused an exaggerated degree of alarm in Geneva. He spoke in the dining-room of his hotel, with his papers on an affair which was shaped like a church lectern, and his voice was so earnest that I felt some astonishment he was not wearing a surplice and a cassock.

Dr. Goebbels is a slender little man whose club foot kept him out of the war, and, by so doing, made him more violent and more bitter than he ought to be. Shortly after he became Minister, I saw him driving along the Wilhelmstrasse with four uniformed Nazis in the car. He looked so frail beside them that, until I recognised him, I felt sure he must be some political opponent being driven off to prison.

Since he could not fight, he studied; and, although German students often take two or three universities in their stride, he must be rather exceptional in having studied at no fewer than eight of them, ending up with Heidelberg, where he became a doctor of philosophy. History, literature, and the history of art could not keep him away from contemporary politics. He joined up with Hitler in 1922 and was active in the Ruhr during the French occupation. Always the most revolutionary and Socialistic of the prominent Nazis, he became *Gauleiter*, or group leader, in Berlin. When most of the Berlin Nazis broke away in 1930 under Stennes, Goebbels remained loyal to Hitler, who later repaid him by giving him the very important Ministry of Propaganda. He can tell tales of the early days of the organisation in Berlin which will keep his friends chuckling with laughter. There is no doubt about his fanatical belief in the mission of National Socialism, and particularly in those points of its programme which most distress the foreigner, but there is always that saving sparkle of humour in his eyes. He may be a dangerous little man, but the more I hear of other Nazi leaders the more I wish they were like the "Doctor," as he is known to his followers in Berlin.

Goering, for example. I have only seen General Goering once—except in his remote presidential chair in the Reichstag—but I have never seen anyone who impressed me at a first meeting as being more ruthless. Diplomacy may not always be a quality, but it has its superficial attractions. Goering does not worry to be a diplomat. He must have been admirable at his first real job with Hitler—the organisation of the *Sturm Abteilungen*. He must, too, have been admirable in the war. His father was a distinguished man, a friend of Bismarck, and Goering had received his commission in the Regular Army before the war broke out. In the winter of 1914 he transferred to the Flying Corps and was stationed opposite Verdun. In November 1915 he was badly wounded, but managed to bring his machine back behind the German lines. In 1918 he received the highest German decoration, the *Pour le Mérite* (instituted, as one might guess, by Frederick the Great, with his passion for the French language). At about the same time he became leader of the famous "Richthofen's circus," and held the job until the armistice. The first command Captain Hermann Goering disobeyed was to hand over his squadron to the Allies; instead, he flew it in formation back to Germany—a Germany that he could no longer

understand and that treated him with contempt. Men of his type became the most bitter and intolerant enemies of the new Republic.

In 1920, Goering found a job as the chief pilot for the Swedish Airways. A forced landing on a small lake near a country house led to his meeting with a certain Baroness Fock, whom he married. He returned to Germany, met Hitler in Munich, and was badly wounded during the first Nazi attempt, on November 9th, 1923, to overthrow the Weimar Republic. While Hitler went off to his prison to write *My Struggle*, Goering was smuggled by his wife and friends across the frontier into Austria. When he could travel, he went to Rome to see Fascism at first hand, and then drifted on, nearly penniless and an exile from his own country, through Hungary, Poland, Denmark, and Sweden. In 1927 an amnesty enabled him to return home, and a year later he became one of the twelve National Socialist members of the Reichstag. In August 1932 he became its President. In February 1933 he watched its burning, a prelude to the most sensational political trial since the Dreyfus case and to the abolition of all parties in Germany except the National Socialists.

A few days after the Reichstag fire, Captain Goering invited the foreign newspaper men in

Berlin to meet him in the fine palace that is placed at the disposal of the *Reichstags-präsident.* That noon on Saturday (the journalists' one day off) should have been chosen for the rendezvous was unfortunate, for it prejudiced nobody in his favour. Nevertheless, he had an easy task before him. In the first few days after the Reichstag fire, when people were being arrested and maltreated by the dozen, many rumours were spread about, very often by the Communists themselves, to the effect that the principal Communist leaders had been murdered. Thälmann (the Communist candidate for the Presidency of the Republic), Torgler (the most prominent of the accused at the Leipzig trial), and dozens of others were said to have been killed. With a strict censorship and no confirmation or denial from official sources, the Berlin correspondents of foreign newspapers had to use their discretion. Even those who made the greatest efforts to verify their information were apt to send home stories that were not true. No correspondent on earth could have avoided that risk. Some sent the wildest rumours, but the majority were careful. Even the careful ones, however, had slightly guilty consciences. All that Captain Goering had to do was to remind them that their papers had, almost without exception, printed stories which

had turned out to be exaggerated, to remind them that the whole system of government in Germany was being transformed, and to ask for their patient understanding until this revolutionary period was ended. By such a method he could hardly have failed to win a much more tolerant hearing abroad for Nazi doctrines.

But not a bit of it. At a time when no task could possibly equal in importance that of appeasing the foreign Press, Captain Goering (as he then was ; his generalship only came some months later) arrived exactly fifty minutes after the appointed time, and, with hardly a word of apology, began an attack against the foreign Press the like of which I have never heard anywhere else. He knew, he informed them, not only what they sent in their telegrams and telephone messages, but also what they wrote in their private letters. His patience was wearing thin. He had had very nearly enough of their exaggerations, and so on. I confess that, although I was not one of the victims of the attack, since I was not a newspaper correspondent in Berlin, I found it difficult to sit through the whole address. I was not sorry that I was not included in the group of journalists who went to see the more prominent Communist prisoners to make sure that they were still alive.

General Goering must have been more valuable than any other of Herr Hitler's adjutants during the campaign to capture power. He is still a very great force in the land as Prime Minister of Prussia, which covers two-thirds of the territory of Germany. He is said to represent the Right wing of the movement, while Dr. Goebbels represents the Left. And the great uncertainty in German politics is that nobody can yet tell from which of these leaders the Chancellor will take his ideas of government.

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS NATIONAL SOCIALISM?

THERE can be no doubt about Herr Hitler's power. He has far more of it than any other ruler in the world to-day. He has crushed opposition ruthlessly but rapidly. He enjoys a popularity that is idolatrous. What is the movement of which he is the leader? We hear what it is not; we never hear what it is. And that is the difficulty. It is still so much in the chrysalis stage that it is impossible to tell what it will look like when it is fuller grown. Mr. Horsfall Carter does not think it will lead either to reaction or war, but to some entirely new social system in Europe:

"German traditions," he writes, "are essentially autocratic and military. This applies particularly, of course, to Prussia, but, as we know, owing to the methods by which Bismarck welded German national unity, the same craving for authority is deeply imbedded in the national consciousness. With it is bound up also a definite trend towards 'Socialism,' in the sense that Germans naturally expect the State to play a bigger part in their economic

and cultural life than would ever be tolerated, for instance, in this country. These are, so to speak, the constants in the German problem. The variables, which in an age of transition like the present play a vastly more important part, have, as it happens, worked in the very same direction. National Socialism, in its peculiar emotion-laden form, could only have arisen in Germany. But its immense importance derives from the fact that an integration of the National idea and the Social idea is the characteristic post-war development in Europe. Instead of shadow-fighting about a meaningless internationalism which, politically, is non-existent, let us face up to the fact that a new nationalism has sprung up which is essentially intensive, not imperialistic, and which embraces the economic no less than the other strands of national life, since its task is precisely to relieve the Social tension (by a more equitable distribution of worldly goods) left by the Liberal individualistic age of economics. . . . The (Nazi) *party* which has now achieved its purpose of mobilising the nation's consciousness is one thing; the *movement* represents something far more significant and fundamental. Thus, in view of actual happenings in regard to international trade and finance—as distinct from what ought to be, according to

sound orthodox doctrine—it is no longer possible to dismiss the groups of Germans looking towards a new economic order based on 'national freedom and social justice' as 'the crank brigade.' Since last October, Germany has been the chief sufferer in the trade war which is decimating the import and export trade of every country. She is being thrown back more and more on her own resources. . . . No one who considers actual facts, and politico-economic realities, can continue to pour ridicule on the idea of autarchy, i.e. a planned national economy insulated from the intolerable pulls and strains to which Germany's economic structure has been exposed these last few years."[1]

Let me try to supplement that definition. Hitherto I have concentrated rather upon the chance events, in Germany's home and foreign relations, which have put so many trump cards into Hitler's hands, but his followers would be fewer and far less determined if they had only been won over by clever propaganda against the Jews, the Social Democrats, and the Versailles Treaty.

So here is my attempt to explain. It is based in part on the writings of a small group of economic planners whose influence is hard to

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1932.

define, but I believe that what they think and write is what the mass of decent Nazis would think and write if they were better trained for such exertions. I believe this to be so, even though the leader of the group, Hans Zehrer, has apparently fallen into disgrace—but that happens to so many intellectuals in Germany to-day !

In the past revolutions have extended outwards and have been aggressive. The ideas of the French Revolution, for example, have guided Europe for a hundred and forty years, and the campaigns that followed it led Napoleon to Moscow. But revolutions of recent years have been " intensive," and have aimed at protecting some national culture or some social idea. Even in Russia, where there has been a good deal of talk about a world Communist revolution, the really serious effort is to protect the Soviet system against pressure or attack from outside. Many of the younger Japanese, even while they occupy Manchuria with the help of the most modern weapons supplied by international armament manufacturers, dream of a revival of ancient Japanese ideas and of a withdrawal from Western civilisation. The possession of Manchuria gives them raw materials and helps them towards this independence. They are becoming tired of copying European

and American clothes and culture. The Congress movement in India has gained much of its support from Indians who do not wish to be Europeanised and who have their own standard of values entirely different from ours. Mahatma Gandhi's spinning-wheel has acquired the importance of a religious symbol.

The Italian Revolution was mainly a national reaction against incompetence, due to half-digested Liberal ideas and a democratic system of government for which Italy was not ripe; but no new philosophy has come yet out of Fascism. The German Revolution is likely to be more important because the existence of a large and highly educated proletariat will stress the social side of National Socialism. Hitler, like Gandhi, wants a return to the spinning-wheel, not only because he is an economic nationalist but because he believes in simplicity. The most important feature of the German Revolution is that it is, in essence, a reaction against excessive materialism.

The fact that "autarchy," or self-sufficiency, in a country where export trade has been so important, would mean a terrible reduction in the standard of living does not greatly worry the German revolutionaries. They will tighten their belts another hole or two for the sake of their ideas. Besides, they point out, foreign

trade is going to the Devil everywhere, and it is important to develop a philosophy of life which will enable people to meet the resulting hardships with equanimity.

Liberalism, the Nazis argue, in its insistence upon the liberty of the individual, actually encouraged the dominance of the weak by the strong. Nations, as well as individuals, were divided in the process of unfettered competition into masters and servants. The smaller nations were, economically even more than physically, at the mercy of the Great Powers, and, had there been no limit to the size of the world, the grabbing of territory, raw materials, and markets might have gone on for a long time before these Great Powers came into conflict with each other. But the limits were reached, and Liberal preference for free competition instead of a scientific division of markets led to the approach of war. The same Liberal ideas prevented a careful planning of home markets which would have allowed the development of industry without the danger of friction with other nations. There was no further expansion possible without a complete change in the social system in order to raise the purchasing power either of the masses in the home markets or of the backward races abroad. Such a change seemed too difficult to carry through.

If there was not room for so many Great Powers their number must be reduced. They must fight it out. And so came the war, and Germany's defeat. More clear than ever before stood out this fact that the Great Powers (only there were fewer of them now) ruled and the others had to obey. Germany became a "colony," at the mercy of French soldiers and British and American capitalists.

Meanwhile, this form of internationalism arising from the development of trade and communications aroused the dormant nationalistic feelings in the countries that were not doing too well out of it. Latin-America became more resentful against the economic domination of the United States ; Egypt, India, and other territories more resentful of the economic or military domination of Great Britain. Russia went through her revolution, the outcome of which is to make her as nearly self-supporting as possible. Germany, being no longer in the lucky position of a power able to make the world her market, being on the side of the small and the defeated nations, turned towards National Socialism (Socialism, because the State, to be "free," had to supply funds for, and gain control over, interests which would otherwise only be developed with foreign capital). Class warfare between individuals

began to be replaced by class warfare between nations—the poor, or "proletarian," nations in revolt against the rich, capitalistic ones. The feeling of nationalism became more acute. While the Great Powers looked upon each other as equals their Socialists understood each other and worked for the same ends. They were cogs in a system which could only exist by exploiting the poorer nations. Socialism, finance, and so on were organised "horizontally," across frontiers. When this feeling of equality broke down, Germans, as a defeated people, began their "vertical" organisation—began, that is to say, to feel that internal class warfare between employers and workers tended to weaken the State and to perpetuate its position of inferiority. "A conquered and oppressed people," wrote Hans Zehrer in *Die Tat* of June 1933, "has no place either for an internationally-minded and internationally-organised commerce or for an internationally-minded and internationally-organised working class. Both must be reorganised on a national basis."

In the same way, he goes on to argue, these latter-day revolutions are run very much by the middle classes, which were the greatest sufferers in the war—financiers were organised, workers were organised. The "black-coated

proletariat " could not defend itself adequately against international finance and international labour. In Italy and in Germany, Fascism and National Socialism aim at breaking the international links which gave their strength on the one hand to capitalism and on the other to Communism, since the struggle between these two elements threatened the nation with ruin and collapse. The German Revolution may be a long way from the proletarian revolution based upon the working classes, but being based upon the lower middle classes it has much wider popular support than any other strong government Germany has ever known.

The old form of Socialism in which the workers fought for economic equality has, the Nazis argue, become absurd now that the middle classes in the defeated States have become so poor that there is nothing more to be taken from them. Class war becomes impossible when the " proletariat " becomes so nearly synonymous with " the nation." The new form of Socialism—National Socialism—is more interested in this class warfare between nations. It sees " freedom " in economic nationalism even though (as would inevitably be the case in an exporting nation like Germany) there should be a sharp fall in the standard of living as a result of it. And one

thing is certain. The more Germany tries to be self-supporting, the more the Socialistic side of the Nazi movement will gain control. To quote Hans Zehrer again, "Large estates can no longer be defended when hundreds of thousands of men demand land for settlement purposes; great wealth has no right to exist when nine-tenths of the people are poor; large salaries can no longer be paid when the average income has fallen to a low level; and the security of a small class cannot be maintained if the existence of the rest of the people has become insecure. This form of Socialism does not appeal to social resentment, to the instincts of the lower class and to its desire to climb, but it insists upon social justice in order to bring about national unity. It cannot promise the worker that he will be rich, but it can promise him that he will be free."

The prospect of reaching racial unity and equality only because everyone is equally poor is not a very cheering one. But the most astonishing thing about Germany to-day is that thousands of young Germans accept such a prospect without dismay. And if I had not taken a good deal of trouble over this short attempt to analyse the motives behind National Socialism I should be strongly tempted to tear it all up. Because, in the last

analysis, the National Socialist movement is a religion, and it is therefore useless to produce reasonable arguments for or against it. Either you believe or you do not. I do not ; but, since I have always lacked the intellectual arrogance to approve or condemn Protestantism, Catholicism, Buddhism, Shintoism, or any other belief, I cannot condemn the Nazi faith as sweepingly or as completely as many of my friends. It may sound blasphemous, but it is quite literally true, that I should arouse exactly the same passionate resentment, and to exactly the same degree, if I were to argue with a certain type of ardent Nazi against the "Aryan" blood theory or with a Roman Catholic against the Immaculate Conception. And it is on account of this religious feeling in certain National Socialist circles that I believe the German Revolution will have a far greater effect upon Europe than either Fascism or the Soviet system. I doubt whether enthusiasm in Russia has ever spread over anything like such a wide section of the people as in Germany, and, in any case, Russia has never been entirely European, whereas Germany lies in the very heart of the Continent.

It is also this religious feeling that makes it so difficult to give an adequate account of National Socialism. You may argue for hours

about points of dogma in a religion much more easily than you can argue about its essence, and National-Socialism has not yet worked out its dogma. To the pilgrims who wait in Red Square to see Lenin's embalmed body, his words are gospel, and the present leaders have to be careful in distorting or " interpreting " them to meet their own needs to-day. After two thousand years of Christianity, priests still have to pretend to follow Christ, even when they bless battleships or preach in justification of mass murder during a war. National Socialism has not yet its infallible doctrines except in the matter of pure " Aryan " blood. The rest will come.

This religious vein in National Socialism is almost impossible of explanation. The movement depends upon the lower middle classes, and yet it is in its essence a reaction against the nineteenth century, with its slogans about liberty and democracy. " Liberty," writes M. Pierre Viénot, " implies individualism ; and this characterises the whole of middle-class civilisation. To begin with, in politics, individualism is at the root of universal suffrage, parliamentary democracy, and the national State. In economics the individualism of free competition joins hands with political individualism, which it supports, and presently leads

as a result of technical discoveries to capitalism on a grand scale. At the same time it implies a moral progress which confers a kind of dignity upon personal profit and thrift, those inevitable complements, or even necessary conditions, of individual autonomy. The condition of the immense proletariat created by the capitalist consequences of the régime of economic individualism, yet practically deprived of individual autonomy, grows more and more acute. Material inferiority carries with it a feeling of social inferiority, which is the more keenly resented in proportion as its injustice is emphasised by the acquisition of political equality."[1]

The struggle between the two wings of this middle-class civilisation—capitalists and Socialists—was bound to be very bitter in Germany once the old imperial system had broken down and its unifying force had gone. The bitterness was inevitable because the industrialisation of the country had taken place so rapidly, and the holders of newly acquired wealth never quite know how to use it inoffensively. Even before the war such movements as the *Jugendbewegung* indicated a small-scale revolt against the materialism of the whole business, against this idea that the individual had nothing to

[1] *Is Germany Finished?* by Pierre Viénot (Faber & Faber).

worry about but his personal profit. After the war, when the great mass of small middle-class people saw their savings and their beliefs swept away together, liberty became, not something that must be treasured as a great conquest in the march of civilisation, but as something too frightening for the ordinary man. People wanted to be led, advised, controlled.

We have already seen how the inflation destroyed the former deference to money. It encouraged, indeed, this contempt for wealth and the people who amassed it to the detriment of others. Thrift ceased to be admirable, and heavy taxation made it almost impossible. "In all classes of society, Germans spend what they earn, and expect an immediate return for their money. They do not regard it as a means of liberation, as a device to secure a personal independence, since in the grip of the economic life of to-day they no longer regard such a state as conceivable. Thrift, therefore, has no moral value in their eyes. The notion of patrimony has almost disappeared from German life, with all the moral factors attaching to it. The ideal of individual independence, the ideal of the *petit rentier*, seems to them in more than one respect immoral. You do not stint yourself in view of possible emergencies; you risk them."

So wrote M. Pierre Viénot in 1931. Furthermore, the rapid industrialisation has brought so many people into the towns—more than one quarter of the total population lives in cities of over 100,000 inhabitants—that, again to quote M. Viénot, " only about a quarter of the German people is in a position which allows them to retain a sense of relative independence, if not freedom ; whereas more than three-quarters are closely tied to a system outside themselves, to a life which they are unable, not only to change, to all intents and purposes, but even to regulate in such a manner as to give them even a slight claim to consider themselves their own masters."

One begins to see where the religious and spiritual appeal (two strange words, perhaps, to apply to a movement many of whose manifestations are so brutal, but they are the only ones that fit the case) comes in. This large middle-class population, tired of class struggles between Socialism and Capitalism, sceptical about the materialism and the money which gave it its strength before the war, emptied of the prejudices that had once given it self-assurance—of course it welcomed a movement whose leaders talked of ideals instead of bread, of convictions instead of uncertainties, of service and organisation instead of loneliness and

chaos. "The crisis of middle-class civilisation has turned the individual into a solitary overflowing with hatred for the critical spirit and the intellectualism which imprison him within himself. The *Gemeinschaft* [community] takes on an intrinsic value for him. . . . The atmosphere of liberty has become so rarefied that he can no longer breathe it. He demands new links, and, above all, tangible, natural, and spontaneous links such as those which unite the members of a group. The whole of modern Germany asserts the intrinsic moral value of this group life, and adopts the virtues which favour it: obedience, loyalty, devotion."[1]

The National Socialist movement, with its doctrine of national unity to replace the class war of the "Marxian" Socialist, gave exactly the opportunities of obedience, loyalty, and devotion the people demanded. It removed the difficulties and the fears that went with democratic individualism at a time when there were no fixed standards and values to guide the lost sheep.

But it would be the greatest mistake to imagine that the Germans have returned to the point from which they started on their democratic adventure. The middle class has an anchor again. The excessive number of

[1] *Is Germany Finished?* by Pierre Viénot (Faber & Faber).

city-dwellers will be reduced by "colonising" new land and making farming more attractive. The danger of being crushed between the upper and nether millstones of Capitalism and Socialism is going. But the selfish materialism, the acute competition to climb to wealth—they will not, I believe, return. The readiness of Germany to seize upon any creed—even so empty a one as that of the "Aryan" race—is the measure of the mental distress in which the middle classes were living. But the contempt for money and money-makers is more than a passing phase.

And that is how National Socialism becomes the biggest question mark in Europe. At no other time in recent history have the beliefs of a whole people been so shattered, or, owing to the appalling material and economic difficulties, has the desire for something to believe in been so great. In every country, and in Germany more than in most, the State is compelled to interfere to an ever-increasing extent in the struggle between capitalism and labour. Not only has the social expenditure in Germany since the Revolution remained large, but the banks and, with them, various industries have been kept solvent only with State help. If the process continues—and it may, for the Nazis, in their Winter Relief

campaign, attack their predecessors for spending too little, and not too much, on social work—so much of every wage-earner's salary will go in taxation that he will become to all intents and purposes a Civil Servant. Although emphasis is laid by the Nazis on the importance of private enterprise, many of the fruits of private enterprise go in "voluntary contribution" to the various official and semi-official schemes to wipe out unemployment. Germany will not turn the clock back to 1914, when money and family and officialdom divided the people up into the most rigid classes imaginable. On the contrary, it looks as though all classes and other distinctions (except the Nazi hierarchy) will disappear. Somebody once said of the Swiss that they have reached a very high level of mediocrity. One sometimes fears that, under National Socialism, Germany will achieve the same result.

It is not really so difficult to understand why National Socialism arouses at one and the same time so much enthusiasm and so much despair. To a people waiting for a new creed comes Herr Adolf Hitler, perfectly sincere in his own beliefs and extraordinarily clever in making them appear as the only remedy for the spiritual and material ills of his listeners. Nobody can remain unmoved by the tremendous

enthusiasm and spirit of self-sacrifice that he finds in Germany to-day—it can only be compared with the enthusiasm when war broke out, and in a way it is something bigger than that occasion, since the enthusiasts feel more clearly that they are now going to shape their own destinies. And yet nobody who is not a German, and who therefore does not share the national hysteria, can avoid the fear that the gospel is not big enough for the movement, that Hitler, a very effective prophet, may not be the herald of a new Messiah. Many millions of people, among the most cultured in the world, have been worked up to a pitch of religious revivalism which would be impossible had they been able to recover their mental balance after the war and the inflation, and they wait anxiously for the new gospel to be preached to them. And, so far, all that they are told is that they must purify their "Aryan" blood! It is not merely because I am fond of Germany that I hope some man may come along to lead the movement, probably through the medium of Herr Hitler, to something more satisfying and more constructive than the "Aryan" Economic-Nationalism which, up to the present, is the basis of National Socialist doctrine. The sudden disillusionment of so many people would make Germany a far more dangerous

and disruptive force in Europe than she is now under the guidance of Hitler and his friends. Instead of a country that has become hysterical, we should have a country that had gone mad.

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A few weeks ago in Geneva I mentioned to a German that I was writing this book. He expressed admiration for my foolhardiness, and said, "It's all right as long as you don't try to explain National Socialism. What's your book going to be called?"

"*Nazi Germany Explained*," I told him.

He took me across to the bar in the League's Disarmament Building, and stood me a drink to show his sympathy.

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The mass of people in Germany to-day do not worry about explanations. They are just contented to be enthusiastic. Month after month the radio and the newspapers assure them that Hitler has saved Germany and Europe from Communism. Mussolini used the same argument, and with even less justification, for the Communist danger in Italy had been dispelled two years before the Fascisti came into power. His reaction, like that of Hitler, was in reality against a series of weak and uncertain democratic Governments and a

parliamentary system which made a determined and energetic Ministry an impossibility. Communism in Germany commanded, it is true, the impressive figure of six million votes, but despite the business men and others who honestly hold that belief, I find it difficult to believe that Germany has " saved Europe " from a movement which, in the words of an earnest young German who has sent me an essay on the subject, " was about to deliver us all to the terrifying methods and the Asiatic spirit of Russian Marxism . . . to the most primitive and most brutal barbarity."

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Most of Germany's well-known writers, the men who have won reputations abroad, turn out to be " non-Aryans," and are now silenced in Germany, or write—mostly misleadingly—in exile. Rudolf Binding, whose *Fatalist at War* many people remember with admiration, thus ends an " open letter " to Romain Rolland :

" The world cannot judge this revolution religiously enough—this revolution with its processions and its badges, with its flags and its pledges, with its martyrs and its fanatics (children as well as grown-ups), with its proclamations and its promises, with its irresistible faith and the deadly earnestness of its

people. We know all about the outer show, the cheap patriotism, the swaggering uniforms and arrogant decorations, the drift towards out-of-date and unreal trash. But the leaders know this too ; they are not blind. All that is not the real character, that is not the essence of the movement. The world has never lived through what we have experienced. And this is only the beginning. But a people that had lost its self-confidence has found it again. And its faith makes it beautiful."[1]

And how can one argue with a man who feels like that ?

[1] *Antwort eines Deutschen an die Welt*, by Rudolf Binding (Rütten & Loening, Frankfurt).

CHAPTER IX

GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

GERMAN foreign policy must be divided into two sections. First, there is the reaction against the "inequality" clauses of the Versailles Treaty, with their implicit suggestion that Germany, having once been defeated, must stay defeated for all time. Secondly, there is the desire to gain, or regain, influence, if not control, over all territories where German is spoken. The first sentiment has encouraged all the flag-waving and military marches and books such as those with which the next chapter will deal. The second sentiment is mainly responsible for the frontier incidents which have so much added to the doubts as to Germany's peaceful intentions.

What foundation is there for this inferiority complex which makes Germany as touchy and awkward as a small tradesman who has won a lottery? It is almost impossible for anyone who is not a German to remember how inevitably the series of disappointments since the war has led to this baffled feeling of "inequality" which has now caused Herr Hitler

to call his delegates back from the League. It is, perhaps, worth while running very briefly over the events since Stresemann introduced his policy of fulfilment.

The French had gone into the Ruhr to fetch reparations for themselves. After the Dawes Plan had settled what future payments under this head were to be and had stabilised the mark, the Germans waited for the French to withdraw. They failed to do so. Next came the announcement that the First Rhineland Zone (Cologne and neighbourhood), which, according to the Versailles Treaty, was to be evacuated on January 10th, 1925, five years after the treaty came into force, would not be evacuated on that date because Germany had not carried out her disarmament satisfactorily.

Hopes rose during the negotiations for the Rhine agreement and all the other documents signed at Locarno in October 1925, but they fell again when Germany's admission to the League had to be postponed, owing to the claims of Poland, Spain, and Brazil to be treated as Great Powers in the matter of permanent seats in the Council. And then came a magnificent day when Briand and Stresemann, dodging the journalists like villains in a detective story, had their historic lunch in the little French village of Thoiry, a few

miles from Geneva. What a lunch ! What brandy ! What cigars ! For days the proprietress of the restaurant kept the ash-tray the two great men had used, and if a few other visitors added their ash to it on the quiet, well, it only made the number of cigars that had been smoked during the political discussion all the more impressive. And what an agreement was reached !

The other two Rhineland zones were to be evacuated in the course of 1927, the Saar Basin was to be handed back to Germany without a plebiscite, military control was to cease. Germany, on her side, was to float a gigantic international loan in order to pay a large lump sum to France, whose difficulties with the franc were becoming alarming. At last there was the chance of real mutual co-operation, and I suspect that both men, who certainly died of disappointment if disappointment in anything but love can kill, often thought back longingly to that day when they brought their countries so near to lasting friendship. But M. Poincaré came back to power and, stabilising the franc, had no need of German financial help. He said so very frankly, and added a curt reminder that Germany still had not completed her disarmament. The old bickering began. Every speech

on the one side of the Rhine was misinterpreted on the other. All hope of an immediate evacuation of the remaining Rhineland zones had to be abandoned.

Meanwhile reparation difficulties cropped up again. They made the tone of the speeches still less friendly. At Lunéville, M. Poincaré asked how his compatriots could have any confidence in the German Government and could dream of giving up the last pledges they held. Herr Stresemann replied : " The policy of the Ruhr or the policy of Locarno—the one or the other. *Quo vadis, Gallia ?* " Even M. Briand asked whether Locarno was a conjurer's hat out of which one could take anything one liked. The spirit of Locarno, Geneva, and Thoiry had all evaporated.

The Young Plan gave fresh hope, but not a great deal of it. And it did not last. This time the Germans themselves were much to blame. Without warning they announced their scheme for a customs union with Austria, which, they argued, was just what M. Briand, with his talk about a United States of Europe, was aiming at. M. Briand did not think so. The French saw the spectre of a political union between Austria and Germany. The dreaded *Anschluss* frightened them. They were determined to stop it, and they did, even though

the reputation of the League Council and the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague suffered a good deal in the process. When, some months later, President Hoover proposed a year's moratorium for all reparation payments and debts, the French again hesitated. The crash of the Credit Anstalt Bank in Vienna had shaken confidence in the German banks to such an extent that foreign capital was being withdrawn from the Reichsbank at the rate of nearly seventy million marks a day. The danger of a collapse was genuine, but—the French hesitated.

After a fortnight, they agreed to this moratorium, but by that time it had lost all power to revive confidence. Attempts to save the financial situation by getting credits in London and Paris were held up by the political conditions which the French attached to their help. There were suggestions in the papers that the building of the second of six cruisers allowed to Germany by the Versailles Treaty should be stopped, that the Customs Union scheme should be abandoned, that the National Socialist Party should be dissolved, and so on. Germany refused to bind herself in this way and General Maginot, French Minister of War, stated quite bluntly that " two conditions are necessary to ensure peace—the

peaceful countries must remain strong and the warlike ones must keep their mouths shut."

One more disappointment was to come. The financial situation had become desperate, and an expert committee of the Bank of International Settlements in Basle had recognised Germany's inability to pay. In January, 1932, Dr. Brüning announced that he could do nothing more about reparations. But the haggling and arguing went on for over six months, while the forces of moderation in Germany steadily lost ground. By the time Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had somehow brought the Lausanne Conference to what looks like being a successful conclusion, the National Socialists had become much the strongest party in the Reichstag.

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I would repeat that in this chapter I am concerned to give a sketch of foreign affairs, not as I see them, and still less as a Frenchman would see them, but as I believe they appear to the average middle-class German. France has her reasons for hesitating to show generosity. To give only one case, Sir Arthur Salter, writing of Stresemann, expresses the opinion that "never was his influence more needed

than when the Rhineland was evacuated in June 1930. There was no one left to say then to Germany what so greatly needed to be said : 'This is the fruit of a policy of appeasement. What other policy could conceivably have freed German soil five years before the treaty date? Now the chapter of the war period is closed ; henceforth let us live as neighbours with our neighbours.' This was not said ; only Stresemann could have said it ; and the occasion was used for celebrations . . . not of reconciliation but of a renewed xenophobic nationalism, which found its most alarming expression shortly afterwards in the sweeping success of the Hitlerite candidates at the election."[1]

But the importance of this series of disappointments lies in the fact that this trend of German policy towards aggressive self-righteousness is not a German affair alone. If a greater understanding of Germany's point of view could be fostered abroad, it is at least possible that this German belief in the undying enmity of France and other countries would disappear. And, in so far as suspicion in one country must encourage suspicion in another, German aggressiveness would surely diminish. "The only devil in this universe," I read the

[1] *Recovery*, by Sir Arthur Salter (Bell).

other day (and cannot remember where), " is fear."

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The second aspect of Germany's foreign policy—her desire to spread the glad tidings of the " Aryan " belief to all places where German is spoken—may be much more awkward to deal with than a persecution mania for which her neighbours are partly responsible, although Dr. Goebbels has recently declared that the Nazi creed is not for export. Frontier incidents have so alarmed these neighbours that even Denmark, which a few years ago was seriously discussing the abolition of her fighting forces, except for sea and land police, is now worrying about the defence of her southern frontier. Switzerland and Belgium are doing the same, only more so. On May 9th, Dr. Frick, the German Minister of the Interior, declared that " at least one third of all Germans now live outside the Reich." A few days before Herr Hitler himself had said : " The Revolution will only be complete when the entire German world is inwardly and outwardly formed anew." On September 10th, Herr von Papen, the Vice-Chancellor, said : " The essential difficulty before Germany comes from the fact that a third of her people lives outside

her frontiers and that one has never succeeded in making the frontiers of State and nation coincide in Central Europe." And one never will ! Why, even in remote Bessarabia there are French and German villages !

If I have properly understood the National Socialist idea, the conquest of territory has ceased to be important. The closest analogy I can conceive is that of the Catholic Church, which, once a great temporal Power, has long since concentrated on conquering minds instead of land. It is the race that matters, not the nation. People of German blood must remember that they are Germans, even though they may have been nationals of another State for generations. Conflicts of loyalties will be inevitable, as they are in the case of any creed which crosses national frontiers. Catholics have known such conflicts of recent years in Italy, Spain, and Ireland, to give only three examples. "Aryans" may know them in Austria, Alsace, and even among the Saxon villages in southern Transylvania. But, the Germans argue, they should occur less often in the future than in the past, because this creed of race automatically destroys the desire to gain control over the lives of people of other races. Frontiers will become less important, as the Allies hoped to make them when they set up the system for

the protection of minorities. The Governments which have signed minority treaties are pledged to give cultural and religious freedom to foreign nationals who live within the frontiers of their country; at the same time, these nationals—if the system worked perfectly, which it does not—would be none the less loyal citizens of their new fatherland. In order to assure the good treatment of German minorities in Poland, the Germans would treat the Polish minorities in Germany with care and courtesy. And so on.

Naturally enough this vague ideal means nothing to the rank and file of the S.A. and the S.S. Probably it means very little to the older supporters of the National Socialist movement. But it almost certainly goes part of the way towards explaining how Herr Hitler himself could have made the blunder of presenting to the Nazis of Kehl a standard bearing upon it the name "Strassburg," just across the Rhine. An excuse was made that this gesture amounted to nothing more than that carried out before the war by the French, who used to drape mourning over the monument to Strasbourg that stands on the Place de la Concorde. But the French action was unofficial, whereas nothing can be more official than an action by the German Chancellor, and Germany

expressly renounced every claim to Alsace and Lorraine when her Foreign Minister signed the Locarno Treaties. If the belief became general that Germany no longer felt bound by these treaties, the outlook for European peace would be black indeed, and one would like to think that Herr Hitler had in mind merely the same sort of link with the German-speaking Alsatians as he might have with German settlers in South-West Africa.

Nevertheless, a doctrine based on the idea of race in a Europe based on the idea of nationality is bound to give rise to incidents which will be a severe test of statesmanship. Had the French, for example, not taken the Strasbourg incident with remarkable calm, it might easily have led to a severe crisis, and the German treatment of Austria has already altered the whole political alignment in Europe.

The Austrian business, we are told, is Herr Hitler's business. It is not astonishing that he should have been disappointed because the land of his birth did not show more enthusiasm over his arrival as tenant at the *Reichskanzlei* in Berlin. Under a " Marxist " Government Germany had reached an agreement with Austria to establish a customs union, and the intervention of the ex-Allies to stop the plan had caused at least as much distress in Vienna

as in Berlin. And now, for the first time since the war, there were Austrians who talked with pride of their little country and its independence. The fact that Dr. Dolfuss, the Austrian Chancellor, had decided he could only govern without Parliament gave the Austrian Nazis their chance. They persuaded themselves, and many others into the bargain, that Austria was suffering under a tyrant who was trying to prevent the natural union of Germans from Germany with Germans from Austria. He would not hold general elections to test the strength of the Nazi movement, so he must learn in other ways. A campaign of terrorism began, and Herr Habicht, Nazi "Inspector" for Austria, was arrested. The German Government had asked that he should be considered as an accredited diplomat, who would therefore be safe from such unpleasantnesses as a night in gaol, but the Austrian Government had not agreed. Herr Habicht went back to Germany to begin a long series of broadcast talks from Munich attacking the Dolfuss Government, and the Germans, after arresting the Austrian Press *attaché* in Berlin, who was an accredited diplomat, and had been one for years, put a tax of one thousand marks on any German who wanted to visit Austria.

That tax has probably been one of the chief stumbling-blocks for Austria's diminutive Chancellor, since the great tourist industry in western Austria depended mainly upon the German visitors. I travelled last June from Munich to Salzburg on the best train of the day, and there were only seven other passengers. Dr. Dolfuss came hurrying to London, partly to speak at the World Economic Conference, where his small size and his large task made him the pet and hero of the meeting, and partly to encourage British tourists to visit his country. He kept the world's Press waiting for nearly half an hour in one room at the Austrian Legation while he argued and pleaded with the representatives of the tourist agencies in another.

But the greatest difficulty of all which "Milli-Metternich" (as the Viennese like to call him) has had to face is the fact that the Austrians are at least as conscious of their German race as of their Austrian nationality. Had the National Socialists chosen other methods than terrorist ones, it is very doubtful whether the Austrian Government could or would have held out. Even now, with support from France as well as Italy, its future is very uncertain. About the only certainty is that Dr. Dolfuss has become so closely allied with the

Heimwehr, whose leader, Prince Starhemberg, took part in Herr Hitler's 1923 rebellion in Munich, that the Social-Democrats will not have a much better time under Dolfuss than they would have under Hitler. Almost the only difference between the programmes of the Heimwehr and the Austrian Nazis is that the former deify Mussolini and the latter Hitler. However justified the German Government may be in claiming that the Nazis should be represented in the Austrian Government, there can be no doubt that the sympathy for Austria aroused in Great Britain bears a considerable resemblance to the feelings that were stirred up in 1914 when the news came through that Belgium was being invaded.

Meanwhile the relations are so bad between the only two German-speaking States in the world that, when last I came from Austria to Germany, the German customs official was less interested in my luggage than my newspapers. I had left Vienna very early in the morning, and had spent part of the time lying on the seat with my feet on a sheet of the *Neue Freie Presse*. At the frontier I crumpled it up and threw it under the seat. The customs official, with a sheepish grin on his face, picked it up, smoothed it out carefully, and took it away with him. Germans must have no opportunity

of knowing what Austrians were saying about them ! The Austrians were taking similar precautions, but on a much less sweeping scale. As the train dragged its way out of Passau station, I saw my German customs official and two colleagues eagerly opening the prohibited Austrian newspapers.

When Herr Hitler first came to power, the country with which trouble seemed most probable was Poland. Actually the agreement reached between Poland and the National Socialist Senate of the Free City of Danzig is as valuable as it is unexpected. When I went to Warsaw a day or two after the anti-Jewish boycott in Berlin, a Polish friend who, on an earlier visit, had only shown me the more respectable sights, such as the Old Square, Pilsudski's home, and one or two Government departments, hurried me off to the Jewish quarter of Warsaw and asked me, with pride in his voice, to see how well Poland treated her Jews. No less astonishing is the change in Danzig. The first time I visited that city—during the War between the Poles and the Russians in 1920—a Polish colonel, who had been assuring me that Danzig was Polish in sympathy even though the great majority of its population had voted for Germany, went out in the street in his uniform and was

immediately hissed. For years disputes of every kind between Poland and the Free City of Danzig have kept the members of the League of Nations Council busy. And now, quite suddenly, we see photographs of the Polish Prime Minister visiting Danzig, and read the cordial speeches which he made about the Free City and the President of the Danzig Senate made about Poland.

One Sunday during that summer of 1920 I motored out to a tiny seaside resort on the Polish part of the coast. There were two or three small villas, and a small bathing establishment which I have cause to remember. For my companion was a Pole who had talked propaganda at me until I could stand no more of it. He was too old to bathe, and I made the excuse that I had not seen the sea for a year and must have a quick swim. While he strode up and down on the shore, waiting impatiently to be at me again, I stayed in the water so long that I developed congestion of the lungs and became seriously ill in a revolting little east Prussian hotel, with bugs running races up and down the walls. Roughly ten years later I returned to that seaside resort and found that it had miraculously been converted into the port of Gdynia, with some 40,000 inhabitants and a liner from New York. So much of Poland's

trade was passing through this Polish port that the Free City of Danzig was in a state of collapse. Germany had done nothing to facilitate the early years of the Polish Republic (not unnaturally, perhaps, since a large part of the Republic had previously been part of Germany), so Poland saw no reason why she should facilitate life for the entirely German city of Danzig. Hence the rival port of Gdynia. And hence the fear of serious incidents when Danzig "went Nazi."

After thirteen years of petty squabbling over the placing of Polish letter-boxes in Danzig and such matters, an agreement was signed in September to regulate the Polish use of the port of Danzig and the rights of Poles in that city. The details need not be put down here—the most important of them are a promise that, for a trial period of one year, forty-five per cent of Poland's exports and imports shall pass through Danzig, while Poles will have full cultural and religious freedom there, whether they are citizens of the Free City or of the Polish State. But I must quote a few sentences from a speech made by the Nazi President of the Danzig Senate on the eve of the signature of these agreements: "Our political and constitutional position calls upon us to be the mediators between the German

and the Polish peoples. . . . We are about to conclude important negotiations between Danzig and Poland in which problems which seemed almost insoluble have been solved by the spirit of co-operation. And by this spirit of co-operation alone . . . can we hope to heal the wounds the war has inflicted upon us and to give our children a happier future. . . . Danzig is too small for economic isolation. It needs trade and other relations with other people. We believe that this knowledge, learnt through bitter experience, will allow us in Danzig to show the way, to give an example for greater co-operation in the lives of different peoples."

Not entirely the sort of speech, perhaps, which one would expect from an ardent Nazi. Most certainly not the sort of speech which one would expect in a place where relations were so strained only six months ago. Nobody who has not spent at least a few weeks in that old and lovely city can realise what restraint must have been shown by Poles and Germans alike to reach this agreement. No previous German Government has dared tell its people that Poland has become one of the largest and most important States in Europe, and Polish travellers on the train from Warsaw to Berlin are amazed by the politeness with which they

are received by the German officials. At least, so some of them tell me, and their voices betray some anxiety as to how long it will last and what it all means.

The one other territorial problem, in its way quite as dangerous as the Danzig problem was until a few months ago, is that of the Saar Basin, a small but very valuable area a little south of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. I have been all over this Saar Territory and have never heard any language but German spoken by its permanent inhabitants, but the fact that its coal was complementary to the iron ore of Lorraine gave the French their claim to it. Even in the secret treaty of February 1917 between France and Russia, the Russian Government had agreed that, if they could do what they liked with Poland, the western frontier of Germany should be drawn " at the discretion of the French Government, so as to provide for the strategical needs, and for the inclusion in French territory . . . of the entire coal district of the Saar Valley." But direct annexation would have been too flagrant a breach of President Wilson's doctrine of the self-determination of people. Although M. Clemenceau claimed a large but non-existent French population in the Saar, the territory was placed under League of Nations control

until 1935, when a plebiscite was to be held to decide its ultimate fate. But, partly to compensate France for the destruction of her own mines in the war zone, the Saar mines were transferred to French ownership and were to be run quite independently of the Saar Governing Commission—five men, including one Saarlander and one Frenchman, appointed by the League of Nations Council. If the plebiscite goes in favour of reunion with Germany in preference to union with France or a continuation of the present arrangement, Germany was to have the right to buy back these mines at an international valuation in gold.

The Saar may become a valuable link between France and Germany, since its coal complements the iron ore of Lorraine. It may also give rise to very dangerous friction. Until a few months ago, even the most optimistic of French Nationalists could hardly have hoped that the plebiscite would show anything but an overwhelming majority in favour of return to Germany. But many of the Saarlanders, as many of the Austrians, are not very enthusiastic about accounts they hear of Nazi concentration camps, and the Saar has become one of the principal refuges for Jews, Socialists, Communists, and others who do not like the atmosphere of Nazi Germany. You have this

very odd state of affairs—every German, whatever his political creed, looks upon the Saar as a natural part of Germany, and yet all political parties except the National Socialists are allowed there, whereas all political parties except the National Socialists are forbidden in Germany. And some of the most ardent patriots in the Saar are beginning to doubt whether their life would be very pleasant and safe if the plebiscite brought them back within the German frontiers. Those of them who do not belong in secret to the prohibited National Socialist Party might find themselves in concentration camps, should such camps still exist after 1935.

At the same time—and for this report I have no confirmation except from Germans working in the French mines administration (the report deserves mention, however, since it is widely believed in Germany)—the French, feeling that the Saar will return to Germany after 1935 and that their own continued possession of the mines would become impossible even if Germany could not produce a large sum of gold with which to buy them back, are now working the pits in the most uneconomical way possible. Each accident, in consequence, is blamed upon French unwillingness to keep the mines even in a decent state of repair, and it serves to

increase German resentment against France. The Saar may easily become the most dangerous breeding-ground of hatred in Europe.

On the other hand both Herr Hitler and Dr. Goebbels have declared, since Germany announced her intention of leaving the League, that the return of the Saar Basin to the Reich would leave no territorial question in dispute between Germany and France.

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And, lastly, there is this business of Germany and the League of Nations. Before the days of the National Socialist victory there had been quite a strong campaign for Germany's withdrawal from an institution which she had badly understood, and which, for reasons given in an earlier chapter, had seemed to fail her on every occasion. In particular, Germans could not forget the League's unwilling share in the Upper Silesian decision, which, after a plebiscite giving 62.3 per cent of the votes to Germany and 37.7 per cent to Poland, awarded Poland 50 out of the 60 collieries and 400,000 out of 570,000 tons of iron ore.

But when Herr Hitler first came into power, his followers, rather surprisingly, took more interest in the League than any German Government which had preceded it. The

German League of Nations Society was expanded and became almost a Government department ; the Berlin office of the League of Nations Secretariat—one of the official outposts which the League keeps in the capitals of the Great Powers—was, I am assured, busier than at any previous time ; the German newspapers devoted far more space to the League of Nations Assembly than the papers of any other country ; and the members of Dr. Goebbels's " bodyguard " were young men who were learning to be Nazi diplomats, and who were sent to Geneva for part of their instruction.

But, it will be argued, the Germans only went to Geneva to see what they could get out of it. And, of course, they did ! It might be better if Governments sent delegates to the League with instructions to forget their national interests as much as possible for the sake of peace. But none of them ever does. Every foreign minister wants to do the best that he can for the country he represents, and he would deserve dismissal if that were not so. The important thing is that he should be determined to further those interests only by negotiation and discussion. If he negotiates in a conciliatory manner, so much the better for himself and everybody else ; if his idea of negotiation is to

hammer his fist on the table and shout, so much the worse for himself and everybody else. But it is better that a Government should instruct its Foreign Minister to be rude in Geneva than that it should instruct its War Minister to sharpen his sword. Grievances that are aired are so much less dangerous than ones that are bottled up. And it was in the highest degree encouraging when Germans began to explain that the League was really a German conception, an invention of Immanuel Kant.

Then came this sudden decision to leave Geneva. What is to be said about it? Why is this step so popular in Germany?

To some extent, one supposes, the isolationist movement, to which attention has already been drawn, is to blame. Also there are obstacles connected more closely with the League. Germany, in fact, became a member of the Geneva organisation so many years after those other Great Powers which belong to it that she never even began to develop that feeling of international solidarity which we generally refer to as the "Geneva atmosphere." The officials of the Permanent Secretariat, for example, had worked together through many crises before the first German members arrived. By doing so they had developed an *esprit de corps*, less strong now than it was in the early

days, which enabled an official so well to understand the points of view of other countries that when his own nation was involved in a dispute he could take a fairly detached view, and was a very valuable bridge between public opinion in his fatherland and public opinion elsewhere. He had sometimes to choose between two loyalties, and to run the risk of appearing doubly disloyal. But if any human being could have checked the determination of Japan to seize Manchuria, for example, it would have been a man like Mr. Sugimura, then Japanese Under-Secretary-General of the League, who made magnificent efforts to develop patience and understanding on both sides, quite regardless of the effects these efforts might have on his personal prestige. Or, to put it briefly, many members of the League Secretariat were able to serve the collectivity of the nations with the same loyalty as most Civil Servants work for whatever Government happens to be in power.

The Germans arrived too late ; they could not catch up with this loyalty that had been developing through the years. Their advent was awaited with a good deal of anxiety and suspicion. How would they be able to adapt their methods of work to the League methods ? Would they, as did certain Italians, look upon

themselves merely as agents of their Government? How would their long isolation affect them? Such were the questions the Secretariat asked itself, and the answer was not long in coming. The Germans felt too much that they were there to uphold their national prestige. Although they were the products of the "Marxist" era which the Nazis so despise, they were, for the most part, very nationalistic. Other officials dared not talk over political problems as frankly with the Germans and the Italians as they did among themselves, for nobody knew in how much detail the discussions were reported to Berlin and Rome. And the Germans feeling that they were not trusted, found confirmation for their own distrust of the League as an organisation designed to keep Germany down.

Further, this national pride sent them chasing the shadow instead of the substance. The smaller nations—more internationally minded than the great ones, since they can depend less upon their own strength—needed a leader. They had no love for a system based on the Versailles Treaty, for they had been mercilessly snubbed during the Versailles Conference, and had been able to influence proceedings no more than the Germans themselves. The obvious policy for a Great Power

momentarily placed on a footing of inferiority was to take the lead of the little nations in a campaign against the vested interests of the other Great Powers. If Germany had followed a " League " policy against secret diplomacy, against economic reaction, against the reluctance to disarm, against all the attempts to revive the old and discredited diplomatic methods, then she could have gained the moral leadership of the world—to say nothing of considerable natural benefits for herself.

If the ex-Allies have missed chances of giving us a better Europe, Germany has failed too in this respect. It is so much easier for the " have-nots " than for the " haves " to take a high moral line, to preach equality, to deny that might is right. But German policy so seldom got beyond an attempt to remind everybody that Germany was a Great Power. The defence of justice was left to men like Dr. Nansen, M. Motta of Switzerland, and Mr. Branting of Sweden—who for years fought Germany's battles for her. (Even during the Geneva Conference of 1922, Motta and Branting were so active in their attempts to conciliate the ex-Allies on the one hand and Germany and Soviet Russia on the other that their names were always coupled together as the two champions of right ; one journalist,

who grew a little tired of their persistence, and who had been urged by his editor to brighten up his despatches, began his message with the words : " Messrs. Motta and Branting, who, despite their names, are not two trick cyclists. . . .")

So that Germany had little understanding of the League and little faith in it. It was, perhaps, a political error even to admit her to membership until she was assured of " equality of rights " in fact as well as in name. Up to the moment when Herr Hitler suddenly decided he had had enough of the whole business, the German League of Nations Society was urging the acceptance of certain requests which may still be worthy of mention, since, presumably, they represented the views of the German Government.

These are the German demands :

1. " The realisation of a complete and effective equality of rights between the Member States, and especially the complete abolition of any military superiority."

2. There should be compulsory arbitration for all disputes of every kind, including " those which arise out of disagreement as to the application of a treaty, or which refer to changes of a territorial nature." In political disputes the arbitrators should not base their

decisions on juridical principles, they must be courts of equity even more than courts of law.

3. There must be rapid decisions about disarmament, since otherwise " there can be no remedy for the present depression nor for the rising tide of distrust amongst the nations."

4. Machinery for protecting the rights of national minorities should be improved, if possible, by establishing a Permanent Minorities Commission to keep a constant watch over their interests. The granting of autonomy such as that now enjoyed by Catalonia in the Spanish Republic may prove the ultimate solution. But at all events the old confusion of the State with the nation must disappear. " Events of European history have torn asunder those national groups, which became aware of their existence as a result of the French Revolution, and have cut frontiers right across them regardless of their cultural relations. The theory that the State and the nation are identical has remained an idea. Nevertheless, a number of States, especially those under French influence, still maintain the fiction of the national State with all its resultant disregard for nationality. That old idea of a national State . . . leads to the disregard of a higher principle—the observance of the natural rights of the community (of each community, not only of the one in

authority), and imposes corresponding restrictions and obligations on States, similar to those imposed in the national and international interest in other forms and in other domains."

It was the very truth of this thesis which gave Mr. Ormsby-Gore his opportunity, during the League of Nations Assembly, to criticise so drastically the National Socialist Government's failure to observe " the natural rights of the community (of each community, not only the one in authority)."

5. The Mandates system, with the obligation of the mandatory Power to give a regular account of its government to an international body, should be extended to all colonial possessions. The powers of the Mandates Commission should be extended—it should suggest future legislation and not merely comment upon the application of existing laws ; it should have the right in urgent cases to make enquiries on the spot, and it should be competent to take decisions in certain important questions, instead of merely giving advice.

One cannot pretend that, if these changes were carried out, Germany would have nothing more to demand of the outside world. As far as mandates are concerned, for example, the argument that Germany cannot live without colonies is undoubtedly making headway

among the members of the younger generation. A German with no work and not very much hope of work must naturally study the map of pre-war Europe with some regrets, and his elders would be a little more than human if they told him that there were fewer Germans in the German colonies than there are in these same territories now that they are under British, or South African Union mandates. While Herr Hitler believes that intensive colonisation inside Germany will abolish unemployment, many of his subordinates—General von Epp, the *Reichsstatthalter* in Bavaria is one of them—insist that Germany must have colonies again : otherwise she still would be without her equality, summed up in that much-abused word, *Gleichberechtigung*.

. . . . . .

Such, then, is German official foreign policy to-day. Moderate enough, one would say, and yet it has not dissipated distrust and suspicion. Mr. J. L. Garvin,[1] for example, is far from reassured. Although he began his fight against the "inequality" clauses of the Versailles Treaty almost before the ink with which they were written was dry, this is his summing up of the results of National Socialist foreign

[1] The *Observer*, October 8th, 1933.

policy (and one could have picked out much more vehement passages !) :

" The Nazis have wiped out the differences between Britain and France. Their suppression of the peace-spirit and their organised glorification of war has changed the former sympathy of the United States into cold vigilance. Fascist Italy never will go with them in these circumstances. They have alienated even Bolshevist Russia.

" They have consolidated Poland in a manner that nothing on earth but their methods could have effected. They have given new energy to the Little Entente. Belgium to a man is on guard against them. They have estranged Scandinavia. Denmark, almost ready a few years ago to abolish totally its army and navy, will stand in at need with all the rest, and fight to repel Nazi aggression in South Jutland. They had better beware before they touch the German Swiss. The Balkan States are fully awake to the danger of a new *Drang nach Osten.* To a man—yes, and to a woman—they will resist it to the death. . . .

" They have roused something in the world that they will do well to heed. They appoint stipendiary professors to inculcate unscrupulousness in war and in devising beforehand the means of war. They defend again the

violation of Belgium and the tearing up of the 'scrap of paper,' to which Prussia had attached her signature and her seal. It will not do. Never can a people be more confident in the power of material preparation than was the Hohenzollern Reich of 1914. Even that Germany did not win that war. The new Germany would have far less chance of another war, and would suffer a more fearful penalty. That truth will tell."

. . . . . .

The Germans doubtless resent this summary of the results of their foreign policy—indeed, they took the rather odd step of strengthening Mr. Garvin's views of them by forbidding the sale of the *Observer*—a sale which surely could not have influenced more than a thousand German minds inside Germany? (I apologise to the *Observer* if I under-estimate its normal circulation in that country.) But what other verdicts can the National Socialists expect when their reply to the distrusts shown by various Members of the League of Nations is to leave the League altogether? The step is popular enough in Germany, for it appears to show how strong Germany has become that she can put the world "in its place," but its effect abroad is, and must be, lamentable. I have

suggested in this book that there is insufficient understanding outside Germany of the causes of National Socialism and the military displays that go with it. How is that understanding to be increased by a German decision in favour of yet greater isolation? The League of Nations, with all its weaknesses, is the only international club where Governments can talk things over. It is weak in exact proportion to the interest these Governments show in it. The best club in the world goes bankrupt if the members do not use it. A member who takes the initiative in resigning has no right to grumble if his motives are misunderstood.

CHAPTER X

HITLER AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

THE ONLY subject in connection with Germany that can be more difficult to write about than Hitler's attitude towards the outside world is the outside world's attitude towards Hitler. It would be so much easier to omit them both from a book on Germany. If the Chancellor himself were the author, he would quite probably do so, for he shows no interest in them. What matters to him is the situation of the German race. Unfortunately, the territory inhabited by the German race does not coincide with that inhabited by the German nation, with the result that he, and still more his followers, are apt to make pronouncements on foreign politics which entirely counteract the good effect that would otherwise be created by his speeches.

When I spoke to Herr Hitler about foreign affairs he became impatient, and demanded how anybody could believe that he had time to worry about such things, with so many German problems to tackle. So one must turn

to his writings and his speeches. "*Mein Kampf*," as already suggested, is not a very reliable guide to the Hitler of to-day, since nothing changes a revolutionary's ideas so drastically as responsibility. But there are one or two passages which are important, since the ideas behind them have not greatly changed.

"The frontiers of 1914," he writes, "mean nothing in respect of Germany's future. They were no protection in the past, nor would they mean strength in the future. Only one thing is certain. Any attempt to restore the frontiers of 1914, even if successful, would merely lead to a further pouring out of our nation's blood until there was none left worth mentioning for the decisions and actions which are to remake the life and future of the nation. On the contrary, the vain glamour of that empty success would cause us to renounce any more distant objective, since 'national honour' would then be satisfied and the door opened once again, anyhow until something else happened, for commercial enterprise. It is the duty of us National Socialists to cling steadfastly to our aims in foreign policy, and these are to assure to the German nation the territory which is due to it on this earth. This form of action is the only one which could justify bloodshed in the eyes of God and of the future generations in Germany.

No nation on earth holds a square yard of territory by any right derived from heaven. Frontiers are made and altered by human agency alone. It must be thoroughly understood that the lost lands will never be won back by solemn appeals to the good God, nor by pious hopes in any League of Nations, but only by force of arms. . . ."

And if the first part of that paragraph seems to conflict with the second, the fault is not mine. Writing in much the same tone as the *Figaro* or the *Echo de Paris* use in their articles on Germany, he declares : " We must be absolutely clear that France is the permanent and inexorable enemy of the German nation ; the key to her foreign policy will always be her desire to possess the Rhine frontier and to secure that river for herself by keeping Germany broken up and in ruins. England does not want Germany as a world Power ; France does not want Germany to be a Power at all—a very essential difference ! We, however, are not fighting today for a place as a world Power, but we have to struggle for our Fatherland's existence, for our national unity, and the daily bread of our children. From this point of view, only two States are left over for us—England and Italy. . . . It is only in France that there is intimate agreement between the intentions of

the Stock Exchange, as represented by the Jews, and the desires of that nation's statesmen, who are chauvinistic by nature. This identity constitutes an immense danger to Germany, and it is the reason why France is by far the most terrible enemy of Germany. . . .

"I am convinced that the only way to alter those intentions in respect to ourselves will be to force the helm of the ship of our Reich round, and turn the ram against the enemy, and I believe that there will be a good chance of success, if we manage first to isolate France, so that the second struggle shall not be one of Germany against the world, but a defence of Germany against France, who is disturbing her peace and that of the world also. So long as the external conflict between Germany and France consists merely of defence against French aggression, it will never come to a decision, but century after century Germany will be driven from one position after another. Not until this is fully understood in Germany, so that the German nation's will to live is no longer wasted in passive defence, but is gathered together for a final settlement with France, shall we be able to bring the eternal and fruitless struggle with that country to a decision. . . ."

In this struggle Great Britain is the ally that

really matters, and not only in this struggle with France. There are those Eastern European territories which are written about with such enthusiasm by one of the Chancellor's advisers, Herr Alfred Rosenberg (whose influence has much diminished since his visit to London in the spring of 1933 to convince Englishmen that all was more than well in Germany).

"Germany's only hope of carrying out a sound territorial policy," writes Herr Hitler, "lay in acquiring fresh lands in Europe itself. Colonies are useless if they appear unsuitable for settling Europeans in large numbers. For such a policy there was only one possible ally in Europe—England. England was the only Power which could protect our rear, supposing we started a new Germanic invasion [*Germanenzug*]. We should have had just as much right to do this as our forefathers had. Our pacifists do not hesitate to eat the bread of the East, although the first ploughshare was the sword. No sacrifice would have been too great in order to gain England's concurrence. It would have meant renunciation of colonies and importance on the sea, and refraining from interference with British industry by our competition. . . .

"There was a moment when England would have let us speak to her in this sense; for she

understood very well that, owing to her increased population, Germany would have to look for some solution, and find it either in Europe, with England's help, or elsewhere in the world without it. . . . Let us imagine that Germany, with a skilful foreign policy, had played the part which Japan played in 1904—we can hardly estimate the consequences that would have had for Germany. There would never have been a World War. The talk about ' peaceful economic conquest of the world ' was the greatest piece of folly ever set up as a leading principle in State policy, especially as there was no shrinking from quoting England to prove that it was possible to carry it out in practice. The harm done by our professors with their historical teaching and theories can scarcely be made good again, and it merely proves in a striking fashion how many ' learn ' history without understanding it, or taking it in. Even in England they have had to confess to a striking refutation of the theory ; and yet no nation ever prepared better for economic conquest with the sword, or later maintained it more ruthlessly, than the British. Is it not the hall-mark of British statecraft to make economic gains out of political strength and at once to reconvert each economic gain into political power ? Thus it was a complete error

to imagine that England personally was too cowardly to shed her blood in defence of her economic policy. The fact that the British possessed no national army was no proof to the contrary ; for it is not the military form of the national forces that matters, but rather the will and determination to make use of what there is. England always possessed the armaments which she needed. She always fought with whatever weapons were necessary to ensure success. She fought with mercenaries as long as mercenaries were good enough ; but she seized hold of the best blood in all the nation whenever such a sacrifice was needed to make victory sure—but determination to fight, tenacity, and unflinching conduct of her wars were there always."

With such an ally, it should be easy to take all the land in Russia that could be needed for " colonists " without being attacked in the rear by the French. For Herr Hitler has a poor opinion of Bolshevism. " We National Socialists," he writes elsewhere, " have deliberately drawn a line under the pre-war tendency of our foreign policy. We are where we were 600 years ago. We stem the Germanic stream towards the south and west of Europe, and turn our eyes eastward. We have finished with the pre-war policy of colonies and trade,

and are going over to the land policy of the future. When we talk of new lands in Europe, we are bound to think first of Russia and her border States. Fate itself seems to wish to give us our direction. When fate abandoned Russia to Bolshevism, it robbed the Russian people of the educated class, which once created and guaranteed their existence as a State. For the organised Russian State was not due to any political capacity in the Slav race, but it was a wonderful example of the efficiency of the Germanic element in forming States among inferior races. This Germanic element may now be regarded as entirely wiped out in Russia. The Jew has taken its place. It is as impossible for the Russian to shake off the Jewish yoke by his own strength as it is for the Jew to keep control of the vast empire for any length of time."

And who can wonder, after reading all that, if the Russians have thought it wise to sign treaties of non-aggression with all their neighbours and to give such an enthusiastic welcome to M. Pierre Cot and the French air mission which recently visited Moscow?

. . . . . .

So much for the past. Now for the present. Once you admit the Chancellor's thesis, or his belief in the truth of his thesis, that "the

German nation entered the fight in 1914 without the slightest feeling of guilt on its part, and filled only with the desire to defend its Fatherland, which had been attacked, and to preserve the freedom, nay, the very existence, of the German people,"[1] once you admit that Hitler honestly holds this belief, then his speeches as Chancellor have been so moderate that if they could be taken *au pied de la lettre* there would have been a noteworthy improvement in European relations.

Last April I went through Potsdam on what seemed to me the most sensible mission on a German Sunday—to go canoeing on the Wannsee—and I noticed a crowd of people outside the Garrison Church. They were visitors who wanted to see the place where, more than a month before, President von Hindenburg had opened the first Reichstag session under the National Socialist régime. All the newspapers were filled with articles to commemorate *Der Tag von Potsdam*, which was one of the most important days since Herr Hitler became Chancellor, since it brought together the three German idols—Hitler, the old President of the Republic, and the ghost of that famous Francophile, Frederick the Great. On that day Hitler's only reference to foreign affairs

[1] Proclamation by the German Government, February 1st, 1933.

ran : " In our relations to the world we wish, having clearly before our eyes the sacrifices of the war, to be the champions of a peace which shall finally heal those wounds from which all are suffering."

Two days later, on March 23rd, he put his detailed programme before the Reichstag—on this occasion transferred to the Kroll Opera House in Berlin opposite the burnt-out shell of the old building—and his remarks on the same subject were more specific. They were a warning of later deadlocks in disarmament discussions. " The protection of the frontiers of the Reich, and thereby of the lives of our people and the existence of our business, is now in the hands of the Reichswehr, which, in accordance with the terms imposed upon us by the Treaty of Versailles, is to be regarded as the only really disarmed army in the world. . . . For years Germany has been waiting in vain for the fulfilment of the promise of disarmament made to her by the others. It is the sincere desire of the National Government to be able to refrain from increasing our army and our weapons, in so far as the rest of the world is now also ready to fulfil its obligations in the matter of radical disarmament. For Germany desires nothing except an equal right to live and equal freedom. In any case, the National Government will

educate the German people in this spirit of a desire for freedom. The national honour, the honour of our army, and the ideal of freedom must once more become sacred to the German people ! The German nation wishes to live in peace with the rest of the world. But it is for this very reason that the Government of the Reich will employ every means to obtain the final removal of the division of the nations of the world into two categories. The keeping open of this wound leads to distrust on the one side and hatred on the other, and thus to a general feeling of insecurity. The National Government are ready to extend a hand in sincere understanding to every nation that is ready finally to make an end of the tragic past. The international economic distress can only disappear when the basis has been provided by stable political relations and when the nations have regained confidence in each other."

Later, in his May Day speech, the note of determination to throw off those Versailles obligations which place Germany on a different level from the victorious Powers becomes louder and more defiant : " We are not of those who leave everything to Providence. Nothing will be given to us for nothing. Just as the road which we have trod in the last fourteen

years up to the present day was a road of eternal strife, a road which often led us to the point of despair, so will the road to a better future also be a hard one. The world is persecuting us ; it is turning against us ; it will not recognise our right to live nor our right to protect our homeland. My German comrades ! If the world is so against us, we must all the more unite ourselves together, we must all the more firmly proclaim : ' You can do what you like, but you will never make us bow our heads, you will never compel us to recognise a yoke. You will never compel our nation to give up its claim to equal rights.' The German people have come to themselves."

On May 17th there was a special session of the Reichstag, not to vote on legislation, since the *Führer* had obtained freedom under the Enabling Bill two months earlier, but to add solemnity to his speech in which he was to lay down the lines of Germany's foreign policy. Again comes the rejection of the " war guilt " clause which so many Englishmen, but no Germans, have forgotten. Speaking of the reparation problem, Herr Hitler said : " Germany has faithfully fulfilled the obligations imposed upon her, in spite of their intrinsic lack of reason and the obviously suicidal consequences of this fulfilment. The international

economic crisis is the indisputable proof of the correctness of this statement. The chances of restoring a general international legal sentiment have also been no less destroyed by the treaty. For, in order to justify all the measures of this edict, Germany had to be branded as the guilty party. This procedure is, indeed, just as simple as it is inadmissible. In any future cases of conflict the vanquished will always be the guilty party, because the victor can establish this fact in the easiest manner possible. This procedure, therefore, assumes a terrible significance, because it gave at the same time an excuse for the conversion of the power ratio existing at the end of the war into a permanent legal status. The conception of conqueror and conquered thus literally became the foundation of a new international legal and social order. The degradation of a great people to a second-class nation was proclaimed at the same moment as a League of Nations came into being.

" This treatment of Germany could not lead to the pacification of the world. The disarmed state and defencelessness of the conquered parties which were thus considered necessary—an unheard-of procedure in the history of the European nations—were still less calculated to diminish the general dangers and conflicts, but

merely led to that condition of constant menaces, demands, and sanctions which, by the unrest and insecurity which they give rise to, threaten to undermine the entire economic structure of the world. If no consideration is given by the nations to the danger of certain actions, reason may easily be overcome by unreason. At any rate, up to the present the League of Nations has been unable to grant any appreciable assistance to the weak and unarmed in such cases. Treaties concluded for the pacification of the nations only possess an inner meaning when they are based on real and honest equality of rights for all. This is the main reason for the state of unrest which has been weighing on the world for a number of years.

"It is, however, in the interests of all that present-day problems should be solved in a reasonable and final manner. No new European war could improve the unsatisfactory conditions of the present day. On the contrary, the application of violence of any kind in Europe could have no favourable effect upon the political or economic position which exists to-day. Even if a fresh European act of violence had a decisive result, the ultimate effect would be to increase the disturbance of European equilibrium, and thus, in one manner or another, to sow the seed of further conflicts and

complications. The result would be fresh wars, fresh uncertainty, and fresh economic distress. The outbreak of such infinite madness would necessarily cause the collapse of the present social and political order. A Europe sinking into Communistic chaos would bring about a crisis the extent and duration of which could not be foreseen.

"It is the earnest desire of the National Government of the German Reich to prevent such a disturbing development by means of its honest and active co-operation. . . . Speaking deliberately as a German National Socialist, I desire to declare in the name of the National Government, and of the whole movement of national regeneration, that we in this new Germany are filled with deep understanding for the same feelings and opinions and for the rightful claims to life of the other nations. The present generation of this new Germany, which, so far, has only known in its life the poverty, misery, and distress of its own people, has suffered too deeply from the madness of our time to be able to contemplate treating others in the same way. Our boundless love for, and loyalty to, our own national traditions makes us respect the national claims of others, and makes us desire from the bottom of our hearts to live with them in peace and friendship.

" We therefore have no use for the idea of Germanisation. The mentality of the past century, which made people believe that they could make Germans out of Poles and Frenchmen, is completely foreign to us ; the more so as we are passionately opposed to any attempt on the part of others to alienate us from our German tradition. We look at the European nations objectively. The French, the Poles, etc., are our neighbours, and we know that through no possible development of history can this reality be altered."

Towards the end of the same speech, and " with regard to the contention, repeated by France again and again, that the safety of France must be secured to the same extent as the equality of Germany," he asked two questions :

" 1. Germany has so far accepted all the obligations with regard to security arising from the signing of the Versailles Treaty, the Kellogg Pact, the Treaties of Arbitration, the Pact of Non-Aggression, etc. What other concrete assurances are left for Germany to give ?

" 2. On the other hand, how much security has Germany ? According to the figures published by the League, France alone has 3,046 aeroplanes in service, Belgium 350, Poland 700, Czechoslovakia 670. In addition to these numbers, there are innumerable

reserve aeroplanes, thousands of tanks, thousands of heavy guns, and all the necessary technical equipment for chemical warfare. Has not Germany, in her state of defencelessness and disarmament, greater justification in demanding security than the over-armed States bound together in military alliances?

"Nevertheless, Germany is at any time willing to undertake further obligations in regard to international security, if all the other nations are ready on their side to do the same, and if this security is also to benefit Germany. Germany would also be perfectly ready to disband her entire military establishment, and destroy the small amount of arms remaining to her, if the neighbouring countries will do the same thing with equal thoroughness. But if these countries are not willing to carry out the disarmament measures to which they are also bound by the Treaty of Versailles, Germany must at least maintain her demand for equality."

So much for Hitler's words. They are not, in themselves, very terrifying, for they only repeat in a slightly different form what many British newspapers, from *The Times* to the *Manchester Guardian* (the latter ever since the Peace Conference) were writing and rewriting until less than a year ago. Nor has the treatment of the Jews alone been sufficient to swing

round public opinion in this and many other countries until " equality " with Germany is the last thing to which it wishes to agree, and until anyone who suggests that the Germans of to-day are just the same Germans as they were a year ago, even if they do wave flags and wear badges, is called a " pro-German," as though we were back at war again. It needs more courage now to write a book urging the modification of the " inequality " clauses of the Versailles Treaty than it did before that treaty had come into force. I did the one and am doing the other, so I may claim to know !

No, Hitler's words would not make such a change possible. There are, I believe, four reasons for it : the treatment of democrats and Jews inside Germany, the incidents along the frontiers, the semi-military or military training of men and boys, and the fact that the German Government is a dictatorship. In France, the second and the third reasons are those which cause most alarm ; in England, perhaps the third and the fourth, for we have never yet been able to realise that a form of government which suits us, and which we have been able to adapt throughout centuries, may not suit other people. Whether the effort to introduce democratic methods into countries like Egypt or India has added to, or detracted from, the

happiness of their illiterate inhabitants, I do not know. Thank heaven, I am only writing a book about Germany, where, as a prominent German once remarked, " We have a Republic but no republicans."

The treatment of Germans inside Germany has already been dealt with and here I would only add the fact that the Government now propose to get rid of the concentration camps without much delay. Let us take the other three reasons separately, for they are not necessarily different sides of the same problem. Many of the people who object to German rearmament, for example, are not at all opposed to the idea of a dictatorship. The " Diehards," who have not yet got over their anti-German feelings of the last war, and the Communists, who look upon Fascism as a dangerous rival, agree in upholding the idea of a minority Government with dictatorial powers. This business of dictatorship, in fact, cuts across all political parties, and it ought not to be confused with the bullying which went on in Italy and Germany when their democratic systems were overthrown. The democratic ideal for which people have struggled generation after generation, and which has its martyrs far back into history, no longer inspires our sons as it did our fathers. Almost every obstacle which people

a century ago believed stood between them and freedom has gone. Every adult in our own country now has the right to vote, and yet as canvassers know, it is difficult, except on panic issues, to persuade him to go a few hundred yards out of his normal way to his work in order to record his vote. He does not feel that the power to vote gives him the power to govern ; if he did, he would be more anxious to make use of it.

Furthermore, a desire for some form of government which imposes its will, instead of waiting for public opinion to tell it what to do, is growing in almost every country. Many of us must have noticed, during the last few months, the number of young men marching about in black shirts or in some other semi-uniform, even in our own country, where fear of ridicule still prevents men from wearing sensible clothes in summer. Surely for that very reason it is wiser to examine dictatorships impartially than to dismiss them as revolting and reactionary tyrannies ? For if we pay too little attention to the reasons why this system of government appeals to the younger generation, we are quite clearly in some danger of believing that we alone remain sane in a world that is going mad. That may be so, but it is a dangerous assumption to make, because it lessens our

efforts to understand other countries, and everybody, of every political colour, seems to be of the opinion that our gravest problems are international and can only be solved by international agreement.

Hitlerism would be much easier to deal with if it were a tyranny depending upon force alone. But in many countries the passionate desire for individual liberty has been replaced by an equally passionate desire for the subjection of individual interests to those of the State. This is especially the case among the younger people, because youth always wants to devote itself to some cause, and under a dictatorship its service is not limited to time of war. On every train in Italy there are a couple of young Fascists who walk up and down to see nobody steals the luggage—a dull enough job, I should have thought, but one that is carried out with enthusiasm. If democracy is to flourish, it must somehow do more to appeal to the imagination of the young.

I am sure that the development of science is at the back of it all. Thanks to private initiative, better and better machines have been invented to produce more and cheaper goods, but each man thus put out of work has meant one person the fewer who can buy the goods the manufacturer wants to sell. As Mr. John

Strachey says : " It is now not merely technically possible, by using our modern machines, to give everyone enough to eat, to wear, and to shelter in, but it is technically necessary to do so, unless the new machines are to cause unemployment, chaos, and war, instead of peace and plenty."[1]

That technical development is something so new in the history of mankind that we are still bewildered by it. And yet it seems to me to render Fascism almost inevitable in the newer countries where the roots of democracy had never gone very deep. It leads to two conflicting tendencies in international politics. On the one hand we have the argument that industry cannot flourish unless it has the whole world as its market, and on the other we have the development of economic nationalism, which means that each country wants to export as much and to import as little as possible. The first tendency has led to the League of Nations ; the second to tariffs, quotas, import restrictions, Hitlerism, and President Roosevelt's insistence that the United States must set her own house in order before she can worry overmuch about the rest of the world. It is surely important to remember that these tendencies, although in conflict, spring from the same cause.

[1] *The Menace of Fascism*, by John Strachey (Victor Gollancz).

Another result of our power to produce on so large a scale is the confused feeling that competition must give way to co-operation. President Roosevelt, through his National Industrial Recovery Act, is trying to get rid of class warfare by persuading industries to fix a high minimum wage and a short working day. Herr Hitler, following Signor Mussolini, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, and others, but acting much more ruthlessly than they did, has wiped out all political parties and hopes to wipe out all social divisions. The corporative State about which the National Socialist countries talk so much is still so vaguely planned that one can hardly discuss it, but its fundamental idea is that people employed in any one industry should no longer be divided into competing groups of employers and workers. In Russia the same idea has been carried so much farther that the State has become the only employer of labour. The new London Passenger Transport Board puts an end to competition which, if left uncontrolled, might have so crowded the roads with rival 'buses that none of them could move.

Here we come to the main cause and the main strength of the dictatorial system, be it Fascist or Communist. Many people fear that democratic Governments, depending, as they

must, upon public opinion, will allow the natural reluctance of the individual to be interfered with to prevent the world from making the most of its new wealth. The American war veterans' ramp, which led Congress in 1932 to vote pensions to more than twelve times as many ex-soldiers as were actually disabled, is perhaps the most glaring example of the way in which vested interests can misuse the democratic system even in a highly civilised State. Only the fear that President Roosevelt, turned dictator, would make them more unpopular by imposing fresh taxation gave Members of Congress the courage to put an end to a crying scandal. There is much more resentment in Germany than most people outside that country realise against individuals—not so many of them Jews as the Nazi newspapers like to pretend—who line their own pockets at the expense of the community. The belief that the Hitler Government can put a stop to that sort of thing is one of the main reasons for the support given to it by a number of intelligent and responsible citizens who look upon the " Aryan " creed as dangerous nonsense.

In October the new German Press law was issued. It insists that every journalist shall be an " Aryan " and, to all intents and purposes,

a Government official. Unless his name is entered in a professional list, prepared by the regional Press associations and approved by the Ministry of Propaganda, he may not exercise his profession. There is a terrifying number of things a man may not write about lest he offend the Government, but particular emphasis is laid upon the necessity of avoiding anything which might " confuse selfish interests with the common interest in a manner misleading to the public."

The German Press, then, becomes entirely and absolutely subservient to the National Socialist régime. But that is not so great a danger to peace as many people believe. I once ventured to suggest to Signor Mussolini that the Italian Press had become incredibly dull since every newspaper was told what it had to say, and he agreed that the control tended that way. But, he asked, which was better—a Press that worked entirely for the national interests as conceived by the Government of the day, as was the case in Italy and Germany, or a Press such as one found in the " democratic " countries, where there was free speech but where some newspapers were controlled by armament firms or others whose aims might be quite opposed to the national interest, or where other newspapers were run

entirely for private profit by people with no sense of responsibility toward the nation? I did not argue—one doesn't with Mussolini—but I felt there might be something to be said for his point of view, and particularly when there was a danger of war. So many statesmen since the last war have wanted to agree, but have not dared to do so because of their fear of public opinion at home, so many chances of real progress have been baulked by popular but suicidal prejudice, that one's regrets for the disappearance in many countries of what is generally called " democracy " are not so keen as they would otherwise have been.

For the alternative to democracy is not an absolute dictatorship. In the words of Count Koudenhove-Calergi, the founder of the Pan-European Movement: " It is to be expected that, in the coming years, the hostility between the Fascist and the democratic systems will lose force. For the history of dictatorships during the last ten years has shown plainly that a return to absolutism is impossible, that any attempt by a dictator or a monarch to rule in opposition to the public opinion of his people soon leads to his downfall, that Fascist régimes can only last if they have the support of the masses—that is to say, if they attack the parliamentary form of democracy but not the

principle of popular participation in the functioning of the State. . . . What all the peoples of Europe need is a synthesis of governmental authority and popular control, of aristocratic direction supplemented by democratic supervision."

In other words, the dictator of to-day can keep public opinion in check, whereas public opinion keeps the democratic statesman in check. And this may be of great importance in the event of an international crisis. For it is an error to believe that the dictator necessarily wants war ; he only wants, in Mussolini's own words, to " live dangerously."

Many of the Duce's speeches, for example, have been unpleasantly reminiscent of those of the ex-Kaiser before 1914. And yet nobody can seriously believe he is going to risk the whole organisation he has built up during the last ten years in Italy, and his own position into the bargain (for it was one of his closest friends who reminded me that a declaration of war is seldom signed by the same man who signs the subsequent declaration of peace), unless he stands a chance of making a very good thing out of it. And there is no war one can envisage which would give Signor Mussolini greater prestige and greater power than he enjoys to-day, when he acts as mediator

between France and Germany. Even in the case of Herr Hitler, the evidence that he wants to make war is extremely slight. The seeds of war would be there in Germany, dictator or no dictator. The only change is that they may germinate more quickly under the burning heat of nationalism.

The dangers and follies of nationalism are obvious, and they have already delayed a European recovery by years, but we need not believe that a nationalist dictatorship is synonymous with a threat of war. Any lasting peace must be based on reality, and in reality war is just as destructive to a dictatorship as to a democracy. There is only this difference—that nationalism is latent in a democracy, and may become so aroused during a crisis that it sweeps a democratic Government off its feet, while nationalism is an article of everyday use in a dictatorship, and its manifestations may arouse the latent nationalism of the democrat across the Frontier. Both forms of government are dangerous, but the dictator, unless he wants a war (and, if he is a realist, as most dictators are, he is not likely to do so), stands a better chance than his democratic colleague of checking and calming public opinion at a time of crisis. He will use the Press and the army as pawns in peace time, but he will do everything

to avoid a war. And, to console ourselves because so many other countries are choosing dictator Governments, we might remember that the most drastic proposals for the reduction of armaments have come from two great dictator countries, Russia and Italy. (Although this is a book about Germany, I leave Germany out, because she has such obvious reasons for wanting armaments equality that she can claim no very great credit if many of the Chancellor's speeches have been in favour of drastic general disarmament.) And, again, Turkey under a dictator has recently taken the lead in trying to form a " Balkan Locarno." That such bitter enemies as Turkey and Greece should have become such good friends, thanks to the patient efforts of statesmen on both sides, that they have been able to sign a treaty that amounts almost to an alliance—that is as near a miracle as we have seen in international politics since the war. It does not confirm the widespread idea that dictators believe only in bloodshed. And it would be unwise to base one's judgment of Germany, and to condemn her as a danger to the peace, solely on the ground that she has a dictatorial Government. We have to go further and to enquire whether that Government wants war.

CHAPTER XI

DOES GERMANY WANT WAR?

MODERATION in official statements does very little to counteract the depressing and alarming fact that Germany is drilling her young men just as though she were preparing for 1914 all over again. It is impossible to argue convincingly that Herr Hitler does not want war when he so obviously wants military training. Some weeks ago I was debating with a German friend. "How can anybody imagine we want another war?" he asked indignantly. "Didn't we have a bad enough time in the last one? It's lunacy to think we want to go through that again." "How can anybody imagine anything else," I replied, "when he can never listen to a German wireless station without hearing a military band or some talk about Germany and her glory?"

My friend interrupted me to say that intelligent people in Germany had given up listening to the wireless. I thought back to the evenings I spent in little inns during a recent canoe trip down the River Mosel, and I had

to agree that whenever this militarist propaganda began one of the Germans in the room switched us over to Strasbourg, Luxembourg, or dance music from Daventry. It was done as a matter of course, without even consulting other listeners. But even if the same thing were happening all over Germany, it would not do away with two facts. One is that to the great majority of non-Germans the wireless is their only oral link with Germany, and they must judge the country by its broadcast programmes. The other is that the propagandists at the head of things in Germany think that militarism is good for their listeners.

Much attention has been drawn in Great Britain to a book by Dr. Ewald Banse on *Military Science*. It is true that he is not a well-known man, but it is also true that he is a professor appointed by the Government to one of the newly founded chairs of Military Science, and, as such, he must be treated as a man of considerable importance. His book is, as *The Times* of September 6th puts it, "A child's guide to war, intended to direct into military channels the minds of people whose normal occupation is not that of arms, but whose existence is ultimately conditioned by the inevitability of war." This book has now been withdrawn on the ground that "tendencious

extracts" from it have been published abroad. This step is all the more welcome in that it was taken less than a week after Germany's decision to leave the League, but these extracts have been so widely read in foreign countries that I give one or two of them; they help to explain the reluctance to give Germany her promised equality in armaments.

"Nobody should be in doubt," writes Professor Banse, "that war stands between our prevailing need and our coming fortune. But war is no longer a fresh and jolly campaign with military bands, victorious colours, and a cornucopia of decorations. It is bloody battle; and in particular a contest of material; it is gas, plague, tank, and aircraft horror; it is hunger and poverty, baseness and lies, deprivation and sacrifice. The only nation that can endure it is one whose every member has known for years and is convinced in the depths of his soul that his life belongs to the State and only to the State, which is the guardian of nationhood and mother-tongue and culture. Therefore we shall not look at war through rose-coloured glasses; we shall not desire it, but we are convinced that it will come, and that we must pass through it to reach our freedom. All the more must every man, woman, and child know what war means."

War, he goes on to argue, is the only inexorably just test of will and ability, for only in war is the immediate verdict pronounced by victory or defeat. "Everyone must understand that there is nothing extraordinary or criminal about war, that it is not a sin against humanity." Nor, apparently, is any method of waging it, for a section of the book is given up to chemical and bacteriological warfare; "every method must be allowed to ward off a stronger enemy and to conquer him."

Professor Banse can hardly complain if other peoples, realising that this sort of thing is being taught to German children, sometimes feel that they had better get another and more overwhelming verdict against Germany than they did in 1918.

In a recent issue of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which still does its best to retain its old Liberal traditions, I came across a long article on "School and Air Protection," in a section headed, "For High School and Youth." As the Russians did before them, the Germans are working up the belief that they may be attacked from the air. The author of this particular article is doubtless sincere when he writes:

"Each one of us who has any sense of responsibility knows how fully armed in the

air the military powers that surround Germany are. The protection of our population by military means is not yet permitted to us ; we have only that ' civil protection ' which must accompany the military method."[1]

There can be no doubt that German disarmament in the air may easily arouse a considerable fear of attack. But one revolts when he goes on to argue that the greatness of this danger must be taught to the children in the schools. Apparently the Air Ministry has already been in touch with the different educational departments to institute compulsory lessons in protection from air attack in all German schools. A conference of science and mathematics masters at Erfurt greeted this initiative " most warmly," and declared itself ready " to undertake the teaching of this important national task, and to set about making it a success with all energy, and for the welfare of the German people."

Meanwhile the writer in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* wants to waste no time. In geography lessons there is a chance to show " how disarmed we are and how menaced from the air," while the chemistry hour will be great fun ! Then the pupils can learn all about the different forms of poison gas, and the way in which they

[1] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Sept. 17th, 1933.

cause death. Having done this, they can go home and tell their parents all about it, and before we know where we are the whole population will be watching the skies, gas masks in hand. Already the National Air Protection League is busy, and posters urging the citizens to join it as a matter of duty appear in the stations and elsewhere. The first bomb-proof cellar for the general public has been opened in Berlin.

"The lads of the Nazi 'Storm Sections,'" writes the Berlin correspondent of *The Times*,[1] "have it persistently drummed into them that they are soldiers, in addresses lauding German war victories on land and sea, and boosting Germany's mission in the East and the expansionist theories of Herr Rosenberg. Their weekly organ, the *S. A. Mann*, keeps war constantly before their eyes with pictures and articles on fighting, essays on tactics, instructions (with diagrams) in the handling of machine guns, and so on. The controlled daily Press abounds as never before in illustrated articles on phases of war glorifying German heroism. A stream of children and youths passes through war exhibitions studying models of trench and sea warfare.

"Anxious Germans may rest assured that

[1] Sept. 27th, 1933.

all this is not deliberately misconstrued by foreigners whose home has been Germany for the last decade. In spite of a certain detachment, which does not exclude sympathy, such observers realise that much of the shouting and exaggeration is sheer revolutionary exuberance; that the sections of the German nation who have always felt themselves to be the only true patriots are enjoying the sound of their own unrestrained voices and genuinely believe that it is essential to raise the national self-respect. Foreign residents understand also when clear-sighted Germans explain that it is impossible, in the present early stage of treaty revision, for German orators to admit that the military terms of the Peace Treaty are being to some extent evaded, or even that Germany is interfering in Austria. German spokesmen are faced with an obvious dilemma. If they make frank admissions, however well justified, they condemn themselves out of their own mouths. If they deny the obvious, public opinion abroad questions their trustworthiness.

"It cannot be wondered at that suspicion is roused abroad. Even assuming that Herren Hitler and Goebbels and other Nazi leaders are sincerely persuaded of the fundamental peacefulness of their people, is it to be wondered at that foreign opinion should be afraid

lest, in a period of three, five, or even more years, when Germany has increased her armaments, and when some followers of the Banse school consider war inevitable, an expansionist movement, stimulated by these flamboyant methods, may not burst out of the German frontiers?"

One could fill pages with evidence that a section of the National Socialist movement thinks in terms of war, and that the mentality of the younger generation will be poisoned with hatred and a belief that might is the only right, unless this present policy changes very quickly. Fortunately there are some grounds for hoping that it will do so. For part of this pre-occupation with arms and armies is genuine and understandable. The London correspondent of the National Socialist paper, *Voelkischer Beobachter*, in a message dated October 3rd, and headed "This is Disarmament!" refers to a very effective new British shell of which details had been printed in the *Daily Telegraph*.

"The British declare that they have disarmed far more than their security justifies," he writes, "but they ask in the same breath why Germany wants arms since she is threatened by nobody. Then we are entitled to put another question in reply and ask who

threatens England, and against what enemy is she insufficiently protected."

This interest in the armaments of her neighbours and ex-enemies is not due solely to jealousy ; uneasiness plays its part, and would do with us were we in Germany's position.

It is significant, and a little encouraging, that this same *Voelkischer Beobachter*, formerly notorious for the violence of its language, devoted its front page on September 29th to the address given by Dr. Goebbels to the foreign Press representatives in Geneva. The headline runs : " National Socialist Germany and her task : for peace among nations," and each of the Propaganda Minister's references to the abolition of war is printed in leaded type.

Lastly there is the interview that General Goering gave to M. Jules Sauerwein, printed in the Paris *Soir* of October 5th.

" We don't want war," he said. " I, a soldier whose job it has been to fight for years on end, I say that to you. And I'll tell you why we don't want it. France and Germany cannot wipe each other out. They have never managed it. We don't forget the years in which so much heroism was shown. Great things were done, but the sufferings were appalling. What people could you get to go through that sort of trial

again except for an imperious and absolute necessity? And there is only one such necessity—it's the revolt of a whole people if its territory is invaded or if someone tries to enslave it, to dishonour it. War-like songs, patriotic enthusiasm—they are all very well, but the reality of war is something quite different. That General Staffs want war does not astonish me; it's their job. But we, men of the people, governed by a leader who comes of the people, we know that we could win very little and should stand the chance of losing everything. War for a strip of territory? Never! But against an enemy who wanted to annihilate us? Then war to the last man and the last breath. We have no idea of revenge. There used to be an old song, '*Siegreich wollen wir Frankreich Schlagen*' ('We want to fight and to defeat France'). I've given the order that it must be sung no more. . . .

"We are entirely surrounded by countries which are friends or allies of France. We can be attacked from every direction, wiped out. Do people expect us to be absolutely without self-defence? Do they pretend that with a few military or naval weapons we can hold out against air attack? . . . That would be very serious. It would mean that they have in mind the possibility of sanctions against us, of air

raids, and that they want to be able to carry them out without any risk. . . . I insist upon a small fleet of aeroplanes, too light for bombing, and even, if you like, without petrol tanks big enough for long flights. These little fighting machines would be no good for attack, but they could defend us against attack. . . . Is it not miserable and absurd that these eternal disputes and this tension never disappear between our two countries? Do you believe these is a single subject of disagreement for which it is worth our while to poison our existences in this way? I don't. Only, on both sides, to master public opinion, to have the nerve to start along an entirely new path and to talk things over absolutely frankly, men of immense courage and immense power must face each other. Here we have the man. If the Leader pledges the German people, it is an absolutely definite pledge, given without any reserve, and the whole German nation will follow him. You, despite your parliamentary disputes and compromises, have you such a man as well? And can you bring him face to face with our leader? I hope so with all my heart, for, when I think it over, I fear that we must be either the best of friends or the worst of enemies. There's no middle way."

I have suggested earlier in this book that

General Goering is a man who speaks his own mind. At times it is just as well, for I have read no more frank and honest presentation of the case as seen by National Socialist Germany.

To it, M. Georges Comines replies, in the same paper, with logic that is devastating but, to me at least, a little depressing. "What does Germany demand of us?" he writes. "That we make concessions, and, of course, concessions that are not reciprocal. She has nothing to offer us, and we want to ask nothing of her. She wants us to agree that she should increase her military strength, and that we should sharpen her claws so as to make her completely pacific.

"What Frenchman would fail to see the danger of such a policy? To allow Germany to increase her armaments—be they defensive or offensive it doesn't matter much—is to increase her feeling of power, it is to develop her idea of superiority, which would rapidly become a menace; it is to destroy that pacifism of which M. Goering boasts. If history shows that Germany and France have never wiped each other out, it also shows that whenever Germany has felt the stronger her spirit of domination and conquest has been unleashed. We should be incredibly imprudent and blind if we ourselves were to put our hands to that lever."

And how is anyone to build a bridge over the Rhine between France and Germany when the same ideal of peace is seen from such different angles? As Pierre Viénot points out in *Is Germany Finished?* " When Germany asks : Does France want an agreement ? she means : Does France realise that the world, and Germany's position in the world, can change ? When France asks : Does Germany want an agreement? she means : Does Germany want peace ? and ' peace ' of course means the Treaty of June 28th, 1919." And one sometimes fears that the two countries will never learn to mean the same thing by the same words. The Treaty of Verdun, which was to bring lasting peace between the Eastern Franks (the Germans) and the Western Franks (the French), was signed in August 843 !

. . . . . .

It is widely realised—though not widely enough—that armaments lead to insecurity. If one country builds a big new battleship, its neighbour grows uneasy, and builds a bigger and a newer one. And so the race begins. We should have learnt by now that preparation for war does not bring peace, since, between 1908 and 1914, the three greatest European Powers—Great Britain, France, and Germany —increased their armaments by almost seventy

per cent, and they got, not peace, but the biggest war in history. But it is less widely realised that the lack of armaments in an armed world also may lead to insecurity. It may be perfectly true that nobody proposes to attack Germany, and therefore she need not worry. But who on earth is going to attack us? And how can Germany be expected not to worry about her security when her neighbours, so much better armed and equipped, talk all the time about theirs! This drilling of youth, these provocative speeches near the frontiers, these boring brass bands on the radio—they are obviously all political blunders, but they are not made because Germany wants war. It is a paradox, but I believe it to be true, that Germany will be less of a danger to peace when her neighbours are less obviously stronger than she is. It is scarcely reasonable to expect a German to be moved when a French statesman, with his fully equipped conscript army behind him, expresses horror because youth in Germany is taken out on route marches or lectured on Germany's greatness. It may be equally unreasonable to expect a Frenchman to cut down his armaments just at the moment when German statesmen are most nationalistic, and he can argue with justice that he has made a great step towards disarmament by reducing

the term of military service. But this is a book on Germany, and in this chapter we are trying to look at Europe from the German point of view.

Nor does it help to tell the German that he is a danger because he started the last war. He quite honestly does not believe it. It is very convenient to talk of countries as though they were individuals. We learn to think of them as living entities instead of strange-shaped blobs on a map. But there is one great difference between a nation and a man—the nation takes so much longer to die. We write, talk, and think as though the Great Britain of to-day were the same country as the Great Britain of yesterday, and yet many of its governors in Parliament were schoolboys when the war broke out, and children that were not born when the war ended will be growing up to manhood when the next big war crisis comes along.

The change has been much more remarkable in Germany, where the death-rate both during and after the war was so much higher. The men governing Germany to-day could have had no conceivable influence upon the policy of the country in 1914. Is it reasonable to expect them to have a feeling of personal guilt and responsibility for it? Are we Old Testament Gods, to visit the sins of the fathers upon

the children? Even the least nationalistic among us would resent such an imputation of guilt, and would feel it our most sacred and patriotic duty to work for its removal from the history books and the minds of men. Those in whom this sentiment of nationalism was naturally most acute—and especially the club armchair patriots—would feel that duty must be carried out even if it involved another war. I sometimes think our inability to understand the Germans to-day arises from the fact that we expect them to be so different from ourselves when, in fact, they are so like us.

And for that small outburst of bad temper I apologise! But I do not believe—and most emphatically do not believe—that Germany wants war. Not yet! And it will not be her fault alone if she ever does.

CHAPTER XII

THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND HITLER

THE ADVENT of Herr Hitler to power has, very unexpectedly, done more than anything else that has happened since the Peace Conference to wipe out prejudices and suspicions between European nations. In a general way it may be said that, except along the frontiers of Germany, the political situation is far more favourable than it has been since the Peace Conference. Greece and Turkey, only a little more than ten years after the conclusion of a very bitter war between them, are bosom friends, and their flags have been flying side by side in the shadow of the Acropolis and from the swagger new Government departments which the Turks have built on the bare yellow hills at Ankara. They have been tempting Bulgaria to give up her claims for frontier revision and urging her to take a stronger line against the Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation, so that she can join in the love feast with Jugoslavia and Rumania. The Little Entente countries are far more friendly towards

Austria than they have been since the Austro-Hungarian Empire was carved up for their benefit, and they would make considerable, if belated, economic concessions to Dr. Dolfuss to keep him in power and the Austrian Nazis out of it. Even towards Hungary their attitude has changed, and if Hungary's attitude towards them has less obviously done so, it is only because she would like back some of her lost territories before she opens her arms in friendship.

In Eastern Europe the change is more remarkable still. One of the few successes of the World Economic Conference in London was the batch of treaties of friendship which M. Litvinoff took back to Moscow with him—treaties with Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Jugoslavia, Poland, Turkey, Latvia, Estonia, Persia, and Afghanistan, which help to stabilise the frontiers and to lay down an automatic test of aggression. To get these treaties through, Russia has had to forget all about her claim to Bessarabia, which for years has made the River Dniester one of the most absolute barriers in Europe ; where I visited it at Tighina there was a wrecked bridge to emphasise the destruction of all links between Rumania and Russia. Moscow and Warsaw say such nice things about each other that one finds it difficult to

believe they were at war in 1920. As for Russia and France, the welcome given to M. Pierre Cot, the French Air Minister, on his visit to Moscow in the early autumn, reminds one a little too closely of the visits paid to St. Petersburg by President Poincaré and others before the war of 1914. Fascist Italy and Communist Russia have long been on fairly cordial terms, and the events of the last few months have increased this cordiality.

Last, and most important of all, is the *rapprochement* between France and Italy, which if it is strengthened will put an end to most of the rivalry in the Balkans and the Danubian plain. Instead of a group of countries under Italian influence—Bulgaria, Hungary, and Austria—in opposition to a Francophile group —Jugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Rumania —there might be an economic federation of the very greatest value. The whole of Europe, in fact, is fast being linked together by a network of treaties which promise either that active help will be forthcoming for the victim of aggression or, at the very least, that there shall be no help for the aggressor. And the whole change in this European alignment has come about as a result of the anxiety caused by past speeches and present militarist propaganda in Germany. Never in time of peace has there

been such an overwhelming concentration against one country.

"But," asks Sir Norman Angell,[1] "overwhelming to what end? If it means a mere repetition of pre-war 'encirclement' it will mean, ultimately, a repetition of its result. Its purpose must include what that of the old pre-war anti-German block did not include: security for Germany as complete as that which it seeks to establish for the non-German States. It must be made plain that it is a power created not to put Germany or any other State in a position of inferiority or defencelessness, but for the purpose of supporting certain principles of international life—beginning with the principle of third party judgment, that none shall be his own judge in his own cause; that this shall operate as much for the defence of Germany as of others. . . . But that this is indeed its purpose can only now be made clear by certain acts. That the principle of equality of rights animates the new union must be shown by our readiness now, or at a definite date not too remote, to disarm broadly down to Germany's level. If it be argued that 'this is not the time' to diminish our forces, it should be remembered that what we lose in reduction of individual power we more than

[1] *Time and Tide*, Oct. 7th, 1933.

counter-balance by the gain in force represented by unity. Against a Europe which was really united, Germany could do nothing, even though there had been great reduction in the forces of each individual of the union."

This series of treaties, this unexpected cordiality between former rivals, marks the limit to which fear will drive nations to unite. The next step demands courage. And the question mark we must write after the name of Europe owes its existence much less to the possibility that Germany may want to make war than to the possibility that Germany's neighbours may fear to make peace. If I were a German I should consider it my duty to use what little influence I had in moderating those militaristic influences which must inevitably cause anxiety and distrust abroad. If books must be burned, I should have bonfires of all the lying and idiotic volumes that encourage race suicide by pretending that war still has its glories and its victories. Not being a German I can only urge that non-Germans should do everything they possibly can to avoid actions which will rub on that sore of nationalism and make it more inflamed and more dangerous. Germany —and one cannot repeat it too often—is neurasthenic and hysterical, and no doctor

attempts to cure neurasthenia or hysteria by clouting his patient over the head. And to plead that we should not become hysterical ourselves does not necessarily denote that the person who makes it is "pro-German." It does mean, however, that he is a person who is "pro-peace." The only result of much of the Press campaign to convince the world that Germany is arming, Germany wants war, Germany is manufacturing poison gas, is not to increase European security but to increase military expenditure or the profits of armament manufacturers. And if one concentrates upon the need for meeting the German point of view it is only because Germany is the pathological case. She is the potential danger. She is the country whose mutterings and menaces have so alarmed the whole world. She is the patient who must be cured if we are to avoid war. And as that wily old Frenchman, Talleyrand, once pointed out, "l'indignation n'est pas une attitude politique."

The issues before us are much more simple than our prejudices allow us to believe. Either we decide that Germany must never be released from the bonds we tied round her at Versailles—and, in order to prevent her from making a successful attempt to be roughly as strongly armed as each of the other Great

Powers, we shall have to re-institute a military commission of control to keep a look-out in every factory—or we decide that Germany must be given back her freedom. The second course involves a risk—that Germany may try to fight again, and that the other Powers will not hold together to make a successful fight an impossibility. The first course involves no risk whatsoever: it involves the absolute certainty of war, after a ruinous period of intrigue and alliances which would perpetuate the present economic crisis.

The British and other Governments have chosen the second alternative. Germany is to be given her freedom. The only trouble is that we have not yet found the courage to decide when she is to have the "equality of rights" she was promised at the end of 1932, and every frontier incident, every bombastic German speech, every book about the value of war, very naturally saps what courage we do possess. How, we ask ourselves, can we show any confidence in a Government which is proud to turn its back upon the League of Nations, the only official organisation in existence to work for international peace? And yet we must show that confidence or prepare for another war. "Herr Hitler has declared his willingness for his country to abandon her own armaments," writes Lord

Allen of Hurtwood,[1] " if other nations will do likewise. If this is refused, then equality means for him the right to re-arm. . . . World peace will never be constructed until we offer *equality* in its most real sense to the German nation, and *world security* in its most real sense to the French nation."

And, as Mrs. H. M. Swanwick[2] points out, Germany " was offered ' probation,' ' inspection,' and a recrudescence of the principle of ' sanctions ' . . . let us consider how they (the Germans) feel when, after fourteen years of probation, they are offered at least four more ; let us remember all the pictures of deep humiliation which the word ' inspection ' must call up in the minds of those who had to endure the innumerable and often insolent Inter-Allied Commissions ; let us realise how much of the horror and fury in recalling the occupations of the Ruhr and the Palatinate is suggested by the word ' sanctions.' "

That is strongly worded, but it certainly does not exaggerate the feelings of a great many Germans to-day. We know that each postponement of the grant of " equality " has encouraged the Nationalists in Germany. We know that the further postponement, natural enough

[1] The *Manchester Guardian*, May 19th, 1933.
[2] Ibid., October 18th, 1933.

in the circumstances, of this " equality," which was promised in 1932, has encouraged the Germans to march out of the League. We know that each month turns more German moderates into German militarists. We know that if we are to have peace with Germany we must first have agreement with her, and that each day of delay makes the distance we must go to reach that agreement a little greater. That each day makes it a little more difficult to remember that peace is more important than prestige. We know all that, but still we hesitate.

The situation, surely, may be summed up in these terms : Sooner or later Germany will be granted exactly the same degree of freedom in armaments as other countries, or she will fight a desperate war in the hope of taking that freedom for herself. She is not strong enough to fight now, and will not be for some years to come. Even if she were given every right to re-arm to-morrow, and even if the one desire of every German were to fight, a considerable period of time must elapse before she could obtain sufficient credit to buy adequate stocks of raw materials and prepare enough gas, aeroplanes, and so on to enable her to defy the whole world—for at the present time any act of aggression on her part would bring the

whole world against her. So that it really would not matter very much whether she had a few tanks and guns that could be shown to her gaping and admiring citizens. If these tanks and guns gave her back that feeling of being one Great Power on a footing of equality with the other Great Powers, so much the better. I believe they would, for heaven knows that national pride is soothed or offended in odd ways—an uncomplimentary remark by a foreigner about the British climate, for example, may make the Britisher indignant, and an Englishman living in Australia has a devil of a time of it during the test matches.

Should some real concession made to Germany now, when she is weak, fail to give her that feeling of " equality " about which Herr Hitler worries so much, should it arouse in her a desire to dominate, there would be a far greater force against her than she could ever acquire herself. The way to avoid war is not to humiliate the country which might be tempted to indulge in it until its nationals are ready to fight with fists and pitchforks. The only way to avoid it is to strengthen by every possible method the union of those nations which are determined to maintain peace. And the Utopian sound about that statement is the best illustration of the fact that many of us

have allowed our Government to sign the League of Nations Covenant, the Kellogg–Briand Pact, and the Treaty of Locarno without the slightest intention of seeing that they are honoured.

Germany's failure to respect a convention which she had signed of her own free will, would justify any action against her as it is justified against the criminal in the ordinary affairs of men. But if, on the other hand, a bold concession, a generous attempt to meet the German point of view, succeeded—as I believe it would succeed—in ridding Germany of her damnable inferiority complex, then she would arrive ultimately at the " equality " level with no more desire than any other country to commit murder and suicide by starting another war. It may be a lamentable condemnation of our civilisation that " strength " and " respect " should still depend upon the military power a country has under its control, but they do, as many a negro squatting on his haunches at some outpost of Empire has learnt to his cost.

" The Treaty of Versailles," wrote *The Times* in a leading article on September 18th, 1933, " left Germany in a position of inferiority relative to France which was not intended to be permanent; and this disparity finds its most obvious and, to German minds, its most

painful expression in the respective armed strengths of the two nations. When the forces of Germany were reduced to a minimum after the war, her disarmament was quite definitely implied to be a first step to a general reduction ; and the failure of her neighbours appreciably to lessen the difference is one of the causes of the present ferment in Germany. The fact has got to be faced that Germany will re-arm. Germany is indeed already, to the best of her ability, re-arming. In so doing she is no doubt contravening the Disarmament Clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. . . . Public opinion in this country will attach far less importance to the technical contravention of an arrangement which was only meant to be transitional than it would to the infringement of a convention voluntarily entered into by Germany, and it will be correspondingly less inclined to take any action upon it."

Somehow, then, we have to get a Disarmament Convention, for if no convention were signed, we should have the depressing prospect Mr. Baldwin outlined to the Conservative Party conference on October 6th : " If rearmament began in Europe, you may say goodbye to any restoration of cuts, to any reduction of taxation for a generation. . . . With many a nation, or let me say with some nations, the

expenditure that would be involved in increasing armaments would bring them much nearer to a catastrophe. It might even bankrupt some, and you may imagine from that what the effect would be on the trade of the world. Psychologically, the world would be back to 1914, with more knowledge than we had then, and I have never disguised my view that another war in Europe would be the end of the civilisation we know."

Nor would a convention signed more or less under protest bring us nearer peace. "This young Germany," Dr. Goebbels declared to the journalists in Geneva, "will not sign treaties she cannot fulfil. But when she does sign treaties because they can be fulfilled, then she is determined to respect them." But Germany feels her present isolation so keenly (although she can only blame herself for it) that the mere prospect of further and more complete isolation might persuade her to sign the convention as she signed the Versailles Treaty—with the feeling that she had been almost blackmailed into signing. And then the fools in Germany who talk about the glories of war will become the prophets; the young fellows we have met canoeing on German rivers, tramping in German forests, bathing in German lakes—all this young generation that

had learnt through privations to despise the materialism of our age—will be hardened into grim and bitter soldiers, to fight, with every foul device that earnest scientists can think out, against our own youth, in the desperate belief that thereby it is serving an ideal.

If I were not so deeply, so absolutely convinced that the whole issues of peace and war, life and death, decency and mean hatred, depend upon our ability to remove the humiliation that will otherwise drive Germany to destroy herself and the world, I should not have been quarrelling with all my friends and burning the midnight electric light in order to write this book. But we have reached a crisis which was foreseen before the Disarmament Conference first met—the crisis caused by the German reminder that, since we have failed to disarm, she proposes to re-arm. It is a crisis we have postponed by every method for years—in one period of six months we allowed the military experts in Geneva (or, rather, their unfortunate secretaries) to duplicate three and three-quarter million sheets of paper on this subject—but we have not prepared ourselves to meet it during this long period of postponement. And it still haunts us : Are we to have the courage to disarm ? Are we to shirk the issue and to allow Germany to re-arm ?

Some months ago, when General Smuts was in England, he said that there had been three opportunities of making a real and lasting peace and two failures to do so. The first opportunity was given by the armistice, based on President Wilson's Fourteen Points, and we failed at the Peace Conference. The second opportunity was the Locarno Conference, and we failed to follow up the temporary *rapprochement* it brought about between France and Germany. The third opportunity is now, when we have to choose between the risk of disarmament and the certainty of war. If we choose the second alternative—and I am no longer quoting General Smuts—we shall be able to put the blame on the Germans—as, a year or two ago, we should have put it upon the French. We shall be able to forget our own share in driving Germany demented, and that will be all right. If they behave too foolishly, we can always boycott them, or blockade them again. If we cannot wipe out over sixty million people we can keep them down by force. It may be a dangerous and a costly business, but it won't matter if we can postpone the payment of the penalty so that our sons or our grandsons have to foot the bill instead of ourselves. We shall not have to worry that we have not made a greater effort to end war and to shed our

national prejudices and suspicions, because so many of the men who went into the last war are dead, and will never know how we have failed them.

When Blériot flew across the English Channel in 1909, he destroyed our last hopes of ever keeping out of a big European conflict. The relations between France and Germany are of vital interest to us, and it was not mere generosity which drove us at Locarno to promise help for either of these countries if the other should attack it. It is therefore essential for our self-preservation that we should do what we can to diminish the French fear of attack, and the German belief that attack might succeed where negotiation has so far failed. Somehow we must convince France that we would put all our strength behind her if she were invaded once again, and must remind Germany that there would be no doubts about our intervention, as there were in 1914. And somehow we must convince Germany that we are in earnest about disarmament. The most hopeful fact in Europe to-day is that within a day or two of the German departure from Geneva responsible Ministers were taking up the broken threads again to see how they could be mended.

There are many people who argue in favour

of postponement, who would isolate Germany, who would boycott her till "she came to her senses." But what, in God's name, is the alternative to the present National Socialist régime? Can we drag Stresemann out of his grave and put a docile German public behind him? Can we resuscitate a political system that is dead, and put Brüning back in power with an assured majority in the Reichstag? Can we make the Germans more hopeful, more patient, by postponing still further consideration of their demands? Is it not almost an axiom of physics that the greater the external pressure brought to bear upon certain substances, the greater their explosive power becomes? The only alternative to the present extremist Government in Germany is a more extremist one still, and would such a change facilitate the reduction of armaments or improve the chances of peace? Have we any reason to believe that the Germans will turn against Herr Hitler if he is criticised in foreign countries, when we know how much we resent foreign criticism of British policy towards India or Ireland?

No. *Entweder . . . oder . . .!* Either National Socialism, and we make the best of it, or a period of chaos leading to a choice between Communism and an impossibly reactionary military dictatorship. If anybody can convince

me that there is another and a better solution, I shall ask Mr. Victor Gollancz not to print those future editions of which every author dreams !

. . . . . .

And that, as they say, is that. I have never undertaken a more difficult task, for public opinion in Great Britain and Germany has followed such divergent paths during the last nine months that it has become almost impossible to build even a bridge of words between them. In my desire to do what little I can to dissipate the sort of misunderstandings that lead to war, I may have given too favourable an explanation of the actions of Hitler's men. I have, indeed, sought for explanations of much that disgusts me and fills me with despair. But I have not wanted to take the easier way, and to argue that these Germans are a race apart whose reactions are so different from our own that we need not even bother about them. That attitude of mind tends to range every German behind his Government, and to turn pacifists into fire-eaters. That attitude, by isolating a powerful country in the centre of Europe, makes war a certainty, and I believe passionately that modern methods of warfare make the destruction of civilisation

so certain that every patriot should be a pacifist.

This small book will be misunderstood by many in my own country and in Germany. Possibly I shall have to consider I have done my task fairly well if people in each country reproach me with equal vehemence. But I hope that others will be ready to appreciate an honest attempt to explain one nation to another.

THE END