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## OUR WAR AIMS

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THROUGH THIRTY YEARS  
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THE MEANING OF HITLERISM  
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OUR  
WAR AIMS

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TO  
MY WIFE

WHOSE COUNSEL THROUGH MANY  
YEARS HAS HELPED TO SHAPE  
THE THOUGHTS SET DOWN  
IN THIS BOOK





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## CHAPTER I

### WHY "WAR AIMS"?

A GOOD many people, and many good people, wish to know our "war aims". They have been told we are fighting to overthrow "Hitlerism". Exactly what "Hitlerism" may be they find it hard to understand. What they really want is to be sure that when "Hitlerism" has been beaten and the war has been won we shall so act that peace will not again be lost.

I, too, have been thinking over these matters in the light of such knowledge and experience as I possess. For what they may be worth I shall set down my thoughts in this book. The effort I have made to clear my own mind may perhaps help others to clear their minds.

At the outset I think it important to distinguish between two things which are closely related yet not identical. They are "the aim of war" and "war aims". If we mix up the two, without really understanding

which is which or how each bears on the other, we may get into a muddle. Though they seem as like as two twins, their likeness is not a case of Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

The best account I can remember of the difference between "war aims" and the "aim of war" was given more than a hundred years ago by a great Prussian soldier of Polish descent, General von Clausewitz, whose book, *On War*, has been a sort of bible for students of warfare ever since. He entered the Prussian army in 1792, fought against the forces of the French Revolution and those of Napoleon for more than twenty years, and ended his active career as Chief of Staff to one of the Prussian Corps which helped Wellington to win the battle of Waterloo. Then he was appointed Head of the Berlin Military Academy. After his death in 1831 his widow published what he had taught and written as a professor of warfare. Not only upon the waging of war but upon the purposes which war is meant to serve his teachings were long looked upon as the last word. And if weapons and tactics have changed since his time, the nature of war itself is not likely to change until nations learn to make war no more.

The best single word for "war aims" is "policy". It means what we are after, what we are driving at. And the best single word for "the aim of war" is "victory". Up to a point, "policy" can be carried on without fighting. War comes when one country, or set of countries, would rather fight than give way to the policy of another country. Then "policy" becomes "war aims", and "victory" becomes the "aim of war".

This is plainly what Clausewitz had in mind when he wrote his famous phrase: "War is nothing but the continuation of policy by other means". He went on to say, in words which are not so often quoted though they are quite as true: "This standpoint, if everywhere held fast, will bring much more unity into thought about the matter, and everything will fall more easily into its right place." So it would seem that "war aims" are "policy" in time of war. But what of the "aim of war"? Clausewitz answers that war is "an act of violence meant to force an opponent to do our will. . . . We must render the enemy defenceless so as to make sure of reaching this end; and this is, according to the very idea of war, the real aim of warlike action".

If the "aim of war" is to beat the enemy, does "policy" enter into it. "In a certain degree," Clausewitz thinks that "war aims" are distinct from "the aim of war" or victory. Though the forcing of policy upon an enemy may be the final goal of warfare, he says that policy must never interfere with the actual waging of a war. It must be thrust aside "in a certain degree as something not belonging to war itself".

If this were all, we might suppose that Clausewitz looked on warfare as a soldier's job with which "politicians" have nothing to do. Most soldiers think this. They feel that their business is to beat the enemy. They do not like "the politicians", with their "war aims" or policy, to butt in. But if they expect Clausewitz to go all the way with them they are reckoning without their host. At the end of his book he says roundly that "war is the handmaid of policy"; and that without "a firm policy" war cannot be well waged because war is only one form of political action, not a separate or independent undertaking. In the service of "a splendid policy" he believed that war might rise to a level so high as to become almost an end in itself. Yet he was careful to add:

"Therefore the need for an ideal policy must never be lost sight of, nor should it ever be forgotten that policy and war are inseparable."

Here, I think, we are beginning to get near the true reason why so many people now want a statement or a definition of our "war aims". They wish to be sure that we have a "firm policy", a "splendid policy", a policy so "ideal" that war becomes, for the time being and in the service of such a policy, almost an end in itself. And they feel that by setting forth and making known war aims that are right and good, or a policy that is splendid, a country at war may not only be heartened by its understanding of what it is really fighting for but may help to increase beyond its borders the moral forces that will hasten victory.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Clausewitz worked out his ideas, a "splendid policy" will have seemed different from our notion of it to-day. He had seen the French Revolutionary armies start a European crusade for "Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood". He had seen Prussia and Austria withstand them in an attempt



to save the King and Queen of France, prisoners of the Revolution. They failed. In 1793 the execution of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had shocked the world, which presently stood aghast at the bloody excesses of the "Terror". The turn of the century had brought the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte who, at the head of what had been the French Revolutionary armies, was soon to sweep across Europe. In 1806 Clausewitz, as a Prussian soldier, felt the bitterness of seeing his King and country crushed by Napoleon at Jena. He himself was wounded and taken prisoner by the French. On his release he, like other Prussian officers, took service with Russia and worked as a Russian Staff Officer until disaster befell Napoleon's Russian campaign in 1812. If there was then no "splendid policy" among the Continental opponents of Napoleon—Russia, Austria and Prussia—it was common ground between them that Napoleon must give up the territory he had conquered in Poland and Germany. This Napoleon declined to do. "What is it you wish of me?" he said to Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, on June 26, 1813. "That I should dishonour myself? Never. I shall know how to die,

but never to yield an inch of territory. Your sovereigns, who were born on the throne, may get beaten twenty times, and yet return to their capitals. I cannot. For I rose to power through the camp."

Hitler, who says that his favourite study is history, might take Napoleon's words to heart. Though Hitler did not rise to power through the camp—unless it were a camp of Brown Shirts, Black Guards and Gestapo, or Secret State Police—he may feel that to yield territory or to acknowledge himself beaten would destroy him and his power for ever. The "splendid policy" which Clausewitz had in mind while he was helping the Russian army to play its part in beating Napoleon at Leipzig in 1813 was perhaps "to destroy Bonapartism", just as ours may be, for the moment, to "destroy Hitlerism". The one policy he would scarcely have understood would have been a "war aim" of which the object would be to put an end to war itself.

Yet, unless I am mistaken, it is the desire for this very policy that prompts so many people now to ask for a statement of our war aims. If policy and war are inseparable, if "a splendid policy" can raise war to so high

a level that it becomes almost an end in itself, does it not follow that policy and peace must also be inseparable and that a splendid policy might raise the creation of lasting peace under the rule of law to the level of an absolute "war aim", instead of allowing "peace" to be looked upon as a longer or shorter interval between wars? True though it be that a single country can pursue a war policy (whereas a peace policy depends upon agreement between several countries), is it quite impossible for one or two countries to frame and to follow a peace policy so "firm" and so "splendid" as to make their principal "war aim" the total defeat of war itself? I ask this question without, for the moment, trying to answer it.

Before any satisfying answer can be suggested, much less given, we need to take stock of changes which neither Clausewitz nor Napoleon could foresee. When they fought and thought and wrote, the methods of war had altered little since the invention of gunpowder made short work of knights in armour, and firearms replaced bows and arrows. They had no long-range artillery, no railways, no electric telegraphs, no

telephones, no breech-loading (let alone magazine) rifles, no machine-guns and, above all, no motor transport or aircraft. Wireless "radio" had not been dreamt of. Distance was what it had been from time immemorial. Wars were fought mainly by manoeuvre on open ground, not in the air or below ground; and on sea by sailing ships and slow surface craft. If long-drawn-out struggles like the Thirty Years' War had destroyed civilization in parts of Germany, the idea that war, as a "continuation of policy by other means", might destroy war itself lest war destroy civilisation would have struck Clausewitz and Napoleon as fantastic and preposterous.

So their policies, or war aims, were conceived in terms of conquest or of national or personal aggrandisement. Nations at large knew little of the real aims for which their rulers bade them fight, save in cases like the wars of England against the Spanish Armada or against Napoleon. The very notion that a people should demand a statement of war aims from its rulers while war was being waged would have been laughed to scorn. Wars fought, or said to be fought, for a belief or an idea, such as wars of religion and civil wars, were perhaps exceptions to this

rule. And here it is noteworthy that so straightforward and convinced a pacifist as Mr. A. A. Milne, who condemned war roundly in his *Peace With Honour* five years ago as "the ultimate expression of man's wickedness and man's silliness", should have written in the *Fortnightly Review* for October, 1939: "I am not now denouncing my country's participation in this war. On the contrary, I am, mind and heart and soul, supporting it." By way of explanation he says he looks upon this war as a civil war, a war of ideas, a revolt against an intolerable form of government, not a fight for territory nor for material gain nor for a false prestige, but for an idea.

"An idea" may be another name for "a policy". If so, what is the policy for which Great Britain, the British Dominions and France have, by fighting this war, transformed into a war aim? Why are other nations deeply concerned about our true "war aims"? They have not yet asked us to state them, as President Wilson of the United States asked the warring nations at the end of 1916 to tell him what they were fighting for in the last Great War. But if the moral support of other countries, great and small, which still hold aloof from this struggle and call

themselves "neutral", is of value to us who are fighting, it seems the more necessary that the policy which we intend to pursue, when we have fulfilled our "aim of war" by beating the enemy, shall be clearly laid down so that all may know it. Not less necessary is it that our policy, when once made known, shall command belief in its sincerity, and shall be accepted as a binding declaration of aims from which we shall not depart when victory has been won.

On this matter it would be folly to deceive ourselves. If war is a continuation of our policy by other means, what policy are we fighting to continue? Is it still the policy of the years before the war, or is it a new policy? Has it been well thought out or will it change with circumstances? When war was declared on September 3 the Prime Minister exclaimed: "I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established". In a message broadcast to the nation on that day, he said, further: "It is the evil things that we shall be fighting against—brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution—and against them I am certain that the right will prevail".

This was a little more than eleven months after he had told the country that his agreement with Hitler at Munich had brought us "peace with honour" and "peace for our time". So it would seem that the policy we are now fighting to continue cannot be the old policy of agreement with Hitlerism.

On October 12, 1939, the Prime Minister made a fuller statement of our war aims. In it he said:

It is no part of our policy to exclude from her rightful place in Europe a Germany which will live in amity and confidence with other nations. . . . It was not therefore with any vindictive purpose that we embarked on war, but simply in defence of freedom. . . . We seek no material advantage for ourselves; we are not aiming only at victory, but rather looking beyond it to the laying of a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of every succeeding generation. . . . The peace which we are determined to secure, however, must be a real and settled

peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and repeated threats.

What stands in the way of such a peace? It is the German Government, and the German Government alone, for it is they who by repeated acts of aggression have robbed all Europe of tranquillity and implanted in the hearts of all their neighbours an ever-present sense of insecurity and fear. . . . Past experience has shown that no reliance can be placed upon the promises of the present German Government. Accordingly, acts—not words alone—must be forthcoming before we, the British peoples, and France, our gallant and trusted Ally, should be justified in ceasing to wage war to the utmost of our strength. . . .

There is thus a primary condition to be satisfied. Only the German Government can fulfil it. If they will not, there can as yet be no new or better world order of the kind for which all nations yearn.

The issue is therefore plain. Either the German Government must give convincing proof of the sincerity of their desire for peace by definite acts and by



the provision of effective guarantees of their intentions to fulfil their undertakings, or we must persevere in our duty to the end. It is for Germany to make her choice.

This statement, which was welcomed by British public opinion and in many countries abroad as the best and fullest definition of our war aims that had been officially given up to mid-October, contains one passage that commands general agreement because it is taken to foreshadow a "splendid policy": "We are not aiming only at victory but rather looking beyond it to the laying of a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of every succeeding generation". The British people as a whole share this aim and believe it to be true. Does the rest of the world also believe it to be true? Would the German people from whom, the Prime Minister said, "we desire nothing which should offend their self-respect", believe it also, could it be brought to their knowledge? This is the point that needs to be looked into without fear or favour and with a single eye to the truth.

In so far as I know anything of the state of mind of foreign countries in and beyond Europe I cannot feel sure that they yet believe this germ of a "splendid policy" to be the essence of our war aims. If they doubt it I should hope that they are wrong, though without closing my eyes to reasons which they may think a warrant for their doubt. In the course of my life I have lived and worked abroad long enough to have gained the gift—or the drawback—of being able to see ourselves as others see us. So, putting myself into their places, and thinking of our recent past as well as of our war-filled present, I fancy I can see why other countries still wonder whether we, and not merely the Germans, can safely be taken at our word.

Let us look at our record—as others see it—since the National Government came into power during the financial crisis at the end of August, 1931. In September, 1931, taking advantage of this crisis, Japan began her onslaught upon China in Manchuria. Did we stand up to Japan or even warn her seriously? In some ways we encouraged her. Yet not only was Great Britain, like China and Japan, a member of the League of Nations—

and therefore pledged to regard as an act of war committed against herself an attack by one member of the League upon another—but she had also signed and ratified the Nine-Power Treaty of Washington which was drawn up in 1922 for the protection of China. She had likewise signed and ratified the Briand-Kellogg Pact, or International Treaty in Renunciation of War, which was concluded at Paris on August 27, 1928. Early in 1932 Mr. Henry L. Stimson, the American Secretary of State, took his stand on the Briand-Kellogg Pact and the Nine-Power Treaty as grounds for opposing the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. He invited our Government to support him. It refused. Worse still: at the Special Assembly of the League of Nations summoned in 1932 to deal with and condemn Japanese aggression, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, won the praise of the spokesman and special ambassador of Japan for having made out in half an hour a better case for Japan than he (the Japanese spokesman) had been able to make in ten days. Sir John Simon is now a member of our War Cabinet. Nor did we scruple to allow a British industrial mission to go to Japan for the purpose of promoting

Anglo-Japanese trade at a moment when our Treaty obligations ought to have obliged us to ostracise Japan as an aggressor whom, notwithstanding Sir John Simon, the League Assembly solemnly condemned.

In 1935 Italy warned us of her intention to extend her African territory at the expense of Abyssinia, another member of the League. To this warning we paid little heed. But in September, 1935, another British Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, gave a lead to the League of Nations in favour of collective security against aggression if Italy should attack Abyssinia. More than thirty nations followed this lead as soon as Abyssinia was invaded. "Economic sanctions" against Italy were brought into play. Yet in December, 1935, Sir Samuel Hoare joined his French colleague, M. Laval, in putting forward a scheme for a partition of Abyssinia in favour of Italy. True though it be that a wave of national indignation swept Sir Samuel Hoare—temporarily—out of office, and all but overthrew the Baldwin National Administration within a month of its victory at the polls, the chance of saving Abyssinia was lost. Sir Samuel Hoare was soon given another office and is now a member of our War Cabinet.

Mr. Neville Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who in the general election of November, 1935, had come out as a whole-hearted backer of the League of Nations, stated six months later that it would be "the very midsummer of madness" to continue League pressure against Italian aggression. Mr. Neville Chamberlain is still the Prime Minister of our War Cabinet.

In 1936 when Germany and Italy intervened to support a Spanish Fascist revolt against the lawful Government of Spain—a Government duly recognised by us and represented at the Court of St. James's—we first refused to sell that Government arms and munitions, and then organised in London a "Non-Intervention Committee" with Italy and Germany as members of it. Though we tolerated the bombing of many British merchant vessels by German and Italian aircraft, we did make a stand against the torpedoing of British and other vessels by Italian submarines, and stopped it. Yet Mr. Eden, who had succeeded Sir Samuel Hoare as Foreign Secretary and had made this stand against "submarine piracy", was obliged to leave office in 1938 because he did not like the idea of an Anglo-Italian agreement without pledges that Italy

would keep it. The agreement was made without pledges. Finally, in January, 1939, the Prime Minister and Mr. Eden's successor, Lord Halifax, visited Italy, where they recognised, and Mr. Chamberlain toasted, the King of Italy as "Emperor of Ethiopia". In April, 1939, Italy invaded Albania and destroyed Albanian independence. Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons that in his view this act of aggression did not upset the Anglo-Italian agreement.

Meanwhile, the British National Government had quietly accepted Hitler's forcible annexation (in March, 1938) of Austria, whose independence Great Britain had repeatedly declared to be a British interest; and, after showing some resistance to Hitler's intended attack upon Czechoslovakia in May, 1938, British policy began to favour Hitler's demands on that country. A British mediator in the person of Lord Runciman was sent to Prague to suggest an arrangement between Czechoslovakia and Germany for a grant of local self-government to the Germans in the Sudetenland. While he recognised that the Czechoslovak proposals were so reasonable as to satisfy everybody except the Nazi German extremists, he suggested that the

German regions of Czechoslovakia, with all that country's principal defences, should be ceded to Germany. In the course of visits paid by the Prime Minister to Herr Hitler at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg and Munich in September, 1938, the cession of those regions was agreed to under threat of war. Not only was the Czechoslovak Government not consulted about the final surrender of its territory and fortifications but it had been emphatically warned by Great Britain and France that should it resist, and should it persist in appealing to its Treaty of Arbitration with Germany, it would be responsible for the outbreak of a European war. The Czechoslovak Government gave way for the sake of peace, and in view of a promise that the future frontiers of its country would be guaranteed by Great Britain and France. Mr. Chamberlain then signed with Hitler at Munich in the early hours of September 30, 1938, a declaration which stated:

We regard the agreement (for the new frontiers of Czechoslovakia) signed last night, and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement, as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method to be adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference, and thus contribute to the assurance of peace in Europe.

"It bears his (Hitler's) signature as well as mine", Mr. Chamberlain said to the crowd which awaited him on his return to London, and to which he read this declaration on the afternoon of September 30, 1938. On March 15, 1939, Hitler sent his troops into Prague, followed them thither and turned the remainder of Czechoslovakia into a German protectorate. With French and British help he had got rid of a well-equipped democratic army of more than 1,000,000 men, behind strong fortifications, on his southeastern flank. Then he began to pick his quarrel with Poland who had no fortifications and whose army was inadequately equipped.

Alarmed by Hitler's bullying of Poland the British National Government pledged themselves, on March 31, 1939, to go at once to the help of Poland with all the forces



at their disposal should Polish vital interests or independence be threatened. This pledge was soon converted into an Anglo-Polish alliance. Early on the morning of Friday, September 1, 1939, Hitler's army invaded Poland while his aircraft bombed Polish villages, towns and cities. Not until fifty-four hours later, at 11 a.m. on Sunday, September 3, did Great Britain go to the help of Poland by declaring war on Germany. On the night of Saturday, September 2, Lord Halifax declared in the House of Lords, and Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons, that "if the German Government should agree to withdraw their forces, then His Majesty's Government would be willing to regard the position as being the same as it was before the German forces crossed the Polish frontier; that is to say, the way would be open to discussion between the German and Polish Governments of the matters at issue between them, on the understanding that the settlement arrived at was one that safeguarded the vital interests of Poland and was secured by an international guarantee". This statement was received with what the Deputy-Leader of the Opposition next day described as the "resentment, apprehension

and anger" of the whole House. Intense relief was felt when it became known that war had at last been declared.

After the return of the British Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson, from Berlin, a British Blue Book was published. It revealed Hitler's trickery and bad faith—not, indeed, as a surprise, for they had invariably marked his behaviour both in Germany and in his dealings with foreign countries ever since he came into power in 1933. But it left public opinion in foreign countries bewildered upon one point: How could a British Government ever have believed it possible to reach binding agreements by negotiation with men who, like Hitler and his associates, had never shown the slightest capacity for truthfulness, honest dealing or good faith?

This riddle remains unanswered even after Mr. Chamberlain's statement to the House of Commons on October 12, 1939, in which he said that "past experience has shown that no reliance can be placed upon the promises of the present German Government. . . . The issue is therefore plain. Either the German Government must give convincing proof of the sincerity of their desire for peace by definite acts and by the

provision of effective guarantees or their intentions to fulfil their undertakings, or we must persevere in our duty to the end. It is for Germany to make her choice”.

Which Germany? foreigners ask. Would Great Britain still be ready to accept guarantees of any kind from “Hitlerism”? Would she make peace with any other German Government unless it were clear “beyond a peradventure” that everything which “Hitlerism” stands for has been swept away? These doubts, and the remembrance of our record—which I have briefly sketched—during the past eight years of National Government, help to explain why our professed “war aims” do not yet carry full conviction even in foreign countries that wish us well. And it is for this reason, among many others, that a frank response to the public demand for a clear definition of the policy which it is the aim of this war to make the enemy accept is wanted abroad as well as at home.

We are not fighting for ourselves alone. But it may be at once too much and too little to say, as the Prime Minister said on October 12, 1939, that we embarked on war simply

'(in defence of freedom')'. He was nearer the mark when he added:

It is not alone the freedom of the small nations that is at stake: there is also in jeopardy the peaceful existence of Great Britain, the Dominions, India, the rest of the British Empire, France, and indeed of all freedom-loving countries. Whatever may be the issue of the present struggle, and in whatever way it may be brought to a conclusion, the world will not be the same world that we have known before. Looking to the future, we can see that deep changes will inevitably leave their mark on every field of men's thought and action, and, if humanity is to guide aright the new forces that will be in operation, all nations will have their part to play.

If "all freedom-loving countries" are in danger of losing their "peaceful existence" unless we and France win this war, and if "all nations" will have their part to play in shaping a world which "will not be the same world that we have known before", we

and the French are plainly the champions both of the peaceful existence of freedom-loving nations and of the new kind of world that is to be. Plainly, too, we want the freedom-loving nations in particular, and as many as possible of "all nations", to be sure of the earnestness and the honesty of our "war aims". If they are not yet sure, how can we persuade them?

They are sure of one thing. It is odd but true that the only features of British policy during recent, very recent, years which have led foreigners to believe we might mean business have been the size and the speed of our rearmament. Alongside of our attempts, from 1933 onwards, to get away from a "League policy" of collective resistance to aggression, and to replace it by a Four-Power Agreement between Great Britain, France, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany—and despite our efforts to "appease" German Nazism and Italian Fascism at the cost of weaker peoples—has run a tardy policy of rearmament to meet the worst should the worst befall. If we meant to turn our backs on a League policy of collective security against war we ought to have rearmed much sooner. Our own people hardly know even yet into what

discredit "appeasement" brought us among "the freedom-loving nations". The others, the dictatorships, saw in it proof that we were "on the run" and should never make a stand. Up to the last, and even after he had smashed Poland, Hitler believed we should be willing to "negotiate" with him.

Nor did the other dictators, Mussolini and Stalin, think differently. We were, we still are, a puzzle to them. They cannot make us out—and there is some excuse for them. We *are* hard to understand. If we say we were obliged to let Hitler swallow Austria and to carve up and destroy Czechoslovakia, or to let Mussolini crush Abyssinia and lay hands on Albania because we were not yet ready to stop them, we invite the answer that the writing on the wall had stared us in the face ever since Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. And foreigners point out that the very men who preached and practised "appeasement", presumably because we were not ready to make a stand even in 1938, had been responsible through seven full years, with huge Parliamentary majorities, for seeing that we should be ready to defend our peace and our freedom.

Now we are ready—and at war. Is it one

of our war aims to keep up this state of readiness? Is this the policy we are fighting to continue? Rearmament may have been, it may still be, "an aim of war" in the sense that it is meant to bring us victory. But should not one of our chief "war aims" be to get such a peace after victory that we and as far as possible "all nations" may be relieved of heavy national armaments; and that we may be able to turn our thoughts, our resources and energies to the task of creating, under a "better international system", conditions that will give us life in freedom without fear?

So to me it seems that if war is still a "continuation of policy by other means" the policy to be continued can be neither one of surrender to wrongdoing—misnamed "appeasement" or "negotiation"—nor a policy of lasting rearmament. It must be a policy which all freedom-loving peoples can recognise as a "war aim" at once "firm" and "splendid". Nothing short of this will serve. How such a policy is to be worked out and made known, what things it should take account of, what it should spurn, and where—apart from the waging of war for victory—it should begin, are matters that demand

careful thought and searching enquiry. And since past disappointments warn us not to strike at the stars only to fasten in the mud, the question of means as well as of ways has to be considered.



## CHAPTER II

### WAYS AND MEANS

**A**NATION is a going concern. In time of peace a free nation, under constitutional democratic government, resembles a limited liability company. When the affairs of such a company get into a mess, and the company itself has to be "reconstructed" by experts, the first thing the experts do is to take stock of assets, look into liabilities and decide upon ways and means. Even if the Board of Directors remains unchanged it dare not ignore the advice of the experts. In what they do or leave undone with shareholders' money the directors are subject to Company Law and can legally be called to account.

In time of war the national "company" needs reconstructing. The outbreak of war may, indeed, be proof that its affairs have been mismanaged. At all events they are put in charge of experts in fighting whose advice the Board of Directors, that is to say, the

political Government, is bound to heed. But there are differences between the affairs of a limited liability company and those of a nation at war. One is that a company's shareholders stand only to lose the money they paid for their shares. Their liability is limited. A nation at war, on the other hand, runs the risk of losing everything, including its freedom. There is no limit to its liability. Another difference is that a nation's directors or Government declare war on its behalf as an act of unlimited national sovereignty, not subject to any effective "International Company Law".

Under these conditions the question of ways and means becomes vital. It includes moral as well as material assets, "good will" as well as stock-in-trade. Mechanical, technical and human means of overcoming the enemy in battle are hardly more important than the spirit of the people, their willingness to bear mishap and hardship, their faith in final victory. The more truly and constantly a free people can be told of their real position, the more likely are they to hold fast and to endure. The capacity of our people to hold fast and to endure is the chief moral asset in our balance-sheet of war.

If we have other notable assets, such as the strength and efficiency of our fighting services, our comparative wealth and the vast resources of the British Commonwealth of Nations—to say nothing of the strength and kindred resources of France—we are burdened also with liabilities heavier than most of us are aware of. These liabilities have to be faced. Some of them arise from past mismanagement; some are due to the present lack of any effective “International Company Law”.

When war began in 1914 we were, militarily, less ready for it than we found ourselves on September 3, 1939. Before 1914 we had not fought in Europe since the Crimean war of 1854. But our resources were almost intact. Our national debt was little more than £700,000,000. Morally, on the other hand, we were not so united in 1914 as we are to-day. Most of our people then believed we were fighting “for Belgium” in the first place, and “for France” in the second. Some doubted whether we ought to fight at all. Now, few of us think we are fighting only “for Poland”. Then, as now, our Prime Minister declared that we were upholding the freedom of small nations. But in 1939 we see, as not all of us saw in

1914, that we are also fighting for our own freedom and "peaceful existence". We have known from the beginning of this war what we learned only by degrees in the last—that war itself is "the enemy", and that unless victory makes an end of it, even victory will not put our national affairs on a sound footing.

In 1914 the lawfulness of war as an instrument of national policy was hardly questioned. Provided it were properly declared, and fought according to the rules, war was looked upon as a kind of glorified prize fight round which spectators, or "neutrals", with recognised rights of their own, kept the ring. Before long Germany began to break the rules and to reveal war as what it is—lawless violence in being. She invaded neutral Belgium, trampled on the rights of the other neutrals and struck at them ruthlessly by "unrestricted submarine warfare". Even at the outset German commanders ordered their troops in Belgium to behave with "a certain frightfulness" so as to terrorise civilians. They argued that the more "frightfully" war was waged the more humane it would be, because terror would shorten it and fewer lives would be lost.

These tactics had the opposite effect. They made war look so abominable as to convince us, and many of the neutrals, that an end must be put to it, for good and all. The need for an "International Company Law" began to be felt. Even while the United States was neutral a group of earnest men, headed by a former President of the American Union, started an organisation to promote a "League to Enforce Peace". In Great Britain kindred groups were formed. One of them, called "A League of Free Nations Union", took its stand on the truth—more widely understood now than it was then—that freedom and peace are inseparable, and that only free nations, in union, can safeguard peace. Gradually the feeling spread that the main war aim of the Allied and Associated nations (the United States entered the war as an "associate", not an ally, in April, 1917) must be to find means of getting rid of war itself. In Great Britain an official committee under Lord Phillimore began to work out the rules for a League of Nations against war. On January 8, 1918, President Wilson of the United States, in his "Fourteen Points" speech which set forth American war aims, declared that "A general association

of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike." This "war aim" was accepted by Germany in the autumn of 1918 when she asked for an armistice on the basis of President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" and his other speeches.

But it is one thing to have an end in view and quite another thing to find ways and means of reaching it. The men who set about the task of getting rid of war were new to the work. They hardly understood either the strength of the war-habit in nations or the true requirements of peace. Only two men of eminence or authority, one an Englishman, the other an American, saw what was wanted; and neither of them had any real say in the making of the League of Nations which the Paris Peace Conference decided in January, 1919, to set up. These two seers were the late Lord Parker of Waddington, one of the ablest of English Judges, and the late Mr. Elihu Root, the foremost lawyer in the United States. In a speech to the House of Lords on March 19, 1918,

Lord Parker hit the nail on the head. He said:

The true line of development lies, not in regulating the hateful thing (war) but in bringing about conditions under which it becomes increasingly difficult and ultimately impossible, not in consulting the welfare or selfish interest of neutrals but in abolishing neutrality. Murders would increase if the murderer could count upon the neutrality of bystanders, and it is the same with war. The neutral, in fact, shirks his share of the burden of humanity.

Five months later, on August 16, 1918, Mr. Elihu Root laid down the doctrine that there could be no peace without "a universal, formal and irrevocable acceptance and declaration of the view that an international breach of the peace is a matter which concerns every member of the community of nations—a matter in which every nation has a direct interest and to which every nation has a right to object". The change to this doctrine from the older doctrine that war between two States concerned those two States alone, Mr. Root insisted, is "really crucial" because

the change "involves a limitation of sovereignty, making every sovereign State subject to the superior right of a community of sovereign States to have the peace preserved. The acceptance of any such principle would be fatal to the whole Prussian theory of the State and of government". Both Lord Parker of Waddington and Mr. Elihu Root looked forward to the promotion of an international community, or company, under a valid international company law.

The failure of the League of Nations to develop into such a company has been a direct result of the unwillingness of sovereign States to accept either the principle that neutrality and peace cannot go together, or the doctrine that there can be no lasting peace unless every sovereign State is subject to the superior right of a community, or company, of States to have the peace preserved. We, and others, have behaved like King John when Stephen Langton and the Barons made him sign Magna Carta at Runnymede. "They have given me five-and-twenty over-kings," he cried in a rage, as he threw himself on the floor and gnawed sticks and straw in his fury. Rather than accept any limitation of his sovereignty in practice he



called in the King of France to help him regain by force what he had been compelled to sign away. Not until the next reign could Magna Carta, in a modified form, be issued anew and its principles established.

In the background of the present war lies a similar refusal on our part, as well as on that of others, to stomach any real limitation of our sovereignty. We have declined to uphold, though we signed, a Magna Carta of the nations. Out of the same background will come other wars until that limitation has been accepted and enforced. The right of a sovereign State to be neutral—to stand out of an international company—must disappear, for neutrality means unlimited national sovereignty, and is derived from the idea that war is a lawful means of gaining a nation's ends. If war were made, in practice as well as in theory, internationally unlawful like piracy or brigandage it could not be the source of rights, neutral or other.

So when we cast about for ways and means of putting an end to war we shall go wrong unless we frankly accept and steadfastly cling to these principles. It is true that by the time the League of Nations Covenant had been drafted, President Wilson came to see,

as he put it, that "in the League there will be no neutrals". This was a great advance on his part, for he had brought his country into the war in defence of American "neutral rights". It is also true that Article 16 of the League Covenant put an end to neutrality in theory by saying that if any member of the League should resort to war in disregard of its obligations under previous Articles "it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League". This means that countries against which an act of war is deemed to have been committed cannot be neutral, but must automatically make common cause against aggression. In other Articles, however, the League of Nations Covenant left loopholes for lawful war between sovereign States and for the neutrality of other sovereign States towards them; and even the value of Article 16 was enfeebled when the United States itself failed to join and became neutral towards the League. Taking advantage of this American error, and saying they were afraid of American neutrality, one British Government after the other then began to "hedge" upon their own undertaking not to be neutral. They flatly refused to take

part in the effective organisation of a company or community of nations against war. So they lost the chance of getting other nations to disarm. But they disarmed this country in such a degree that it could not easily have kept the promises—which it made by the Locarno Treaty of 1925—to help in defending France, or Germany, against attack even if it had wished to do so.

This record is one of our liabilities to-day. If we are fighting to defend the freedom and “peaceful existence” of small nations and of “all freedom-loving countries”, including our own; if we say, with the Prime Minister, that we are not aiming only at victory “but rather looking beyond it to the laying of a foundation of a better international system which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of every succeeding generation” how are we to persuade the world that we mean business this time when we did not mean business last time? What chance will there be of founding “a better international system” on the morrow of victory unless we ourselves make up our minds in advance that it shall be founded and what we shall do to make sure that its foundations are well and

truly laid? Are we ready to form, with other free nations, an international company under a valid company law which we shall help to enforce, or do we prefer to stick to our national sovereignty with unlimited risks?

This is one reason why we need, here and now, to work out and to make known our war aims so that none can misunderstand or doubt them. It will be one way of trying to be certain that peace, next time, will not again be lost. It will also be an answer to the down-hearted folk who say that since the last war did not end war it is moonshine to pretend that this war will end it; and that therefore the only thing to do is to refuse to have any part or lot in any war at all. With these dismal people Mr. A. A. Milne, as an honest and plucky pacifist, deals faithfully in the article I have already quoted. He writes:

Now it is the extreme of stupidity and cowardice to think that because many people were expecting the last war to end war, and because the last war did not end war, therefore this war cannot end war. Why should the indomitable spirit of man fail only at this one challenge? There have been many

attempts to climb Everest; is it conceivable that each new expedition says to itself: "Well, the last expedition hoped to do it, and didn't, so obviously this one won't"? How are new discoveries made, how does civilisation march, but along the familiar road from hope to disappointment and on to hope again?

If the rejoinder be that Everest has not yet been climbed, we may draw encouragement from another metaphor. In my youth the failure of one Polar expedition after another led men to say that neither the North Pole nor the South would ever be reached. They have both been reached. My own father assured me that no flying machine ever would or could be made. Within twenty years the internal combustion engine proved him wrong. Now this engine, in aircraft, tanks and armoured cars, has made an abiding peace, in a world from which war shall have been banned by the sacrifice of unlimited national sovereignties, a primary condition of human life in freedom.

We have to begin again, and to succeed where we failed at Versailles and after. Not

every sighting shot hits the target, let alone scores a bull's-eye. The Covenant of the League of Nations was a sighting shot at the target of war. It might have been better aimed if the gunners could have put in a little more practice. They began their training only a short time before the real business started. Now the best shots among them have had twenty years for practice. There could be no excuse for not scoring a bull's-eye this time—provided that the shape and size of the target, the strength and direction of the wind and the conditions of light and distance be rightly judged. And it is here that another of our liabilities comes in.

This liability is something worse than ignorance or lack of training. It is muddle-headedness, amounting sometimes to wrong-headedness. It begins with the false idea that peace is the same thing as non-war, that if only nations do not fight they may scowl at each other as much as they like, and play at beggar-my-neighbour so long as they do not actively cut each other's throats. Now war is a very full-blooded affair. An anæmic, non-war sort of peace can have no chance against it. Any peace worth having must be full of worth-while risks, things to stir men's

blood. Three or four years ago I wrote a book called *Vital Peace*. In it I included a strong case for war, so strong that it sounded like blasphemy to many worshippers of the non-war fetish. At the end of its first chapter on "War and Life", I said:

Should the nations one day resolve to ban war effectually, it will not be solely because of the risks to life which war entails. War will be banned when its drawbacks are thought greater than its possible benefits, or, in other words, because the war-method will be accounted over-costly, haphazard and inadequate. Risk for risk, the risks of what General Smuts has termed "creative peace" will then be accepted as better worth while than the risks of war, even though the risks of peace involve sacrifice of many an individual and national sovereignty which men have long held to be more precious than their material possessions or their lives.

Meanwhile there remains in the concept of war enough of the old glamour, a sufficiency of appeal to patriotism and self-sacrifice, nay, to the ecstasy that

men feel when their blood is up or their deeper emotions are stirred, to render its sway over virile minds hard to break. To work against war is really to seek new outlets not merely for the fighting or the competitive spirit but for many a nobler impulse; and to me it seems that the whole issue resolves itself into a question—not lightly to be answered in the affirmative—whether these new outlets can be found and opened to common men in such fashion as to offer them fuller lives, and emotions deeper and more intense even than those which they have hitherto sought in war.

Here, again, we touch upon a further liability in our national balance-sheet. We are fighting “Hitlerism”. What the essence of “Hitlerism” may be I shall try presently to explain. For the moment it is enough to say that Hitler’s unhampered success in turning Germany into an armed camp, ready to wage “totalitarian” war if he could not get what he wanted by “negotiation” under threat of war, has been due in great part to the pretence that the Nazi and the Fascist dictatorships were safeguards against the sup-



pression of capital and of private property by Russian Communism. Were this matter not so serious as the coming of this war has made it, those who have known all along that "Hitlerism" is the step-child of Bolshevism, with Fascism for its mother, might be forgiven for chuckling over the wry faces which the agreement between Hitler and Stalin caused British and other sympathisers with Nazi-Fascism to pull in August, 1939. In comparison with Hitlerism—which one of the men who knows it best has aptly called the "Nihilist Revolution"—even Russian Bolshevism has been in some ways creative, though its system is careless of human right and human freedom as we understand them. And in course of time its hostility to private property has been abated. On the other hand, many a German capitalist could tell a pretty tale of the degree in which Hitlerism respects private property—other than that of its leaders and backers.

Now, at the outset of our armed resistance to Hitlerism, we have reached a point at which our own private property is so far at the mercy of a Chancellor of the Exchequer that he can impound a large part of our incomes and lay ruthless hands on what we

may leave when we die. As the war goes on, and our outlay upon it reaches or passes the £7,000,000 a day which the last Great War cost, the national debt of nearly £8,000,000,000 with which we began this war will be so swollen that we, as a nation, may find it hard to pay our way. We shall have to do with fewer comforts. But we shall face these things in good heart if we know that they are the price of peace in freedom. And we shall face them the more easily if there spread among all classes a feeling that the brotherhood in arms of our fighting men is matched by brotherhood in helpfulness among civilians.

To foster this brotherliness must be a foremost war aim. It can convert into interest-bearing securities the liabilities of a social system that still weighs heavily upon many of our people. This is a matter of high moral, nay, spiritual, significance. The democracy we are defending as the political form of personal freedom is not chiefly a material possession. As Mr. Middleton Murry rightly says in his *Defence of Democracy*: "First and foremost it is the form of government which (mistakenly or not) asserts the worth and validity of the individual man, and that

the true end of society is to secure to him the maximum of responsible freedom". Democracy, thus understood, is not necessarily bound up with any financial or economic doctrine. And we shall blunder grievously if, on the one hand, we set economic bounds or, on the other, attach hard and fast economic conditions to our defence of the responsible individual freedom which has been, above all, an English achievement and the gift of British political genius to the world.

So, in our search for ways and means of gaining victory over the evil forces against which we are fighting we must not lose sight of that greatest of our national assets--the power of our people freely to pull together and to hold fast in the service of a worthy cause. We have to safeguard freedom at home even while we seek to save its light from being snuffed out elsewhere. It will not be enough to run down "Hitlerism" and to think that when it has been smashed or otherwise got rid of we shall have done our whole duty. If we overthrow Hitler and his system by force of arms alone shall we have killed the whole evil? Can we be sure that some other system, nearly if not quite

as bad, will not replace it and, by replacing it, force us into war once more? Even the war of 1914-1918 will prove not to have been fought in vain if we now learn the lessons of our failure to create peace during the past twenty years, and make up our minds not again to err as we and others have erred since 1920. The time to make up our minds and to set to work is now, not at the end of the war, whenever that may be.

In 1914-1918 we and the French were allied, not always harmoniously. From 1920 onwards, we were often at cross-purposes with them. Now we are united with them. We suspected them, at the Peace Conference and afterwards, of wanting to lord it over Europe. We listened with eager ears to the German propaganda which bade us believe that the Treaty of Versailles was a monument of iniquity, whereas it was an imperfect attempt to set up in Europe, with the help of the League of Nations whose Covenant it embodied, a "better international system". With all its faults the Versailles Treaty and the other peace treaties did set free in Europe 80,000,000 out of 100,000,000 people who were in bondage. But we let ourselves be persuaded that "Versailles" was alto-

gether evil, that in particular Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty had laid upon the German conscience the wicked charge of "war guilt", when in truth it obliged the Germans to recognise only that Germany and her allies were responsible for the loss and damage done in the war let loose by their aggression. The fact of their aggression is indisputable. Austria-Hungary deliberately picked her quarrel with and attacked Serbia. Germany, who had pressed Austria-Hungary to do this, then invaded Belgium as she had long planned to do. Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty was based upon these facts as a legal warrant for the Allied claim to reparations. To enforce that claim may or may not have been wise. But Article 231 said nothing of "war-guilt". It spoke only of "responsibility"—a word which German propaganda deliberately mistranslated as "guilt". And well-intentioned but foolish people in this country echoed this German prevarication until they persuaded themselves that we had been "guilty" of an outrageous calumny of which we should repent in sackcloth and ashes.

Now in the Versailles Treaty there was a charge of war guilt. It was brought against

the German Emperor, not against the German people. In words not unlike those which the Prime Minister has used to condemn Hitler's faithlessness and mendacity, Article 227 of the Versailles Treaty stated: "The Allied and Associated Powers publicly arraign William II of Hohenzollern, formerly German Emperor, for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties. . . . The Allied and Associated Powers will address a request to the Government of the Netherlands for the surrender to them of the ex-Emperor in order that he may be put on trial". This is the real "war-guilt" article of the Versailles Treaty, not Article 231 against which German propaganda directed all its shafts in the hope of upsetting the Allied claim for reparations. And the honesty of this propaganda may be judged from the fact that the "public arraignment" of the former German Emperor for his "supreme offence" against international morality aroused no indignation whatever in German minds.

The sequel to this arraignment was more interesting, and bears more directly upon the lawfulness of war, than the arraignment itself.

On January 15, 1920, the Supreme Council of the Allies brought Article 227 of the Versailles Treaty to the notice of the Dutch Government and asked it to surrender the former German Emperor so that he might be put on trial. The Dutch Government replied that this demand was not a legal claim, but "an act of high international policy" for which there was no existing legal sanction. There could be no crime, it argued, except in the light of an existing law; and in 1914 there was no valid law against war. Should such a law be enacted in future, possibly by the League of Nations, the Netherlands would respect it and act in accordance with it.

The League of Nations enacted no such law. The nearest approach to a legal condemnation of war was made in 1928 by the Briand-Kellogg Treaty in renunciation of war. Of this Treaty the only practical effect has been to induce aggressors to make war without declaring it. So Japan made war on China, Italy on Abyssinia and Albania, and Germany on Poland without declaring it. The reason is plain. No renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, even though it be enshrined in a solemn inter-

national treaty and ratified by more than sixty States as the Briand-Kellogg Pact was, can have practical effect unless the renunciation of war be accompanied by the renunciation of neutrality towards or in favour of war-makers. This is the main lesson of the Briand-Kellogg Pact. It is a lesson we need to learn; for when our war aims are defined and proclaimed, no statement of our intention to "lay the foundation of a better international system" will be worth much more than the paper it is written on unless it provide that any and every adherent of that better system shall renounce not only the making of war as an instrument of national policy but also the sovereign right to be neutral towards any such war-maker.

Until we can bring ourselves to see the necessity of this step, and are ready to take it so far as we are concerned, we shall labour under a paralysing liability whenever we seek to transform our war aims into a moral asset before the eyes of the world. We may demand and secure the restoration of independence and freedom to Poland and Czechoslovakia. We may insist that Austria shall be free to decide for herself her future relationship to other countries. We may



call for disarmament all round. But we shall not lay the foundation of a better international order unless we are ready to contribute to its establishment the sacrifice of our own sovereign right to be neutral. The only path that I can see to a better international system runs towards an extension to the affairs of nations of the underlying principle of English Common Law. This principle is that individual freedom—which means individual sovereignty—must go hand in hand with individual responsibility for order and peace within the community. Any Englishman who fails to give his personal support to the guardians of the law, whenever they need it for the restraint or the suppression of lawlessness, is guilty of an indictable offence. He cannot lawfully be neutral between the law and law-breakers.

On this foundation—extended to freedom-loving peoples—and on this alone, a just and enduring peace could be built up. The foundation may have to be laid on federal lines. This does not mean a stereotyped peace of which no jot or tittle could be changed save by force. It means a peace of growth, of helpfulness, of creative brotherliness among free peoples. Such a peace

must demand the sacrifice of national neutrality and sovereignty in whatever degree may be needed to ensure that armed Might shall not be Right; and that pending fair enquiry into and the righteous settlement of just grievances, the law of warlessness shall be upheld by every member of a community of free nations. I am convinced that without such a basis for peace this war, like that of 1914-1918, will again fail to end war. If, in taking stock of our ways and means, we do not mobilise this asset and make it our foremost war aim, our present crusade in defence of freedom may once more resemble one of the Polar expeditions that did not reach the Pole.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ORIGINS OF HITLERISM

TWO statements by the Prime Minister have suggested what millions of people throughout the British Commonwealth and in France take to be our chief war aims. One statement, which I have already quoted, was made on September 3, the day of our declaration of war upon Germany. It ran: "I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established". The other, on September 20, said that our purpose is "To redeem Europe from the perpetual and recurring fear of German aggression, and enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and their liberties". So we may take it that in the view of our Government we are fighting to destroy Hitlerism and to put an end to German aggression. It is precisely on these points that we need to clear our minds, to find out exactly what the "Hitlerism" is that we wish to destroy, and whether its

destruction would put an end to fear of German aggression.

I think I may fairly claim to have studied, and thought about, Hitler and Hitlerism as long and as carefully as any Englishman. An experience of Germany and the Germans now extending over nearly half a century, and some acquaintance with Prussian and German history both as German writers have recorded it or as I have lived through it, convince me that not only is "Hitlerism" a characteristic product of the evil genius of Germany, but that policies of aggression have been inspired by that evil genius ever since Prussia became the leading State in Germany. If this conviction is warranted by the history of Prussian and German political thought and action during the past hundred and fifty years at least, as I am persuaded that it is, we are faced to-day with a task much more formidable than that of breaking the power of Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist, or Nazi, Third Reich over Germany and Central Europe. We have to deal with tendencies, perhaps with instincts, much older than Hitler, and therefore likely to outlast him. How to deal with them when victory over Hitlerism has been won, and a fair place has

to be found for the German peoples in a liberated Europe, may prove to be the hardest riddle we have to answer. Yet unless we find the answer our major war aims will not be fulfilled.

I have said that I look upon Hitlerism as "a product of the evil genius of Germany". Whom and what, it may fairly be asked, do I look upon as representing the good genius of Germany. Roughly, I should say that I regard the philosophy and the aspirations of Immanuel Kant to "Perpetual Peace", the Humanism of Goethe, the plays of Schiller, the music of Beethoven and Bach, and the political ideals of the German liberals of 1848 as having been inspired by the good genius of Germany. With the still surviving spirit of this Germany I came into touch as a student at the University of Berlin in 1892 and 1893. Three years later it had almost vanished. Now, after a long interval, I find it again in the most recent writings of Thomas Mann, one of the foremost of the present German political exiles. How far it is shared by any large number of Germans inside Germany I cannot judge. Nor do I pretend to know whether there are, as some maintain, "two Germanys" in the sense of a

practical alternative to Hitlerism, or Prussianism, as a basis for the organisation of a future German polity that might be an equal and a trusted member of a European family of nations. In any event it seems to me unsafe to reckon upon an immediate or even a rapid emergence of a "good Germany" after Hitlerism has been overthrown. Without closing our eyes to disagreeable facts, one of our "war aims" should be to encourage and to hasten the growth of a "good Germany". We must hope and work for such a Germany. But the issue at stake—which is nothing less than the freedom and peace of Europe, including our own—is far too grave to justify us in identifying hope with reality.

The evidence of competent observers is not altogether encouraging. During the Great War of 1914–1918, and immediately after it, no British writer was a more fervent believer in a "good Germany" than Mr. Robert Dell of the *Manchester Guardian*. He suffered expulsion from France for expressing this belief, then went to Germany in the hope of finding reasons for it. He was bitterly disappointed. In his book *Germany Unmasked*, published in 1934 after some experience of Nazi Germany, he wrote:

It was the Germany I knew in 1922–1925 that was deceptive and misled so many of us, especially those of us who, like myself, had known little of pre-war Germany. The Germany of 1922–1925 seemed as different from pre-war Germany as the Germany of 1934 is different from that of 1922–1925; but the former difference was only superficial and the real Germany has come back. Not that the Nazi régime is a mere revival of pre-war Prussian militarism—it is something far worse.

Quite as trenchant, and as hard to disprove, is a further statement by Mr. Robert Dell in the *Manchester Guardian* of October 7, 1939. It said:

In November, 1933 (some nine months after Hitler came into power), a distinguished diplomatist said to me in Berlin: "This is not a normal civilised country, and the German Government is not a normal civilised Government and cannot be dealt with as if it were one". Failure to recognise that fact has been, in my opinion, one of the chief causes of a series of diplomatic

blunders, unprecedented in history, which has brought us where we are.

Many people in England will no doubt reply that this is the result of the Treaty of Versailles, which was the ultimate cause of Hitler's success. There have been many unjust treaties in history—indeed few, if any, of the treaties imposed by the conquerors after a victorious war have been just—but I never heard of a peace treaty that produced the results attributed to the Treaty of Versailles. Other peace treaties have produced a desire for revenge on the part of the vanquished, but the Nazi movement was much more than a mere expression of the desire for revenge, which, when I was in Germany in 1922–1925, was felt by only a small minority of Germans. If the Treaty of Versailles was so bitterly resented by the German people as a whole as it is alleged to have been, how is it that the German Nationalist Party, whose attitude towards the Treaty was from the first exactly the same as that of Hitler, never succeeded in getting any great hold on the German people? Hitler himself said in a passage in Part II,



Chapter XIII, of *Mein Kampf* (pages 714 and 715), which was written in 1926, that the mass of the German people was indifferent to the Treaty of Versailles and to German disarmament, and that its resentment would have to be worked up by "ingenious propaganda". The method of "ingenious propaganda" by which he worked it up was the lie that Germany had been victorious in the war but that the fruits of victory had been snatched from her by "Marxist treason". So long as the Germans believed that they had been beaten they remained pacific. Desire for revenge did not create the Nazi movement—it was created by it.

. . . I do not say that Germany will never change, but it will take a long time to bring about the change, which will not be effected by the disappearance of Hitler. Germany is a pathological case which needs pathological treatment. If we do not take this into account in any settlement that we try to make after the war we shall repeat the mistakes of the last nine years over again and we shall have another war in twenty years or less.

Mr. Robert Dell is an honest writer of liberal mind. He may or may not have judged quite accurately when he wrote that if the Germany of 1934 was different from the Germany he had known eight years earlier it was because in 1934, under Hitler, the "real Germany" had come back. He ascribes his mistake about the Germany of 1922-1925 to his own lack of experience of Germany before 1914. Here he is undoubtedly right. Between 1892 and 1913 I knew Germany well; yet I can see differences between that Germany and Hitler's Germany of to-day which leave me, in some degree, with an open mind about the Germany we may have to deal with when "Hitlerism" has been destroyed. This openness of mind extends also to the possibility that prolonged experience of Nazi tyranny, *if its sequel be indisputable military defeat*, may teach the German people such a lesson as to give the better side of their nature a chance of asserting itself.

However this may be we cannot close our eyes to the historical tendencies and characteristics which have found their expression in Hitlerism. To these tendencies and characteristics I shall refer. Before doing so it will be well again to place on record the evidence

of two other, equally trustworthy, witnesses. One is the well-known American writer, Mr. Edgar Ansell Mowrer, who, after the war of 1914-1918 lived twelve years in Germany, watched the rise of Hitlerism and saw the effects of Hitler's "ingenious propaganda" upon the German people. In his *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, published in 1933, he says:

Not mere servility, but knowledge of their essentially dispersive nature made the Germans hanker after heavy governmental yoke, without which the people almost inevitably swung from extreme to extreme. It was not imperialistic scheming but vanity, amounting almost to a vital need, that caused the people to deny reality in the form of its own war responsibility and defeat. What to foreigners seemed wrong-headedness or sheer duplicity was mere incapacity to face a truth incompatible with the national self-esteem.

For a creed is doubly necessary to men who can never quite decide between opposites, who oscillate between jelly-like receptivity and pompous nationalism, unable to accept any form, yet unceas-

ingly jealous of shapelier nations, conscious of immaturity, or lack of face, yet somehow proud of it all as far richer in promise than the neat outlines of Latins and Anglo-Saxons.

It is astonishing the way the people of Goethe repudiated everything he had stood for. Liberalism? A disruptive ideology of a bygone age! Europe? A geographical expression! The League of Nations? A cackle of geese! World peace? A dream of girls and pacifists and Jews! The only reality was the Nordic race and its noble German incarnation.

The other witness is Herr Theodor Wolff, the eminent Editor of the *Berliner Tageblatt* from 1906 to 1933. In his work, *The Eve of 1914*, he says: "The nation's business was conducted before the war by the Kaiser and a few persons who, for one reason or another, were in favour with the Monarch; their clients, whose property and whose lives were involved in their speculations—the whole nation, 65,000,000 human beings—had no opportunity of inspecting the books". Nor did they really wish to inspect them. Herr Wolff adds:

Even among those Germans who were full of distaste for caste arrogance, by far the greater number took it for granted that the quality of the leadership of the armed forces was pre-eminent, that they were invincible and in sole possession of the secret of a special science. There were very few who did not surrender themselves to mystical assumptions of this sort.

This is the key to the mystery of Hitlerism. By cunning mendacity and by playing upon the morbid minds of a people whom defeat had robbed of a cherished belief in the invincibility of their armies, Hitler did more than stir those minds to accept his assurances of future triumph. He awoke slumbering memories of former Prussian conquests, of triumphs over Napoleon in 1813 after humiliation in 1806, over Denmark, in 1864, over Austria in 1866 and over Imperial France in 1870-71. And this he did with the help of a fantastic doctrine which he had borrowed from a renegade Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain who, in his turn, had borrowed it from the German philosopher Fichte and from some of Fichte's predecessors. From

Fichte to Hitler the line runs straight. None who would vanquish "Hitlerism" can afford to ignore it.

Outside Germany Fichte is best known as a philosopher. But it was not his philosophy that did most to mould the German or, rather, the Prussian political tradition that runs from him to Hitler. It was the mystical nationalism of the "Fourteen Speeches to the German People" which he delivered in 1807. Nor was the "Fichtebund" (or "Fichte League") which has been distributing Nazi propaganda in foreign countries, founded in honour of Fichte the philosopher. It was founded to spread Fichte's political doctrine of the inborn superiority of the primeval German people over all others. And if it be asked how a philosophical seeker after truth could teach such heady nonsense, the answer must be sought in Prussian history.

After having been dismissed from his professorship at the University of Jena for "godlessness" in the spring of 1789, Fichte settled in Berlin where he absorbed the Prussian spirit. During the eighteenth century successive Kings of Prussia had made of their mongrel people an organised nation,

with a large, well-trained army, a centralised administration, and a full treasury. It has been well said that Frederick William I, father of Frederick the Great, had "the mind of a drill sergeant, the manners of a boor, and the moods of a savage". He filled his army with giants by the methods of a slave-raider. Having quarrelled with his son, afterwards Frederick the Great, he condemned him to witness, as one of many penalties, the beheading of a cherished friend. He standardised "Prussianism" which, in its simplest form, is thoroughgoing military discipline and political servility. It is the spirit of an army carried over into civil officialdom and into society itself. It is obedience to a single will—be the will that of a leader or that of a tyrant.

When Frederick the Great succeeded his father in 1740, he soon showed his Prussian quality. He denounced the claims of the Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa, to the province of Silesia, and invaded and took Silesia before she could act. Hitler could not have done better. In 1772 he induced Maria Theresa and the Empress Catherine of Russia to join him in partitioning Poland, an iniquitous operation by which he gained the

Polish region known as West Prussia, and staked out his claims to further expansion. Under him, the final struggle between Prussia and Austria for mastery in Germany was foreshadowed. On Frederick's true character light is thrown by a letter dated Berlin March 18, 1776, to the Earl of Suffolk from Mr. James Harris, afterwards the first Earl of Malmesbury. He wrote:

The basis of His Prussian Majesty's conduct, from the time he mounted the throne to this day, seems to have been the considering of mankind in general, and particularly those over whom he was destined to reign as beings created merely to be subservient to his will, and conducive to the carrying into execution whatever might tend to augment his power and extend his dominions. . . . To persevere in this system it was necessary for him to divest himself of compassion and remorse, and of course of religion and morality. . . . Thus never losing sight of his object he lays aside all feelings the moment that is concerned; and, although as an individual he often appears and really is humane,



benevolent and friendly, yet the instant he acts in his Royal capacity these attributes forsake him and he carries with him desolation, misery and persecution wherever he goes. . . . If he has failed in small points, resolution and cunning, employed as the occasion requires, and always supported by great abilities, have carried him with success through almost every important undertaking he has attempted. . . . He undoubtedly owes this, in great measure, to his superior talents; yet I think we may find another cause in the character and position of his subjects; in general they are poor, vain, ignorant and destitute of principle. . . . Their vanity makes them think they see their own greatness in the greatness of their monarch. Their ignorance stifles in them every notion of liberty and opposition, and their want of principle makes them ready instruments to execute any orders they may receive, without considering whether they are founded on equity or not.

Mr. James Harris foresaw that the preponderance of Prussia in Central Europe would

not last long beyond the end of Frederick's reign. Frederick died in 1786. Twenty years later Prussia, smashed at the battle of Jena, lay helpless at the feet of Napoleon. But what Mr. Harris had said of Frederick's appeal to the vanity of Prussians was hardly less true of his appeal to Germans outside Prussia. For the first time since the Thirty Years' War, which was closed by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Germans felt that they might again aspire to a commanding place in the world. In any event Frederick's exploits elated them beyond measure. It is a question of some interest whether the way in which German minds swing from depression to elation and back to depression again is entirely due to circumstances, or whether it is a result of some lack of stability in character. I can think of no other people that has so often changed dejection for arrogance, self-depreciation for loud self-assurance.

In 1807, a year after the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon, Fichte set himself to play upon these changeful moods. He delivered in Berlin fourteen speeches to the German nation which, taken together and compared with the doctrines of Hitlerism, must be

recognised as one of the most remarkable efforts to rouse a nation's spirit by appealing to its vanity that have been made in modern times. Like Hitler, Fichte was convinced that God spoke through him, and that Prussia and Germany must rise again in the service of a German God. If he was not the first to give a mystical and semi-religious turn to German pride of race and yearning for political dominion, he was the first to proclaim dogmatically that Germanism is the supreme possession of mankind. Before Fichte it is true that the philosopher Herder had claimed that the German people alone possessed the secrets of philosophical thought, and that the whole sense of history and of the world points to the triumph of the German people. Fichte may also have caught something of the spirit of an unfinished poem, entitled "German Greatness", which Schiller had written in 1801. In it Schiller affirmed that only the German spirit can understand sacred things, since it alone communes with the spirit of the Universe which has chosen it to work at the timeless task of cultivating and forming humanity. When her day has dawned, Schiller declared, Germany will reap the harvest of all past centuries. On that day the

image of mankind will appear to the world with a German visage.

Taking up this parable Fichte affirmed that though military force must be the instrument of Germanism, German culture would prevail because of its own intrinsic superiority to all other forms of civilisation. This superiority existed independently of the military weapon which would ensure its triumph. It is rooted in the eternal order of things. The essential difference between the Germans and other peoples, Fichte went on, is reflected above all in their language, and in the fact that this language had been spoken from time immemorial by the same primeval human stock on the same soil as an expression of the inmost character of the German folk itself. Unlike other peoples who had learned to speak strange tongues without originality and composed of words that did not refer directly to the objects or ideas they were supposed to represent, the German tongue had kept its direct contact with things, and was therefore living and life-giving. This is the main distinction between Germans and other peoples of Germanic origin. In Fichte's actual words:

This distinction arose on the first

splitting of the primeval common stock, and consists in the fact that the German speaks a tongue derived from the first outpouring of the vital power of Nature, whereas the other Germanic peoples speak only tongues of which the surface moves while their roots are dead. In this circumstance alone, in vitality and in death, we see the difference. Between life and death there is no comparison, for life has infinite worth. Therefore all comparisons between the German and Latinised languages are worthless, inasmuch as those languages speak of things that are not worth speaking of. If there be talk of the inner value of the German tongue, let it at least be compared with one of equal rank. It must be measured with a language equally primordial, for instance, ancient Greek.

The fundamental character of the Germans as a primeval folk, Fichte therefore asserted, gives them the right to call themselves simply "*The People*", so that the name "*German*" can be seen in its true significance. So it is too in the realm of statecraft. Here also the German people are supreme. Such a people

is capable of patriotism in the highest sense of the term, of belief in immortality in the form of its own eternal existence as a people, that is to say, the embodiment of the Divine. But without political independence even the German language could not save the people. They must be free within their own boundaries—inner boundaries, in the first place, which include all who speak the German tongue. No people of other blood or tongue can be allowed to dwell within them. A people which, like the German, has remained true to Nature can, however, if it finds its own homeland too small, gain more space by conquering the territories of its neighbours and driving out their inhabitants. It may wish to exchange a rough and barren land for one more blessed; and in this case also it will drive out the earlier inhabitants. Or it can raid its neighbours, taking from them everything worth having, and bringing back their inhabitants as slaves to be distributed among its own people—without ever allowing the slaves to become partners in its own State. There has been talk, indeed, of a balance of power in Europe as the only means of keeping the peace. This is an empty notion. How can it be transformed into a real thing?

Only by having in the centre of Europe an overwhelmingly powerful German nation, pure and uncontaminated, inspired by a common will and united in a common strength against which the other Europeans would strive in vain. Is there in the whole world another people like this primordial German folk? Any man who seeks to answer this question in the light of deep thought must answer: "No!" If the Germans go down, the whole of mankind goes down never to rise again.

With this teaching Fichte helped to set Prussian and German hearts aflame. He became the prophet of the movement which—organised by statesmen and soldiers like Ritter vom Stein, Hardenberg and Scharnhorst—culminated in the German Wars of Liberation against the tyranny of Napoleon. But it would be quite wrong to look upon Fichte's doctrine as merely the product of an over-heated imagination in an hour of national disaster. It has run through German political thought ever since. In various guises it is to be found in the writings of Hegel, Goerres and Schlegel, in the operas of Richard Wagner, as well as in the books and

lectures of Treitschke, the works of Nietzsche and Lamprecht, in those of Friedrich Ratzel and Arthur Dix (the apostles of German "geographical predestination") not to mention a host of minor scribes, down to the *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, written in German by a Germanised Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

It was, directly and indirectly, from Houston Stewart Chamberlain that both the Emperor William II and Adolf Hitler drew their belief in the God-given superiority of the Nordic "Aryan" Germanic race, and in the intrinsic superiority of everything German over everything non-German. To judge how closely Chamberlain followed Fichte it is necessary only to compare Fichte's doctrine with a letter which Chamberlain wrote to the German Emperor in November, 1901. (It was first published in the second volume of Chamberlain's *Letters* which was issued in 1928.) The letter itself, when printed, covered nine and a half pages. Here are some extracts from it:

Your Majesty and your subjects have been born in a holy shrine. Most of them do not dream that this is so, just



as one does not notice what happens daily, like the rays of the life-giving sun. But I had to tread a long and weary way before I could even see the shrine from afar, and then it cost me years of ardent labour before I could set foot upon its steps. . . . It is my inmost conviction—gained through years of study, gained in those solemn hours when the soul wrestles for knowledge with the Divine, like Jacob with the Angel—that the moral and spiritual salvation of mankind depends upon what we can call German. . . . It is the language that convinces us irrefutably of this; for Science, Philosophy and Religion can to-day take no onward step save in the German tongue. And the existence of this tongue teaches us something which we might not learn from the phenomena of daily life: that in the German people the highest capacities are united, more highly than elsewhere. The tongue and the people's soul condition each other reciprocally. . . . Among the Latin peoples both are dead; among the other Germans (I am thinking especially of England) cleavage has long since begun, a cleavage in which the language

gradually becomes dumb (that is to say, a mere medium of intercourse, not an element out of which new forms can be coined) and consequently the soul loses her wings little by little and only crawls like a worm on its belly. And because the German soul is indissolubly linked with the German tongue, the higher development of mankind is bound up with Germany, a mighty Germany spreading far across the earth the sacred heritage of her language, affirming herself everywhere and imposing herself on others. . . . God builds to-day upon the Germans alone. This is the knowledge, the certain truth that has filled my soul for years.

After the war Houston Stewart Chamberlain began to lose faith in the German Emperor—who was sawing wood in exile at Doorn and hardly seemed heroic—and transferred his allegiance to Adolf Hitler whom he met and heard speak. So on October 7, 1923, Chamberlain wrote Hitler a letter hailing him as the Saviour of Germany. In it he said:

You have mighty things to do; but in

spite of your will-power I do not take you for a violent man. You know Goethe's distinction between violence and violence. There is a violence that comes out of and leads back to chaos, and there is a violence whose nature it is to form a cosmos. Of this violence Goethe says: "It builds up every form with ruling hand, and even at its greatest it is not violence".

It is in this cosmos-building sense that I wish to count you among the up-building, not among the violent men.

Ever and again I ask myself whether the lack of political instinct for which the Germans are so generally blamed is not a symptom of a much deeper State-building disposition. German talent for organisation is unsurpassed. And German capacity for science is unequalled. . . . The ideal of politics would be to have no politics. But this non-politics would have to be frankly professed and imposed upon the world by force. Nothing can be done as long as the Parliamentary system rules; God knows that the Germans have no spark of talent for this system. Its prevalence I regard as the

greatest misfortune, for it can only lead again and again into a morass and bring to nought all plans for restoring the Fatherland to health and lifting it up. . . .

My faith in Germanism has not wavered an instant, though my hope—I confess it—was at a low ebb. With one stroke you have transformed the state of my soul. That in the hour of her deepest need Germany gives birth to a Hitler proves her vitality; as do the influences that emanate from him; for these two things—personality and its influence—belong together. . . . May God protect you!

Hitler must have been pleased to get this letter from a man whose notions he himself was trading upon, just as Houston Stewart Chamberlain had traded upon notions taken over from Fichte, and from a renegade Frenchman named Gobineau. Whether Hitler had ever read Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* I do not know; nor does it greatly matter. The book had been published in German in 1899 and had been devoured by the leaders of the pan-German movement which had, somewhat suddenly,

made headway in Germany about the year 1895. The ground for it had been prepared long before, but it became politically important as soon as German foreign policy took an openly anti-British turn at the end of 1895. On January 3, 1896, the German Emperor sent his famous telegram to congratulate President Kruger of the Transvaal on having beaten off the Jameson raid "without appealing for the help of friendly Powers". As the foreign relations of the Transvaal Republic were then subject to British control, the Emperor's telegram was looked upon as so anti-British that Lord Salisbury's Government formed a "Flying Squadron" of warships at Portsmouth to deal with any German attempt to intervene in South Africa. Queen Victoria wrote angrily to the German Emperor, as her grandson; and he promptly begged the British Ambassador in Berlin to "tell Granny I didn't mean it".

How are we to account for the persistent attempts—from Fichte to Houston Chamberlain and Hitler—to whip up "the German people" into a belief in their own transcending excellence? Are these stimulants supplied in response to an inborn craving? Do German

minds feel some sense of weakness or inferiority which they cannot overcome without intoxicants? Towards the middle of last century a German writer, Julius Fröbel, asked in an essay upon "German Emigration and its Natural and Historical Significance" whether there were any other people which felt so constantly as the Germans the need to affirm its own special character, as though it wanted to convince itself that it really has a special character. He wrote:

Where is there another people that uses equivalents of "German strength", "German true-heartedness", "German love", "German earnestness", "German thoroughness", "German diligence", "German women", "German maidens", or "German men"? . . . A German demands from himself as something extraordinary that he shall be German, as though he would otherwise be free to get out of his own skin—just as he insists that his men shall be "manly" and his women "womanly", his children "childlike" and his maidens "maidenly". The German spirit is always, so to speak, standing before the

mirror and looking at itself. And when it has seen itself a hundred times and has convinced itself of its perfections, a hidden doubt in which dwells the innermost secret of vanity drives it again to stand before the mirror.

With Julius Fröbel's analysis it is interesting to compare Nietzsche's account of the Germans in his work *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*), which appeared in 1885:

As a people of the most monstrous mixture and mingling together of races, perhaps even with a preponderance of pre-Aryan elements, as a middle-people in every respect, the Germans are more comprehensive, more elusive, fuller of contradictions, less known, more incalculable, more surprising and more terrifying to themselves than other peoples are; they defy definition and, if only for this reason, they are the despair of the French. It is characteristic of the Germans that among them the question: "What is German?" is never settled.

With Nietzsche, in his turn, we may compare no less an authority than Adolf Hitler,

who, on pages 437-438 of his book, *Mein Kampf*, says:

The German people lack that infallible herd-instinct which comes from unity of blood and, especially in moments of danger, saves nations from destruction in so far as it enables them to rise above petty inner differences and to show the firm front of a united herd to a common foe. What we call super-individualism comes from the presence (in our people) of unassimilated heterogeneous race elements side by side with each other. In times of peace this state of things may even be of some service but, taken as a whole, it cost us the mastery of the world. If, in its historical development, the German people had possessed the same herd-unity that stood other peoples in good stead, the German Empire would to-day be master of the globe. History would have taken another course; and who can say if this course would not have led to what so many purblind pacifists hope to get by whining and whimpering—a peace not supported by the tearful pacifist lamentations of palm-waving females but founded upon the victorious



sword of a ruling race bending the world to the service of a higher *Kultur*.

Hitler was born in 1889. Some six years later pan-German pamphlets and other publications began to multiply in Germany and Austria; and in 1897 an Austrian official decree which put the Czech language on the same footing as German in the province of Bohemia led to a violent outburst of pan-Germanism. By 1899 a pamphlet called *Grossdeutschland* (*Great Germany*) had been published with a map marking the boundaries of Great Germany and Central Europe as they would be round about the year 1950. Alsace and Lorraine, then annexed to Germany, were naturally within these boundaries; but they included also the French port of Dunkirk, the Flemish parts of Belgium, as well as Holland, Southern Denmark, German Switzerland, North-Eastern Italy (with Trieste and the Istrian Peninsula), Hungary, Slovakia, Bohemia, a larger part of Poland than Germany then held, and a portion of Lithuania with Memel.

At that time Hitler was only ten years of age. But, if his own account of his schooling can be trusted, his ideas were already being

formed by a German Nationalist school-teacher. When I went to live and work in Vienna at the end of 1902 I found that pan-Germanism, with anti-Semitism or anti-Jewish agitation as its accompaniment, had taken root among the Austrian Germans. About 1905 or 1906 Hitler came to Vienna in search of work and fell under the influence of pan-German and anti-Jewish propaganda. He stayed in Vienna until 1912, when he went to Munich; and as I stayed in Vienna until July, 1913, I was closely in touch with the overheated political atmosphere in which his years of adolescence were passed. As far as the personal origins of "Hitlerism" are concerned, that is to say, its origins in Hitler himself, I think I can judge as well as any man what they were and how they took shape in the umbrageous mind of an ill-educated youth who was living from hand to mouth and spending homeless nights in a doss-house.

Those who have never read Chamberlain's *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* can hardly imagine why it struck so many Germans, from the Emperor William II down to the rank and file of the pan-German movement, with

the force of an evangel. Chamberlain set out to find a "true religion" for the Germanic peoples. So his book became a mystical essay upon Nordic "Aryan" race-purity as a holy sacrament. While professing reverence for the personality and the teachings of Christ, Chamberlain doubted whether Christ or his parents were Jews by blood; and he represented the Jews as parasites upon the noble body of Germanism. Christianity he looked upon as a mixture of Jewish beliefs, and of Indo-European or "Aryan" mythology. The struggle between these elements went on in the Roman Church until Germanism broke through triumphantly in the Lutheran Reformation. The civilisation and culture which, radiating from Northern Europe, now dominates a considerable part of the world are, Chamberlain maintained, the work of Teutonic Aryanism, a work which is the greatest yet accomplished by man. Though he distinguished between "Teutonism" and "Germanism" he believed that the Germans were the chief bearers of Teutonic civilisation which expresses the native superiority of the Northern "Aryan" races over the rest of mankind.

Out of the seed sown in his mind by

Chamberlain's doctrine Hitler developed a doctrine partly his own and partly taken from members of the so-called "Geo-Political School" of pan-Germanism to which his deputy, Herr Hess, belongs. From this school comes the term *Lebensraum*, or "living space" which Hitler so often uses. It means that room must be found in Europe for a German nation of 250 millions, mainly at the expense of Slavs like the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and Russians whom—as Fichte taught—"a people that has remained true to Nature can, if it finds its own homeland too small", conquer, drive out or reduce to slavery. One well-known teacher in this "geo-political" school, Professor Ewald Banse, published in 1932 a book called *Space and People in the World War*, which defined "the proper territory of a true Third Reich" with a present population of ninety-two millions. It included what he called the "purely German States" of Germany, Austria, Danzig, Luxemburg, Holland and her colonies, and the principality of Liechtenstein, besides "the German portions" of other countries: German Belgium (Flanders, Brabant, Eupen, Malmedy); German Switzerland; German France (French Flanders, Alsace and Lor-

raine); German Italy (especially the Southern Tyrol); German Yugoslavia; German Czechoslovakia (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia); German Poland (West Prussia, Posen, Upper Silesia); German Lithuania (the Memelland); German Denmark.

This was written before Hitler came into power. What he has already done to carry out this programme can be seen in his annexation of Austria and his destruction of Czechoslovakia and Poland, besides his incorporation of the Memelland in his Third Reich. He wished to subjugate Poland and to fulfil the rest of the programme by threat of war though, if possible, without actual fighting. It is here that the Anglo-Polish alliance, and Polish resistance to his attack, have thrown his plans out of gear. He did not expect serious resistance until he had made Germany so powerful, by "negotiation" and by inducing others to "appease" him under threat of war, that no serious resistance could be offered.

Those who study the origins of Hitlerism both in the historical thought of Germany since the end of the eighteenth century and in the mind of Hitler himself cannot fail to be struck by the straightness of the line that runs

from its beginnings to what we must hope is its approaching end. When Hitler's *Mein Kampf* appeared, many of its foreign readers were tempted to look upon the projects outlined in its second volume as so fantastic as to be almost comic. If I have always taken these projects seriously it was because I knew enough of the origins of Hitler's ideas to realise that they were rooted in the deeper yearnings of the German political temperament. Nor was I led astray by the comparative friendliness of his views upon Great Britain. I have long thought that Great Britain or, rather, "England", would be treated as the ultimate obstacle to pan-Germanism in general and of Hitlerism in particular; and that any effort Hitler might make to win our favour would be meant to beguile us while he prepared to isolate us in Europe by crushing France—unless he should first seek to beguile and then to isolate France by crushing England.

To see this needed no special insight. Even had we not been shown the true purpose of German policy in the years before 1914, when a first policy of "appeasement" nearly succeeded in keeping us neutral while the attack on France through Belgium was being pre-

pared, we might have learned from Hitler's own writings what his final purpose would be. On page 757 of *Mein Kampf* he wrote:

The future direction of our foreign policy must be neither to the West nor to the East, but an Eastern policy in the sense of gaining the necessary soil for our German people. Since, for this, one needs strength, and France, the mortal enemy of our people, strangles us pitilessly and robs us of power, we must take upon ourselves every sacrifice of which the effects are calculated to contribute to a destruction of French endeavours to hold mastery in Europe. Any and every Power is to-day our natural ally who, like us, feels the French lust of domination on the Continent to be intolerable. No approach to such a Power must seem to us too hard and no renunciation unspeakable if its final result offers even the possibility of crushing our grimmest hater.

On pages 766 and 767 he added:

Only when this has been completely understood in Germany, so that the will

to live of the German nation no longer decays in merely placid defence but pulls itself together for an active final settlement with France and throws itself, with the greatest ultimate aims on the German side, into a last decisive struggle—only then will one be able to bring the eternal and, in itself, so barren contest between us and France to an end; though then only on the understanding that Germany will really see in the annihilation of France merely a means, not an end, so that thereafter our people will at last be able to attain its possible expansion in another quarter. To-day we number 80 million Germans in Europe. And our foreign policy will be recognised as right only when, in hardly a century, 250 million Germans will live upon this Continent, not crammed together as factory-coolies but as peasants and workmen whose labour will reciprocally vouchsafe life to each other.

The most noteworthy passage in these confessions is that no approach must seem too hard to any Power if it offers even the possibility of crushing France so as to allow



Germany to expand, in territory and population, into a people of 250 million in Europe. For "the crushing of France" read "the isolation of England" and we have the key to pan-German as well as to Hitlerite ambitions. For between the pan-German and Hitlerite dream of world domination, even after the crushing of France, would stand Great Britain with the British Dominions and the British Empire proper. This is why German diplomacy and propaganda have always tried to drive a wedge between France and Great Britain. This, too, is why Hitler accepted the "unspeakable renunciation" of sacrificing to Italy the Germans of the Southern Tyrol—so that Italy might act with Germany against France. And this, too, is why he made his "non-aggression" pact with Soviet Russia on August 24, 1939, in order that Poland might be overthrown more swiftly and Hitler's army set free for a "final" onslaught on France. It was only when this onslaught was seen to have a doubtful chance of quick success that Hitler sought to persuade the French that they were fighting England's battles and began to talk of crushing England by irresistible attack from the air.

Upon the outcome of this war depends the fulfilment of the whole pan-German dream. Hitler and Hitlerism are making their last throw in the most desperate gamble the modern world has witnessed. In order fully to grasp all that is staked upon this throw we need to understand the system that Hitler and Hitlerism have built up in Germany and the degree of enslavement which they have inflicted upon a German people at once willing and unwilling. In a word, we must have in our minds a clear picture of Hitlerism in being. In the centre of this picture stand "the German people", bewildered and uncertain of their future as they have rarely been before, yet powerless by themselves to rid themselves of the evil genius that has once again brought them and Europe to the edge of the abyss.

## CHAPTER IV

### HITLERISM IN BEING

ON Hitler and Hitlerism a whole library of books has been written. I myself have been guilty of two. Many more will appear as time goes on. Each tells a part, some a large part, of the truth. Years may pass before men's minds are cool enough to allow them calmly to appraise one of the most singular forms of political, social, mental and spiritual tyranny that has ever disgraced the world and humiliated a great people. For the abiding mystery of Hitlerism is that it could, in the space of ten years, gain such a hold upon Germany as to be able to enslave scores of millions of decent folk and to reduce them, by mingled propaganda and terrorism, to powerlessness. When we are told that we have no quarrel with the "German people", we have a right to ask: "Who are the German people"? And we shall not find the answer easy. I look upon Hitlerism as a degrading superstition, a kind

of devil-worship, a demoniac cult that robs its devotees and many of its victims of reasoning power. But before we chide or condemn the "German people" for yielding to this cult, or for not resisting more stoutly its infernal spell, we must try to be just and to think whether we ourselves, in like circumstances, should have done better. I fancy we should, but I may be wrong. Apart from differences of temperament, of character and of geographical position, I believe that our long schooling in the ways of political and, to some extent, of social freedom would have stood us in good stead. We should have made the path of an oppressor much harder than the Germans made the path of Hitler. For their experience of political and social freedom had been both shorter and less varied than ours. Thanks to our island security from foreign invasion, and to our possession of a Common Law based upon individual responsibility, we had been able, little by little, through many advances and setbacks, to reach an idea of the true relationship between the community and the State which no other European people, except perhaps the Swiss, had reached in the same measure. Though few of us could put this

idea into words it was, roughly, that the State, or the Government, exists to serve the people, not the people to serve a State conceived as something intrinsically superior to the sum total of the institutions and persons which carry on the necessary work of managing public affairs.

In Germany, on the one hand, and particularly in Prussia, a different idea prevailed, or came to prevail. Like us, the Germans once had a Common Law, a "Folk Right", of which the principles were in some ways similar to our own. This Common Law was destroyed during the Lutheran Reformation. Luther may not have meant at first to destroy it, but he ended by throwing his great influence on to the side of the German Princes, especially the Protestant Princes, who were already eager to "receive" Roman Law so that each of them might become in his little way what the Roman Emperor Augustus had been in a big way—Pontifex Maximus and Emperor at the same time, a combination of Pope and Caesar, a potentate who united in his one person overlordship in religion with overlordship in the State. Under Roman Law the Princes saw that they could make serfs of the peasants who had been free men under

Common Law. Luther supported the Princes. He preached the doctrine of their divine right and of the duty of implicit obedience to them. Thus he helped to bring on the devastating revolt of the peasants, the Peasant War, during which he encouraged a repression so savage that (in Mr. H. A. L. Fisher's words) "it left the German peasantry more defenceless and abased than any social class in Central or Western Europe".

Now Roman Law was the law of a State founded on slavery. When the Christian Popes of Rome succeeded to the Roman Emperors they took over from their predecessors the title of Pontifex Maximus, or Supreme Pontiff, and presently gained temporal power or overlordship in the Roman State as well. But the Christian Church reformed and improved Roman Law by making it more humane. Alongside of the Common Law, this law of the Church, or "Canon Law", had prevailed in Germany. But when the German Princes "received" Roman Law it superseded both Common and Canon Law. By making a German princeling—there were hundreds of them—a little Pope-King on his own account, ruling his subjects by Divine Right and recognising few or none

of their ancient liberties, Roman Law reduced the peasants to serfdom and made of the common people bondslaves of the Prince and of his State to whose authority they were bound to bow lest they be guilty at once of impiety and of rebellion.

This bondage lasted until the early years of the nineteenth century. Then Napoleon, with the armies of the French Revolution, swept away many of the princelings, and might have given Germany less benighted forms of government. Instead he forced the serfs of German princes to fight for him, by levying what was called a "blood-tax"—conscripts or "cannon-fodder" for his campaigns—so that the Germans came to hate him more than they had hated their former oppressors. The revolt against him began in Prussia. But it was not a Prussian, it was a great Hessian, Ritter vom Stein, who saw that before the revolt could carry the people with it the peasantry must be set free. He understood that the problem of Prussia was more than military, that it was one of national revival and awakening. With the help of soldiers like Scharnhorst and Clausewitz, Stein and Hardenberg gave a servile army and a servile nation some of the characteristics of freedom.

He emancipated the peasantry from serfdom, improved their social condition and granted a degree of self-government to the Prussian towns. He felt that if Napoleon was to be beaten, he must be beaten in the moral as well as in the military field.

Had the spirit of Stein prevailed in Prussia the history of Germany and, indeed, of Europe in the nineteenth century might have taken a different course. But Stein was not beloved of the Prussians. Fichte was more to their taste. It was during the resurrection of Prussia that Fichte inflamed their vanity by telling them that the Germans were the greatest people on earth, the original people who had remained true to Nature, speaking a primeval tongue which kept them in touch, as no other people could be, with the forces of Nature. Before long the notion of a Prussian Pope-King as overlord of religion and of the State was revived and accredited by another Prussianised philosopher, Hegel, whose influence in Germany and abroad as a prophet of obscurantism became more pernicious even than that of Fichte. Hegel began the political reaction against the democratic and humanitarian ideas which had spread from Holland in the sixteenth century,



from England in the seventeenth and from France in the eighteenth. He identified freedom itself with willing subservience to the State. He thrust aside the idea of equality among human beings and replaced it by discipline under the State. He condemned individuality by merging the individual in the State which he declared to be "the Divine will as the present spirit unfolding itself in the actual shape and organisation of the world". The State, he maintained, is "the absolute power on earth". And he went so far as to say that the State "is an end in itself. It is the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual, whose highest duty is to be a member of the State".

This theory, which was an attempt to make Prussians believe that their State was an expression of God Himself, with a divinely-appointed Monarch at its head, has run through Prussian, and a good deal of German, history ever since. Hitler took it up and carried it a step farther. In *Mein Kampf* (pages 431, 433-4, 435-6), he wrote:

The fundamental principle is that the State is not an end but a means. . . .  
The State is a means to the end. The

end is the preservation and fostering of a community of living beings who are physically and mentally alike. This preservation includes, in the first place, the race as it exists, and permits the free development of all the slumbering powers in this race. . . . States that do not serve this end are misconceptions, nay, abortions. The fact of their existence justifies them as little as the success of a robber band justifies robbery. . . . The State is form, not substance. Therefore a people's level of culture is not the standard by which the goodness of a State can be measured. Comprehensible though it be that a highly-civilised people should appear to be worthier than a negro tribe, the State organism of such a people, viewed from the standpoint of the attainment of its end, may be worse than that of negroes.

So we can understand the hatred and the scorn with which Hitler denounces "the so-called democracies". They are worse than negro tribes. They are "misconceptions, nay, abortions". They do not even seek to preserve and foster a community of living

beings who are "physically and mentally alike". Rather do they try to preserve and foster the freedom of those living beings so that each may have fuller play for individual talents and make life more varied by becoming less like each other. But Hitler has taken over both Fichte's idea of the superiority of a people "true to Nature", and Hegel's idea of the State and its head as divine. The second chapter of *Mein Kampf* closes with the passage: "Eternal Nature wreaks pitiless vengeance upon the transgressors of her commands. So to-day I believe that I act according to the mind of the Almighty Creator: in beating off the Jew I fight for the Work of the Lord".

This is one of the most interesting passages in Hitler's book. It reveals in his mind a form of persecution mania—the persecution of mankind (of which the Nordic "Aryan" German race is the noblest expression) by the sinister intrigues of Jewry—and his belief, amounting almost to religious mania, that in defending Germanism he is doing God's own work. Some ten years after he wrote it this religious mania had reached a point at which he could say to one of his advisers: "I am the greatest German who has ever lived. Mankind, led by the German race, is now in

a period of transition, just as it was when men first began to pass from the ape-like into the human stage. Now they are passing from the human into the super-human stage. I have preceded them. In so far as there is a God in this world, I am He”.

In our efforts to understand “Hitlerism” and its relationship to “the German people” we shall go wrong if we think the Nazi, or National Socialist, Party merely a political party led by a man of unusual demagogic talent. It is a kind of Satanic Church, claiming absolute and infallible authority over the lives and the minds of men. From the outset Hitler’s aim was to make his Party identical with the State, and to use all the powers of the State—the army, the police, the law courts, education, and the control of public finance—as the instruments of its, or rather his, supreme will. He looked upon himself as a Messiah, an apostle of God, sent to redeem the German people by the force of his evangel—and by physical force as soon as he should have power to use it. He claims that he himself stands high above good and evil, as lesser mortals may conceive them, that he is bound by no moral law. He can

do no wrong because his will is the supreme good. Nor need he keep any promises or agreements when they have once ceased to serve his purpose. Promises are made to be broken, agreements to be set aside, after they have prevented opponents from continuing to oppose him. Compared with his own sacred mission, they are as dust in the balance.

Upon the spirit in which he undertook his self-appointed task certain passages in *Mein Kampf* throw an instructive light. During the years he spent as a ne'er-do-weel labourer and loafer in Vienna he came into contact, through his fellow-workmen, with Marxist Socialism. He ended by rejecting Marxist ideas though he understood why they had conquered so large a proportion of the more intelligent working-classes in Austria and Germany. Behind the economic and social half-truths which underlay Marxist principles he saw that their driving power came from their semi-religious quality. So he asked himself whether ideas of this quality could be uprooted by naked violence alone. He felt that another kind of semi-religious appeal was wanted to overcome Marxism, and that this appeal could only be made by reminding

the Germans of their God-given superiority to all other races. By playing on their emotions, their vanity and the pan-German ideas of world domination which were then in the air, Hitler believed he could rouse the Germans into an ecstatic belief in himself and in his mission.

I, at all events, cannot quarrel with his estimate of Marxism as represented by the Social Democratic Party in Germany and Austria. As long ago as 1896, after four years' observation of German Marxists, and some acquaintance with their leaders, I had reached the conclusion that they had turned the Social Democratic Party into a kind of Church. I pointed out that while much of the strength of Marxist Socialism in Germany had been drawn, on the one hand, from the fact that it was almost the only remaining form of liberal and democratic protest against the Prussian State, it was, on the other hand, an organisation as rigid in its way as were the Prussian State and the Prussian State-Church themselves. Besides, to those who believed in Marx, German Socialism offered a substitute for religion. It was no accident that most Germans who joined the Social Democratic Party gave notice that they were leaving

the State-Church. At a moment when the old philosophies were losing their hold upon German minds, and the Churches were reeling under the blows of scientific criticism, the Marxist doctrine with its materialist interpretation of History, its Hegelian dialectic, and its promise of a better life to be attained under a Dictatorship of the Proletariat in a Socialist State, seemed to fill with a more positive faith a void of which many Germans were vaguely conscious. This positive faith gained convincing force from the vehemence with which Marx himself had stated economic half-truths as whole truths. Mere reasoning, I saw, leaves the masses cold. Ideas that are put forward with conscientious accuracy have little "drive", and fail to sway men's minds. Marx and his disciples created a set of dogmas, surrounded them with emotions and, in reality, founded a materialist economic church in which there was little place for more generous beliefs or for human freedom as a good in itself.

I am glad to see that so well-informed and sympathetic a critic of Marxism as Mr. Middleton Murry now agrees in his *Defence of Democracy* with the conclusions I reached more than forty years ago. He sees in Marx

a Hebrew prophet who foretold the coming of a materialist Kingdom of God through collectivism or Communism. Hitler also guessed the essentially religious quality of the Marxist faith. Therefore his reflections upon the way to uproot Marxism are of special interest. After explaining that violence alone, without the motive power of a mental or spiritual principle, can never destroy an idea or prevent it from spreading if those who hold the idea are not themselves destroyed to the last man, Hitler concluded that it would be useless to fight Marxism unless the attack upon it were also inspired by a new spiritual or semi-spiritual conception. Brutal violence, he wrote, no matter how thoroughly and ruthlessly it may be used, can only bring victory in a struggle between opposing political creeds if such violence has behind it the force of a faith. He realised that a new party with a new or new-old faith would be needed to wage pitiless war against German Social Democracy which, at the time he wrote, controlled the Government of the Weimar Republic.

The one way, Hitler saw, to lead a new party to success would be by propaganda. Now propaganda is a means to an end, not



an end in itself, and its form must suit the end in view. Just as in war the question of humaneness or brutality is decided by the need to find the shortest way to victory, so political warfare, or propaganda, must not trouble about elegance and must think only of what works best. Should such propaganda be addressed to the educated classes or to the less-educated masses? Hitler answers emphatically: Always to the masses. It has to put certain notions into the minds of the masses and must therefore appeal more to their feelings than to their understanding. It must be pitched at a level not higher than that of the most limited intelligence; and the level must be lower and lower in proportion as the masses are greater and wider. If a whole people is to be brought under its influence the utmost care must be taken not to pitch propaganda too high. Nor must it be forgotten that the mass mind is very narrow and prone to forgetfulness. So propaganda must harp on very few points, constantly repeated, and these points must be summed up in catchwords until the lowest of the low knows what the catchwords mean. Unless this principle be faithfully followed the effect will be lost. The character of the

people at large is feminine. Its feelings are stronger than its brains. Only the repetition of the simplest notions, a thousand times over, ends by making an impression. Nor, if the subject of propaganda be changed, must its object differ. At the end the catchword must come in like a hammer. The immense effects of propaganda on these big lines. Hitler insists, will astonish those who persistently carry it on.

When Hitler wrote thus, eight or nine years before he came into power and when his propaganda was in an early stage, he had before him two examples of what propaganda could do. He had seen it, in its Marxist or Communist form and accompanied by violence, establish Bolshevism in Russia from the autumn of 1917 onwards. He had seen Mussolini's Fascist propaganda establish the Italian Fascist system in 1922 with the connivance or actual help of the army and the possessing classes. If Italian Fascism was Nationalist in colour, and Syndicalist rather than Communist in the inspiration of its violence, it had nevertheless copied from Russian Bolshevism a certain technique of terrorising or removing opponents by force.

This Russian technique Bolshevism in its turn had borrowed from the Okhrana, or Tsarist Secret Police, many of whose members passed into the service of the "proletariat" under Lenin's dictatorship. Mussolini studied these methods with care, adapted them to Italian conditions and perfected them. From him rather than from the Russian Bolsheviks Hitler took over the methods which were presently carried to a much higher point of terroristic perfection by his "Gestapo" or Secret State Police. But, like Mussolini and unlike Russian Bolshevism, Hitler enjoyed the support of financial, industrial and other magnates who believed that he would defend their possessions against Communism.

He began by organising his followers as a "militia" or "Storm Detachments" of brown-shirted youths to whom he soon added "protective squads" in black shirts. These "Black Guards" became both his personal bodyguard and the wreckers of his vengeance upon opponents. Some, like his lieutenant Heines, were simply murderers. To murder in the service of so noble a cause as that of the Germanic "Aryan" race under its divinely-appointed Leader is more than a

worthy deed; it is an act of religious self-devotion. And when, at length, Hitler was given power by President von Hindenburg he had ready to his hand an organisation of disciplined, ruthless bravos to whom his word was the only law, and who knew from experience that their crimes would meet with his approval.

His, and their, first glorious undertaking was to burn the Reichstag, and to saddle the Communists with the blame for it. On the night of the Reichstag fire some four thousand Communists and Socialists were arrested on the strength of warrants bearing their photographs and carefully prepared in advance. Many of them never saw the light again. On the morrow Herman Goering, now Field-Marshal, reported to Hitler and his Council how the deed had been done—which did not prevent the same Goering from raging against the Communists and their infamous “crime” at the trial of the alleged culprits before the Leipzig Supreme Court. The persecution of the Jews had long been Hitler’s main cure for the ills of “Aryan” Germany. It was carried through with every form of brutality, torture and terrorism, open and secret, and was accompanied by persistent “squeezing” of

the wealthier Jews for the pecuniary benefit of Nazi leaders. On all these matters the volume of credible evidence is overwhelming. Nor was the persecution limited to the Jews alone. Every Socialist, Liberal and Catholic leader who could not save himself by timely flight was made to feel the length and the strength of Hitler's arm. I have no need to dwell upon the gruesome details of torture in Nazi concentration camps and prisons. They have been widely published. Few pages of human history have been written with so much blood and so many tears since the days of the Spanish Inquisition. And for the Inquisition this may be said: it burned its victims publicly as an "Act of Faith", whereas Hitler burns the mangled bodies of his victims secretly and informs their relatives by post card that the ashes can be fetched at a certain place on payment of three marks.

Upon the coming and the efficacy of this Terror we have the testimony of an experienced American witness—Professor Calvin B. Hoover who, after publishing a work on the *Economic Life of Soviet Russia*, went to study National Socialism in Germany, and wrote in 1933 his *Germany Enters the Third Reich*. In it he gave (pages 120-1) this account of terrorism:

It is difficult indeed for one living in a country in which the theory that one cannot be deprived of life or liberty without due process of law usually holds good, to understand the position of men who live under terror. Thus astonishment has often been expressed that hardly a voice was raised in all Germany against the acts of violence which occurred. But how could a voice be raised so that it would be heard? No newspaper would or could have printed such a protest. No man could have made such a statement in a public meeting without being interrupted before he could have completed a dozen sentences and subjected at once to the extremes of physical violence. If he protested, even in private conversation, he was in danger of being denounced, and he would be fortunate if all that happened to him was to receive the legal penalty for spreading "atrocious propaganda". Just as likely would be a line in the press that Herr So-and-So had been arrested for spreading atrocious propaganda and "had been shot while trying to escape" or "had committed

suicide in his cell". Martyrdom may have a certain appeal if accompanied by court trials with attendant publicity from a sympathetic and liberal press, but it is quite another thing when it takes the form of summary and anonymous "justice" from a Storm Detachment which drags the martyr out of bed at 3 o'clock in the morning. . . . Terror of this sort may be the negation of civilisation. It may be that in the long run it destroys the individuals who wield it. But for a very long time it is an all-powerful weapon against which the man of honour who is subjected to it is singularly defenceless.

When the writer first observed terror in action in Russia he was inclined to come to the comforting conclusion that it met with little resistance because of the long experience of the Russian people with it in one form or another. It would be as easy to come to the conclusion that terror has its way without opposition in Germany because of the long tradition of Prussian discipline. No doubt the Prussian tradition of discipline was an important factor in explaining

why the National Socialists found at once so ready a respect for the authority of the State, regardless of the hand which wielded it. But a most disturbing doubt exists in the writer's mind whether the situation would be very different in any land if the State-power was ever firmly in the grasp of a sufficiently ruthless group.

This is a disturbing doubt. And it bids us reflect upon the nature of the evil thing we are fighting against when we say that our war aim is "to overthrow Hitlerism". There is no safeguard against it except in the firmness of our devotion to the principle that individual human freedom is more precious than any benefit we may hope to secure by this or that form of political or economic "planning" under State control. Terror is an insidious weapon. It has brought the mental and moral freedom of three great countries in Europe—Russia, Italy and Germany—to the point of extinction. Nor is it only negative. It uses all the educative agencies of a country to spread among the people positive beliefs that will be hard to uproot if ever those countries regain their liberty. No writer,



no journalist, no schoolteacher, no university professor and very few preachers dare write or speak in ways obnoxious to the supreme ruler of the State. True knowledge is carefully withheld. Falsehood is steadily taught. How, then, can we hope to reach for many a day a real basis of understanding with these peoples even if the rulers and the systems of one or more of them be overthrown by this war? They will not think, they will scarcely be able to comprehend, our thoughts. A long period of interpretation, of patient enlightenment by example even more than by precept, may have to be gone through before the alphabet of a common intellectual, political or moral language can be framed.

“Hitlerism in being” is far more than a passing phase of German national life. Many of its traces will remain. The reaction against it may be fierce and violent without removing habits of mind which it has developed. Few of us ask how it came about that the heads of the German army, drawn mainly from the conservative Prussian military caste, accepted Hitlerism with so little ado, and continued to tolerate it even after it had murdered one of its generals (a former

Chancellor) and his wife, and had maligned its most respected representatives. Broadly, the answer is that the German General Staff and the higher officers of the army saw that Hitler meant to rearm Germany as she had never been armed before. They hoped that they would keep control of the vast military machine which he was creating, and that therefore they would once again hold unchallenged privilege and power. To them, as to Hitler, victory beckoned with enticing hand. Soon after the establishment of the Weimar Republic, German soldiers began to work with Soviet Russia for the secret rearmament of Germany. German firms set up arms and munitions factories in Russia and trained Russian workmen in the use of machine-tools. The Russo-German Treaty of Rapallo in April, 1922, strengthened this relationship. It was followed in 1926 by the Russo-German Treaty of Berlin. In May, 1933, a few months after he became German Chancellor, Hitler ratified and prolonged this Treaty; and as late as April, 1934, when the Soviet Government offered to sign a pact with Germany to guarantee the neutrality of the Baltic States, Hitler publicly welcomed the Russian Government's "present desire to do

something definite to restore confidential relations between Germany and the Soviet Union”.

The German army likewise welcomed close relations with Bolshevist Russia. Its chiefs were convinced that “the idea of Bismarck”—that the wire between Berlin and St. Petersburg must never be cut—had been the soundest principle of German policy between 1871 and 1890; and that the setbacks and disasters which befell Germany between 1890 (when Bismarck was dismissed) and 1918 (when Germany was defeated in the last Great War) were due to the Emperor William’s departure from this principle.

So something more than the murders of eminent German soldiers like General von Schleicher and Colonel von Bredow by Hitler’s men, in the “clean-up” of June 30, 1934, would have been needed to turn the Reichswehr against Hitlerism. Hitler’s efforts to “Nazify” the army by “penetrating” it with members of his party were, indeed, resisted with some success. But a number of leading Generals were compelled—by Hitler’s unopposed reoccupation of the demilitarised Rhineland in 1936, by his restoration of compulsory military service,

by his annexation of Austria and by his triumph at Munich over Czechoslovakia, Great Britain and France—to admit that he had been shrewder and better-informed than they. To the negotiations with Soviet Russia that led to the pact of last August for the partition of Poland the heads of the army gave full approval. Its seeming political inconsistency troubled them little, for it meant that they would be rid of the nightmare of having to fight a war on two fronts.

In these circumstances the higher German Command could overlook such a trifle as that of the mysterious death of General von Fritsch in the neighbourhood of Warsaw. He had been suspected of disloyalty to Hitler. He may or may not have been privy to the intrigues of the Reichswehr with a number of Russian Generals who are alleged to have planned to overthrow Stalin and to set up a military dictatorship in Russia that might have served as a counterpart to a similar dictatorship in Germany. How much truth there may be in the circumstantial tale that the names of these Russian officers were given to Stalin by Himmler, the head of Hitler's Secret State Police, it is impossible to say. It is known only that these Russian officers were

seized, made to confess, and executed by Stalin's men—and that something like a "purge" took place soon afterwards in the higher ranks of the German army. It is not in the nature of dictators to handle with velvet gloves those who plot, or are suspected of plotting, against their supreme power.

It is therefore prudent to suppose that the relationship between the Russian "Red" army and the German Army Command will remain close if not trustful. German officers think of one thing mainly—the preservation of their own position as an influential factor in the State. They think, too, of victory as the best means of increasing their credit and retaining their power. They know that defeat in this war might put an end to both. Politically, many of them are no longer Conservative. Six years of Hitlerism have weakened their attachment to what used to be the established order of things; and they might not make many bones about helping to transform Germany into a semi-Bolshevist State provided that it were under their influence and that Russian material, or even military, help should enable them to win victory in the West. There is reason to believe that ideas like these have been and

are being discussed by German officers to-day. Were they put into practice they might mean the end of Hitler and of some of his lieutenants and helpers. They might not mean the end of "Hitlerism" as a force in Germany and in Europe.

One thing seems clear. Nothing short of military defeat in the West is likely to set the German people free from a dictatorial system. Should those sections of the German people that loathe Hitlerism and its works be able to take a hand in the liberation of their country, its future and that of Europe would be brighter. Yet not until military defeat is in sight will active German resistance to Hitlerism, and to the Prussian military spirit with which it is so closely allied, be probable or even possible. Great Britain and France are therefore faced with tasks that may prove formidable. They have to fulfil their "aim of war" by victory before they can approach the fulfilment of their declared "war aims" which are to instal a "better international system" upon the ruins of Hitlerism and to save Europe from recurrent aggression. And each of these tasks seems likely to bring them face to face with the enigma of Soviet Russia.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA

A MAN who, like me, has no direct or personal knowledge of Soviet Russia may be foolhardy if he writes upon the Russian enigma at all. His warrant for doing so might be, as mine is, that Soviet Russia looms so large on the war horizon, and may weigh so heavily in the balance of events, that she cannot be left out of account. In common with most observers of world affairs I have sought to learn as much of Russia as could be learned at second-hand by study and by intercourse with men of several nations who know, or think they know, Russia well. And if I have not found any of these men ready to lay down the law upon the country they had visited, with or without knowledge of the Russian language, I have found many of them inclined to agree with the general conclusions I had drawn from such facts as I knew or impressions I had gained independently.

One thing only need I add by way of explanation. It is that no useful approach to an understanding of Soviet Russia can be made without some freedom of mind from loathing or active dislike of Soviet institutions and ideology. Many Soviet methods I detest as heartily as I detested those of Tsarist Russia. They may be legacies of a semi-barbarous past applied to the purposes of a revolutionary present. I reject also most if not all of the Marxist dogmas and fallacies upon which the so-called "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" was built up by Lenin and others. But this does not prevent me from recognizing the Soviet system as one of the most daring experiments in national and economic reconstruction that the world has ever seen. I look upon Soviet Russia, with her institutions and her tendencies, as a vast enigma which I try to understand.

Some years ago a representative of an official Soviet newspaper in Moscow brought me an English version of the "Constitution" which had been proclaimed throughout the Soviet Union, and asked my opinion upon it for publication in his journal. As I had already seen that remarkable document I told him at once that he might write down what I should



say, but that his journal would not be able to publish it. He assured me it would be published. (I think he was wrong, for I never saw it in print.) I said: "On the face of it this is not, in itself, a Communist or even a Socialist Constitution. It is a liberal constitution—or it would be if it provided for the free exercise of what must be an essential right under any liberal or democratic constitution. This is the right publicly to oppose and to criticise the Government. I can find no mention of it in your constitution. So it seems to me a somewhat theoretical declaration that may not have much practical value as a means of educating the Russian people in the difficult art of political freedom."

Though my visitor faithfully wrote down what I had said, I gathered that he had not the faintest notion of what I meant. Nor was this surprising. As another young product of Soviet education had exclaimed to a Russian Liberal in exile: "How can there be differences of opinion when there is only one political truth?" My visitor's mind had been entirely formed under the Soviet system; and he made me think of a warning I had received a little earlier from a former Austrian

officer who had lived many years in Soviet Russia, and had just returned from another visit in the course of which he had travelled from the Crimea through Moscow to the Manchurian border and back across Turkestan. I had asked him whether there was really a new spirit in the country, something which Professor Karlgren, the famous Scandinavian authority on Russia, had described in 1926 as almost the only positive gain which Bolshevism had at that time brought to the people—the adding of a couple of inches to their moral stature. My Austrian friend answered:

There is a new spirit; and now there is plenty to eat. But that is not the point. The point you people here cannot understand is that every Russian under the age of thirty (another observer put the age at thirty-five), man, woman and child, is convinced, and was convinced even when they were waiting in long queues for a piece of black bread, that they are living in a Communist paradise while the rest of the world lives in a capitalist hell. They no longer want to go out and compel the rest of the world to come into their Communist paradise;

but if the demons from the capitalist hell try to break in, then Europe may see something on a very much bigger scale but something like the rush of the Napoleonic armies over Europe, carrying the ideas of the French Revolution across the continent early in the nineteenth century.

He meant that, this time, the ideas would be Communist, or Marxist, not those proclaimed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man or inspired by the watchwords: "Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood." He meant also that those countries which were organising the Anti-Comintern pact against Soviet Russia might in reality be letting themselves in for something they did not expect.

Under Lenin and Trotsky, to say nothing of Zinoviev, the "Comintern" or "Communist International" was a powerful and aggressive propaganda machine deliberately working to foster Communist revolution everywhere in order to fulfil the injunction of Marx and Engels in their *Communist Manifesto* of 1848: "Proletarians of all Lands, unite!" Under Stalin it became more subdued. It

had failed to produce Communist revolutions everywhere. Stalin—whom Trotsky and others look upon as a usurper, a traitor to the Marxist international idea—believed that the best way to spread Communism was to make it succeed on a big scale in one State in order that such a State might serve as a model and an example to others. But in the summer of 1936 the action of the “Comintern” obliged Stalin to face the responsibilities which its propaganda had brought upon him in Spain, and to give some military and other support to the Spanish Government against the forces of General Franco with their German and Italian auxiliaries. A strong campaign was immediately launched from the Vatican and elsewhere against the “anti-God” Communists and the Spanish Government; and it was utilised by Germany to promote an Anti-Comintern Pact with Japan. This pact was first signed on November 27, 1936, by the Japanese Ambassador in Berlin and by Herr von Ribbentrop (who was then Hitler’s Ambassador in London), not by the German Foreign Secretary, Baron von Neurath. Presently Italy, Fascist Spain, and Hungary also adhered to it. In view of the agreement concluded last August between

the same Herr von Ribbentrop and the Soviet Government its terms are of interest. They ran:

The Government of the German Reich and the Imperial Japanese Government, recognising that the aim of the Communist International, known as the Comintern, is to disintegrate and upset existing States by all the means at its command, convinced that the toleration of interference by the Communist International in the internal affairs of other nations not only endangers their internal peace and social well-being, but is also a menace to the peace of the world, desirous of co-operating in the defence against Communist subversive activities, have agreed as follows: The High Contracting Parties agree to inform one another of the activities of the Communist International, to consult one another on the necessary preventive measures, and to carry these through in close collaboration.

The High Contracting Parties will jointly invite third States, whose internal peace is threatened by the subversive activity of the Communist International, to adopt defensive measures in the spirit

of the present agreement, or to take part in the present agreement.

An additional Protocol to this agreement provided for a permanent committee to co-ordinate measures against the agents of the Communist International and to pool information upon its activities.

While Germany was negotiating this agreement the trial of Zinoviev and other alleged partisans of Trotsky was taking place in Moscow. They were accused of treasonable commerce with the German Secret State Police. I have read a full report of the proceedings. Highly improbable though some of the confessions of the accused men sounded, the general impression left on my mind was that there had been some truth in the charges, and that the only reasonable explanation of the condemnation and execution of the alleged culprits was that they had been working in collusion with the German Secret Police for the overthrow of Stalin. I know, further, that there was at least a similar substratum of truth in the charges afterwards brought against eight Generals of the Soviet army of having plotted with officers of the German Reichswehr to remove Stalin and set up a

military dictatorship in Russia—on the understanding that when this had been done the Reichswehr in Germany would establish a similar dictatorship either with or without Hitler. As I have already said, the story goes—though in the nature of things it is not susceptible of verification—that the Russian Secret Police and Stalin were informed of this plot by Himmler, the head of the German Secret Police, who suspected that it might be directed also against Hitler. However this may be, I know that the news of the arrest and execution of the eight Russian officers caused consternation in leading circles of the Reichswehr in Berlin.

These plots, alleged or real, and the subsequent executions and “purges” raised an interesting point in the psychology of Soviet Russia. Competent students of Russian affairs, who knew some of the men implicated in the plots, have suggested the following explanation. The successive generations of Russian revolutionaries, they argue, continuing almost uninterruptedly for a whole century, during which they were hunted by the Tsar’s police and in constant danger of imprisonment, flogging and death, were

moulded to a particular "pattern of behaviour" that ended by becoming a fixed character. Lies and aliases, deceit and trickery, theft and assassination, filled their whole lives. Yet they were not criminals in the ordinary sense. The best of them were heroic, even if we think them mistaken. Some among them were tempted to betray their comrades and to enter the service of the Tsarist police.

This "pattern of behaviour" is not very different from the "pattern" that could be found in England and Scotland during the revolutionary periods of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; or in France after the revolution of 1789. In Russia where, in 1900, the standards of morals and civilisation were not unlike those of England and France in 1700, the pattern of behaviour of the revolutionary conspirators culminated in extreme bitterness and mutual antagonism. Even after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 it took Lenin and his helpers more than three years to beat off the counter-revolutionary armies, which were supported by several foreign Governments, in a civil war that ended in a devastated country and a terrible famine. The effects on all the combatants and sufferers



were profound. Among the revolutionaries themselves there continued a clash of loyalties and ambitions that could not be settled by argument. When Stalin and his group replaced Lenin and Trotsky the fight against famine was severe. It was inevitable that opinions should differ on policy, at home and abroad. It was in the dark days of 1932-1933, when the fate of the collective farms seemed to be trembling in the balance, that the conspiracies appear to have taken shape.

Now underground conspiracy was the natural form of opposition in the eyes of men who had been revolutionary conspirators all their lives. If they planned or carried out wrecking and assassination, this was exactly what Stalin and all the rest of them had been doing, with untroubled consciences, most of their lives. Nor is it strange that they should have sought the help of foreign Governments hostile to Stalin. This is precisely what the English and Scottish nobility, statesmen and ministers of religion, did a couple of centuries ago when they called in alternately the Dutch and the French.

How long is this series of conspiracies and attempts at counter-revolution likely to last? The answer is: Probably as long as the

“pattern of behaviour” itself. Not until the present generation of those whose early lives were spent in underground conspiracies against the Tsar has passed away will Soviet Russia be as free from attempts at counter-revolution as Great Britain became towards the end of the eighteenth century. For the “pattern of behaviour” fades slowly in those whom it has moulded. Even Lenin wrote to one of his followers in November, 1922: “For a long time to come there will be doubt, uncertainty, suspicion and treachery,” a forecast which these Russian plots and trials have borne out.

How, in the light of this “psycho-analysis” and of the Anti-Comintern Pact, are we to account for the Russo-German agreement of August, 1939? A mania for consistency is doubtless a failing in politics; but inconsistencies so glaring as those between Herr von Ribbentrop’s earlier anti-Communist declarations and his statement at Danzig on October 24, 1939, that “the traditional friendly relations between Russia and Germany have been restored, and there exist all the necessary conditions for a deepening of this friendship” call for an explanation

more satisfying than those which are currently offered. My own explanation may not "fill the bill", and it is open to amendment in the light of future events. Such as it is, I make bold to give it.

Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* shows clearly that he dreamt of gaining "living space" for Germany at the expense of Russia. By the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1917, Lenin and Trotsky had ceded to Germany large tracts of Russian territory, including what had been Russian Poland. Though this territory had been lost to Germany after her defeat in the West, Hitler may have seen no reason why part of it, at least, might not be regained if Russia could be reduced to chaos or beaten in war. He sent into Russia a number of agents, including a Russian-speaking German General. This officer reported to him that the real difficulty was the "comparative invincibility" of Russia on account of her vast size, and that special plans would be necessary to take from Russia what Germany might need.

Up to 1934, when Hitler concluded his ten years' non-aggression pact with Poland, Hitler had been careful not to offend Stalin or to show open hostility to Russia. There-

after, and hoping to use both Poland and Roumania as his tools, he made a long series of attacks upon Stalin, Bolshevism and the Soviet system in general. Simultaneously his Secret State Police began to intrigue with various Russian opponents of Stalin. At that time and up to the beginning of 1936 Hitler believed that the peasants of the Russian Ukraine, who had been mercilessly oppressed, would welcome German armies as liberators and would help Hitler to get hold of the fertile wheatlands of South-Western Russia. But early in 1936 a report from the Economic Attaché of the German Embassy in Moscow upset this expectation. The report impressed both Dr. Schacht, Hitler's principal financial adviser, and the Economic Section of the Reichswehr. It said, approximately:

It is now useless to hope for a welcome from the peasants in the Ukraine. The Soviet "collective farms" are succeeding. The peasants are crowding into them. Those who prefer not to go in have got their little bit of land and their cows; and Kulaks (or better-to-do peasants) are now recognised. They are contented, and Russia has plenty of food.

The reason is that in the old days, when all the ploughing had to be done by horses, there was often too short a time between the end of the summer and the beginning of the winter to get the ploughing done; and if the frost came early the soil was hardly scratched, sometimes not ploughed at all. The seed corn, barely covered by earth, would be washed away when the snow melted in the spring. Famine was frequently the result. But now motor-tractors have been introduced. The whole cultivable surface can, if necessary, be ploughed twelve or eighteen inches deep in ten days. So, when the seed is sown and the snow comes, it lies there throughout the winter, and in the spring the snow melts and sinks in. It does not run off. Good harvests follow. Germany must drop the idea that Russian peasants would welcome her troops. There is only one way to strike a paralysing blow at Russia. Roumania must first be brought under German control, with her corn, oil and timber, and her coast on the Black Sea. Thus a basis will be found for a heavy stroke of

which the aim must be to cripple the tractorisation of Russian agriculture, and her aviation at the same time, by capturing or destroying her chief sources of petrol at and near Baku.

In the course of 1936 I saw a copy of this report—which had certainly not been intended to be read by foreigners. Soon after receiving it Dr. Schacht went on a journey to Turkey, Persia and round the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea. He may have been enquiring into the possibilities of damaging or destroying Baku.

It is unlikely, to say the least, that the amiable intentions of Nazi Germany will have been quite unknown to Stalin and the Soviet Secret Service—just as unlikely, in fact, as that they will have known nothing of the plan cherished by Hitler as late as June or July, 1939. Echoes of this plan reached my ears through a channel that had often proved trustworthy; and in view of the fidelity with which parts of it have since been carried out, it is reasonable to suppose that the parts which were replaced by the Russo-German pact of August will also have been accurate. Its main features were:

The ultimate aim of German policy is to create a World Empire of unassailable strength without the risks of a world war. In 1938 its immediate aim was to subdue Czechoslovakia. In 1939 its immediate aim is to subdue Poland without war or, at worst, after a short localised war. The very conditions that bid Hitler avoid a long or general war are, however, driving him to carry through, without delay, another stage of his programme by the subjugation of Poland and of the Baltic and the Danubian States.

Only when this has been done will there be a prospect of comparative tranquillity while Germany organises and co-ordinates, politically and economically, the territories between her own borders and those of Russia. Further stages in his programme will then be either (1) to undermine, disintegrate and revolutionise Soviet Russia; or (2) to link the Russian "space" with the "Imperial space" of the great German World Empire; or (3) in the event of resistance from Great Britain and France to win a war against them.

Hitler is now seeking (June, 1939)

good relations with Moscow in the hope of localising or isolating his conflict with Poland, not because his "Imperial aims" in the East have changed. Only in the light of these aims can his methods for the subjugation of Poland be understood. Up to the end of 1938 Hitler believed that his Eastern policy could be carried through with Polish help. He intended, therefore, to maintain the German-Polish pact of 1934, and gradually to bring Danzig into the Third Reich by "peaceful means" without disturbing Polish economic interests in Danzig. He hoped that this policy would be tolerated by Great Britain and France while Roumania was also being brought, with Polish co-operation, into the German sphere of influence. A basis for the disintegration of the Russian Ukraine would thus have been assured. Only then would the Polish Ukraine be "liberated" in its turn, and the full German claims be enforced upon Poland.

These plans were thwarted by the Polish alliances with Great Britain and France. So Hitler decided to treat Poland as his most



dangerous enemy and to force her out of an anti-German coalition by any and every means. He hoped that either Poland would not fight when it came to the pinch or that Great Britain and France would give her, at best, half-hearted support. Before dealing with Poland Hitler decided to concentrate the main strength of the German army on her borders, and to hold the "Siegfried Line" lightly and defensively in the West. He felt sure of crushing the Polish army in a few weeks. The account of his plan from which I have been quoting went on:

As regards the West, Hitler does not expect Great Britain and France to favour an aggressive war against Germany especially if their hopes of Russian help should prove illusory. Should the Western Powers nevertheless attack, Germany's Western army will stand on the defensive until the Polish army has been crushed. Then the main German forces would be switched over to the West, though there would be no air raids on England or France as long as those two countries should refrain from aerial attack upon Germany. Simul-

taneously with her military concentration on the West, Germany would begin a peace offensive in which she and Italy would offer immediate peace to the Western Powers who, if they rejected the offer, would be declared the aggressors and made responsible for the devastation that would ensue. Special appeals would be issued by Hitler to the Governments and peoples of Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and other countries. Hitler believes that the success of this peace offensive would cause him to be acclaimed as the saviour of the peace of the world.

Germany assumes further that Russia will remain neutral until and unless the Western Powers and the Rome-Berlin Axis are at death grips in a long struggle. Germany is not yet prepared to face a long struggle. Hence everything depends, in Hitler's eyes, upon a diplomatic and moral defeat of the West that should preclude any further coalition between Western and Eastern Europe. Germany could then organise her "Imperial space" up to the borders of Russia, and lay the foundations for her

continental "Eurasian" World Empire. With this Empire the Western Powers could make peace on condition that they give up all idea of political co-operation with Eastern Europe, including Russia. As compensation Hitler would be prepared to "guarantee" the British and French Empires.

This account of Hitler's policy reached me early in July, 1939, six weeks before the conclusion of the Russo-German pact. I imagine that its broad lines will have been known to Stalin who will therefore have made such conditions for his agreement with Hitler as to thwart Hitler's main ambitions. The Baltic States, which Hitler had hoped to control, have come under Russian control. Most of the oil wells of Poland are likewise in Russian hands. Russia also bars Hitler's road to Roumania and to the Black Sea. How far Russia may be prepared to help Germany in other directions cannot yet be guessed. But into this question enters a personal element that ought not to be overlooked.

Stalin is a Georgian of peasant origin, not a Slav. As a child his mind was steeped in Georgian folk lore. He hated the Tsarist

Russia which had destroyed his country's independence. To this day he speaks Russian with a Georgian accent. His latest biographer, Boris Souvarine, writes: "One cannot help thinking of the Corsican Bonaparte, whose mother-tongue was Italian and who hated France before he came to govern it, just as the Georgian Stalin was to govern the Russia whose Imperial rule he had detested." Unlike Hitler, who went on strike at school, Stalin gained the rudiments at least of a serious education in the Seminary at Tiflis, most of whose pupils were intended for the priesthood. But in the Seminary he came into contact with revolutionary ideas, and left it, or was expelled from it, to become a revolutionary in earnest. Whatever may be thought of his career, it is certain that as a revolutionary he showed a high degree of personal courage, and paid for it by imprisonment and banishment.

Hitler, on the contrary, was the son of a minor Customs official on the Austrian frontier who had made his way with difficulty out of the lowest agricultural class—that of landless labourers. Hitler was haunted by the dread of falling back into the proletariat. He looked with horror upon the idea of losing

what little social status his father had acquired. He had all the pettiness and the prejudices of the lower middle class; and one element in his undoubted genius as a demagogue was his understanding that by working on its fears and appetites the lower middle class might be mobilised as a revolutionary mass against the Socialists and the Jews alike. While it might be unfair to suggest that Hitler lacks personal courage, he has never been conspicuously gallant. He believes in brutality, and one of his favourite adjectives is "brutal"; but he has usually preferred to leave to others the giving and the taking of hard knocks.

So it may not be a wild assumption that Stalin, the active revolutionary, "hard as steel", looks upon Hitler with contempt. Nor need it be supposed that Stalin, the Georgian, has either forgotten or forgiven the personal abuse and vilification which Hitler has not spared him. So if Stalin has a sense of humour he must have chuckled grimly when he forced Hitler to accept, as the price of the Russo-German agreement of August, 1939, the abandonment of Nazi control over the Baltic States, the cession of the Polish Ukraine to Russia and the blocking of the German road to Roumania and the

Black Sea. Whether or not he thought that he was thus driving Hitler into a blind alley from which the Nazi leader could hardly escape it is too early to say. He may be prepared to let Hitler off, at a price, or even to work with him or with the German army against the Western democracies which have never shown Soviet Russia more than a minimum of good will, and sometimes a maximum of ill will. Their behaviour at Munich in September, 1938, will not have inspired him with any high degree of respect either for their clear-sightedness or for their firmness in upholding the freedom of a small democratic nation. As I wrote on the day when the Russo-German pact was made known: "Now our people will begin to taste the full flavour of 'Munich'."

It is possible, not certain, that after having safeguarded the position of Soviet Russia against Germany in Europe, Stalin may seek to profit by the struggle of France and Great Britain against Germany to strengthen and extend Soviet influence not only in Northern Europe but throughout Asia. Stalin himself is semi-Asiatic rather than European. Franco-British rejection of his proposals for a conference at Bucharest as "premature", on the

morrow of Hitler's seizure of Prague, he will hardly have taken as a compliment; nor will he have seen in the half-hearted Franco-British negotiations for an agreement with him in support of Poland any positive proof that the Western democracies were really eager to work with Soviet Russia. In his eyes the prospect of smashing the Anti-Comintern pact may have appeared more attractive than that of playing the Franco-British game by helping to put pressure on Germany. Whatever else he may be, Stalin is certainly not sentimental. For the beautiful eyes of Britannia and Marianne he would hardly feel tempted to forgo the opportunity of compelling Hitler to cease the customary Nazi diatribes against Bolshevism, of bewildering the Nazi party itself, of straining relations between Berlin and Tokio, of weakening the Rome-Berlin Axis and of troubling General Franco in Spain. And the Russian refusal to recognise as valid the British list of contraband of war tends to show that Stalin will continue to play his own hand without much care for what the Western democracies may think the cause of European freedom.

If Soviet Russia confronts us with an enigma,

we shall do well to admit that the enigma is by no means simple. We may be dealing with a revival of Russian national imperialism in a Communist or National Socialist form. In justice to Russia we must remember that there were many more social reasons for a violent revolutionary upheaval in that country than there were for Hitler's National Socialism in Germany. It is therefore less likely that the Soviet or Bolshevist system will be swept away in Russia than that Hitler and his Nazi system will be overthrown in Germany. I can imagine no British policy more foolish than one which should seek to spare Nazi Germany, or to encourage within Germany a "Right Wing" revolt against Hitlerism, lest Germany in her turn be overrun by or turn towards "Bolshevism". Still more foolish would it be now to dream of laying the foundations for a more efficient "Anti-Comintern Pact" than that which Herr von Ribbentrop invented or sponsored in 1936. To do this would be to fall back into the errors of the "Holy Alliance"—with which some British statesmen dallied but did not join—in the years after Waterloo. We have to go forward, not to fall back.

On his arrival in London as Hitler's



Ambassador in 1936 Herr von Ribbentrop said publicly that in Hitler's view the only real danger which threatened Europe and the British Empire was the spread of Communism, "the most terrible of diseases", and that closer co-operation between Great Britain and Nazi Germany was a vital necessity of the common struggle to safeguard our civilisation. About the same time sundry British Conservatives wrote to the *Morning Post* to ask why the Conservative Party in Great Britain should not join forces with Sir Oswald Mosley's Fascists, since there was no essential difference between Conservatism and Fascism, and seeing that Fascism was merely a more robust version of Conservatism. To their suggestions the *Morning Post* made the following cogent and, as I think, unanswerable reply. It wrote:

Now we, for our part, are second to none in our detestation of Communism, and in our consciousness of its power for mischief, but in every other respect we reject with the utmost possible emphasis all the assumptions implicit or explicit in the two propositions formulated above. We deny that our constitutional democracy is incapable of repelling in

its own way the assaults of Communism, and we repudiate absolutely the notion that there is no fundamental difference between Fascism and Conservatism. Fascism stands for an authoritarian and totalitarian principle in government. Conservatism stands for ordered progress, liberty, tolerance, and individualism within the established framework of the British tradition and democratic institutions. Nothing could more utterly belie the whole genius of Conservatism than complicity in any attempt to cast out the devil of Communism with the Beelzebub of Fascism. . . . Between Conservatism on the one hand, and Communism and Fascism on the other, quite as wide a gulf is fixed as between those two rival creeds themselves. Beneath their superficial differences Fascism and Communism are alike in their deification of the State, in their permeation of every detail of public and private life with the imperious influence of an irresponsible despotism, in their ruthless use of the Secret Police to crush every manifestation of opposition. Beside such a communion as this, what does it matter that

the one worships a tribe and the other a class? They are in fact a pair of political religions, whose fanaticism and cruelty and mutual conflicts are as outmoded as the Wars of Religion themselves. Because several countries on the Continent have seen fit to put the clock back to the Thirty Years' War, is that any reason why Great Britain should suddenly abjure the accumulated experience of centuries in the art of government? . . . Is the present generation of Englishmen indeed so decadent that it cannot preserve its heritage without a refresher course in the political kindergarten of some new-fangled dictator?

Even to-day, when war has broken out—and broken out in some degree because our, mainly Conservative, National Government was so purblind as to see in Nazism and Fascism safeguards against Communism—the enlightened Conservative reasoning of the (unfortunately defunct) *Morning Post* still holds good. We may come into conflict with Soviet Russia, or we may not. In any event we shall still have to uphold our liberal outlook and try to preserve as large a part of

Europe as possible for liberal civilisation; for without the freedom that is the purpose and the mainstay of this civilisation there can be no lasting peace. Let us deal with one danger at a time, if it be still possible to do so. When we shall have successfully withstood the Nazi danger, we shall be all the stronger to face and to ward off any Communist danger. And we may perchance find the answer to the Russian enigma if we prove to the world that our faith in freedom is so strong as to enable us to withstand, if need be, a whole world of dictatorships in arms.

## CHAPTER VI

### FREEDOM IN PEACE

WHEN a nation goes to war it enters an unknown land, full of risks and dangers, and with little chance of turning back lest it lose what it prizes more than life itself. It leaves its peace and, in some degree, its freedom behind. The Prime Minister said on October 12, 1939, that we embarked on this war "simply in defence of freedom". He added that we are determined to secure a peace which "must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and repeated threats". So far, so good. But what is the freedom we set out to defend, what is the peace we mean to get? These things need to be looked at now, in retrospect and in prospect, so that we may know them when we see them again and may not let them slip.

Travellers in an unknown land may find what they were looking for by a sort of instinct or by what seems mere chance. They go on,

fighting their way through thorn and thicket, scaling rocks or overcoming perils, like Kipling's "Explorer":

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang inter-  
minable changes  
On one everlasting Whisper day and night  
repeated—so:  
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go  
and look behind the Ranges—  
"Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost  
and waiting for you. Go!"

The freedom and the peace we seek are, indeed, "something hidden", "something lost behind the Ranges", lost in the fog of war yet, perchance, waiting for us. We have to go and find them.

Of freedom we think we know a good deal, more than most people. Kipling, again, has defined it for us as:

Ancient Right unnoticed as the breath we  
draw—  
Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath  
the Law

—on the understanding that we make "the Law" ourselves and are free to change it if we see cause. We do not always stop to think that this freedom is negative. It is freedom

from something—tyranny, injustice or, to quote Kipling again,

Long-forgotten bondage, dwarfing heart and  
brain.

This is political and, to some extent, social freedom. But in the course of the nineteenth century it turned out that for many millions of wage-earners "this freedom" meant also freedom to starve if they would not or could not sell their labour to the lowest bidder. So various forms of Socialism and, presently, Communism arose. Unless political and social freedom, they claimed, should mean also economic freedom, men in need of bread would be fed with stones. From this claim to the "materialist interpretation of History" on which Marxist economics and politics are based the step was short. The spiritual value of individual freedom was lost sight of or made light of. Out of Marxism in its Communist and Socialist forms, and thanks in part to its doctrine that the existing social order must be overthrown by a violent social revolution under a dictatorship of the proletariat, came the further doctrine of violence almost for its own sake, as a good in itself, which was the essence of Syndicalism. Out

of Syndicalism in its turn came Italian Fascism and the totalitarian conception of the State which makes the State the only source of individual right and defines, as Hegel would say, the whole duty of man as consisting in membership of the State and in willing or enforced obedience to it. Fascism is best summed up in Mussolini's boast: "We are trampling on the rotting corpse of freedom".

Alongside of these tendencies in social, economic and political thought and deed ran another tendency which helps to explain them. This was the fashion of looking upon economics, statistics and, ultimately, "planning" as the things that chiefly mattered. Political philosophy, which had played so large a part from the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth centuries in helping men and nations to escape from bondage and to break the fetters of tyranny, fell into discredit. Economics were the thing. The organisation of industry, trade, production, distribution, on "scientific" lines was to give men the key to material welfare, and therefore to happiness. These emanations of a machine-age in which labour-saving machinery was bringing about a revolution in productive methods, while means of com-



munication were becoming so swift as almost to destroy the notions of time and distance, left out of account the ancient problems of human freedom or ignored them as matters of little moment. Only when labour-saving machinery was seen to be life-impoverishing and to be swelling unemployment to horrific dimensions in several countries did the paradox of "poverty in the midst of plenty" force itself upon men's attention. And this paradox became the more frightening when it was seen both that a high degree of industrial efficiency, with economic self-sufficiency or "autarchy", was a form of industrial preparedness for war, and that the totals of unemployment tended to shrink in proportion as "guns" took precedence over "butter".

If war itself were productive something might be said for it as a national undertaking or adventure. Part of the trouble is that war is almost entirely destructive, wasteful and unprofitable. But, as Mr. A. A. Milne shrewdly says, Hitlerism has tried to get round this difficulty by seeking to draw profit not from war but from the threat of war. "This", he adds, "is where those of us who have been exposing the futility of war have gone wrong. War can bring no material

gains commensurate with the losses it entails, but the threat of war can. To a world which remembers the last war the threat of any other war of that magnitude has been a weapon in the hands of the unscrupulous almost impossible to resist. If the challenge be accepted, the challenger knows that he is doomed; it is certain that he could not survive the universal ruin. It was for this reason that one hoped that war would not come, that one told oneself that totalitarian leaders had a special interest in preserving the peace, since their own power could not outlast a war. One sees now that this was a vain hope; one sees also that the threat of war is as much the rule of force, as much a war, as war itself."

It is our business, now that war has come, to see that the power of Hitlerism shall not outlast a war. What then? What of the freedom which we are said to be defending? Here again Mr. Milne writes sound sense:

A great deal of nonsense is talked about liberty. Communists, for instance, ridicule the claim that Britain is a free country; they say that it is a free country for the rich, but not for the poor, and

they imply that only under (of all things) Communism is complete freedom assured. There is no such thing possible as complete freedom. When I say that I am free to write what I like—as in Germany or Italy or Russia I should not be—it is no answer to tell me that the newspapers are in the hands of capitalists who will only print what seems good to them. For I am free to become a capitalist and start my own paper—if I can. And I am free to publish my views in a book, if a publisher, with freedom to refuse the book, decides to accept it. I am free to swim the rapids below Niagara—or should be if the rapidity of the water did not hamper my freedom. One is not less free because one has not the qualities to do all which one would like to do. The liberty which flourishes under democracy is freedom of soul, freedom to live one's own life according to one's opportunities and abilities and desires, subject to the right of every other person to enjoy the same freedom. It is not complete freedom; there is no such thing as complete freedom; it is because Hitler is claiming

complete freedom to do what he likes that we are fighting him. But it is Liberty. And it is the business—one might almost say the whole business—of democratic government so to order affairs that the liberty of one man interferes as little as possible with the liberty of his neighbour.

A great deal of nonsense has been talked about freedom, not because freedom itself is nonsensical but because it is very hard to define and to put into practice when it has been defined. The present threat to freedom comes from the totalitarian State. But how did "totalitarianism" come into being? Its foster-parent, as I have said, was Karl Marx; and Soviet Russia, with its "dictatorship of the proletariat", was the first of the totalitarian States because Bolshevik Communism was the most ambitious and thoroughgoing attempt ever made on a large scale to turn Marxism into a going concern. For this purpose it began by destroying both freedom and private property—and frightened property-owners in many lands into thinking the loss of freedom a small thing compared with the threat to their property. But we

shall go wrong if we simply condemn the Communist suppression of property without understanding the reasons for it. Marx drew his doctrines from a study of British industrial conditions in the first half of the nineteenth century. Machinery and steam power had revolutionised methods of industrial production. Workmen became accessories of the machine. The owners of machinery, the new industrial middle class, replaced the older patriarchal and feudal employers, and left only wages as a frigid bond between masters and men. Crowded manufacturing towns sprang up. In them, masses of "operatives" were herded together to live dark and wretched lives in miserable surroundings. Even child labour was ruthlessly "sweated". The industrial capitalists, owners of the new machinery, made capitalism look like a devilish form of property without any human obligation.

At the same time the new industrial and trading middle class gained political power through the representative parliamentary system; and there was much force in Marx's contention (in 1848) that "modern government is nothing but a managing committee of middle-class interests". Marx saw, too,

that a society in which political power was held by property-owners devoid of any sense of human obligation must destroy itself; and he believed (wrongly, in my view) that the appointed instrument for its self-destruction would be the proletariat from whom it bought human labour as an industrial commodity to be paid for at the lowest market price.

Where Marx also erred was in identifying "the proletariat" with "democracy", and in looking upon "capitalist society" as being, necessarily and inevitably, hostile to human dignity and human freedom. Since he wrote, the relation of capitalism to industrial production has undergone a revolution—and, in the main, a democratic revolution—almost if not quite as significant as was the "Industrial Revolution" which ousted the patriarchal and feudal relationships between masters and men. By the repeal of repressive laws against combinations of workmen, by the development of trade unionism, by the use of parliamentary institutions and, not least, with the support of humanitarian and Christian convictions upon the sanctity of the human personality, the inhuman conception of property-right as divorced from human obliga-

tion has been essentially changed. Indeed, as Mr. Middleton Murry points out, the proletariat has ceased to be a proletariat in the Marxist sense. Thanks to the representative democratic system it has become a possessor of political freedom.

Part of this process consisted in making political power more or less independent of property. The property-qualification for the parliamentary franchise was gradually abolished. Trade Unions, co-operative societies and other "proletarian" organisations acquired property of their own and, with it, power to defend themselves and to safeguard their freedom. In fact, during the nineteenth century, political power was gradually taken away from property as such, and given to individuals, or combinations of individuals as such. This means that the structure of the society about which Marx made his prophecies has changed, perhaps fundamentally. Property has avoided self-destruction by accepting some measure of human obligation. At the same time the "proletariat", as Marx conceived it, has ceased to exist. Capitalist society, as he conceived it, has either ceased to exist or has had its wings severely clipped.

How does this bear upon the "freedom"

which we believe ourselves to be defending in this war? How will it bear upon the structure of the peace that will have to be made when the war has been won? This much is clear: Individual freedom is possible only in a State that exists for the benefit of the individuals who form its people. It is not possible in a totalitarian State which commands its people without caring for what they may or may not wish, and without letting them have any say in public affairs. In this sense, freedom and democracy are inseparable. In another sense a totalitarian State can only fulfil itself in preparation for war or in war. It is a military organisation, well reflected in the saying: "Nazism is mobilisation". It is absolute and cannot brook compromise save, maybe, as a makeshift until it shall be strong enough to get its own way.

Nor can a totalitarian State be moral since it takes no account of its obligations towards others. Now the obligations of individuals to each other are the essence of social morality, and the obligations of States or nations to each other are the essence of international morality. The German philosopher, Hegel, who was the first apostle of the



totalitarian State, said this quite frankly. He affirmed that beyond the State there is no higher human association, and that States have no duties to one another or to humanity. Therefore the State must judge for itself what it will treat as a matter of honour, especially when, after a long period of peace, it has to seek an occasion for activity beyond its borders. It need not wait for any actual injury. The idea of a threatening danger is enough. Preventive or anticipatory wars are therefore justified. They need not be waged for any humanitarian purpose, since the State has to think of its own well-being, and its well-being is superior to that of any individual within its own confines or without.

This is Hegel's doctrine of the State Absolute. In practice if not in theory it is the doctrine of all totalitarian States. It is the negation of individual freedom within the State and of international freedom under recognised law among individual States. Now peace in freedom and freedom in peace depend upon relative, not absolute, doctrines or institutions. And it is the relativity of freedom and peace that makes them both so hard to define. We may live in freedom and at peace without knowing it, and realise what

they were only when we have lost them. Having lost them, it does not by any means follow that we can regain them in the same way and on the same terms as we enjoyed them before. We may have to find new ways and to accept other terms. This we can do only if we have the root of the matter in us, and care less for the forms than for the substance of things.

The root of the matter is a strong sense of the difference between what is absolute and what is relative, coupled with a determination to reject the absolute and to cling to the relative with all its changefulness. Sooner or later, thought upon this difference leads to the conclusion that human freedom is a ceaseless experiment in relativity, a constant process of adjusting ourselves to circumstances. The freedom we wish to enjoy and are now defending is liberty to think, to speak and to act under the laws, conventions or customs of human society. It has nothing to do with the absolute freedom of a Robinson Crusoe on an uninhabited island before the arrival of Man Friday—for with the arrival of Man Friday a limiting social element begins to creep in. So our freedom is social or

political, not freedom in the abstract. And, as societies develop, the freedom of their members becomes more and more relative, that is to say, more dependent upon others and less and less absolute.

Yet another circumstance has to be considered. Restrictions we have grown used to are not felt to be irksome. We do not feel that they limit our freedom. So it may seem that it matters less whether we are free from constraint than whether we feel constraint to be galling. The degree of what may be called our "objective" freedom appears a minor matter in the light of our "subjective" feeling that there is no reason to revolt against laws and customs which we are in the habit of obeying. Here we begin to tread on dangerous ground. Unless we are careful we may submit to surroundings so cramping that they end by rendering us incapable of active freedom. And this is precisely one of the difficulties which we shall have to overcome if our present pursuit of international peace in freedom is to be crowned with success.

In this country we have long been wont to take freedom for granted as a good in itself. Yet, if Soviet Russia be included, the greater

part of Europe has turned its back upon freedom, and has been taught that it is better for men to think and to behave alike under discipline than for them to hold and to be free to express in word and deed individual thoughts and opinions. Russian Communism, Italian Fascism and German Nazism are agreed in looking upon freedom as superfluous if not, indeed, as something bad in itself. In 1921 the Spanish Socialist leader, Fernando de los Rios, asked Lenin whether the dictatorship of the proletariat would not one day give place to a system of personal freedom. Lenin answered: "Bolsheviks have never spoken of freedom but of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They exercise this dictatorship on behalf of the proletariat, which is a minority in Russia, and they will continue to do so until the rest of the community submits to the economic conditions of Communism."

In saying this Lenin was faithful to the teachings of Marx and Engels who, as the German Socialist writer, Karl Kautsky, accurately wrote, "hammered out the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat which Engels stubbornly defended shortly before his death in 1891—the idea that the political autocracy

of the proletariat is the sole form in which it can establish its control of the State". Ten years later Kautsky repudiated this idea on the ground that it represented the "tyranny of the minority over the majority". On this account he was taken to task by Trotsky in the latter's *Defence of Terrorism*. From the standpoint of democracy, as the political form of individual freedom, Kautsky was certainly right; for democracy is based upon the rule of the majority, even if it safeguards the rights of minorities to oppose the majority. There are few better examples of political freedom in practice than the British Parliamentary principle that His Majesty's Opposition, as representing a minority, is entitled to a standing scarcely inferior to that of the Government itself. And if it be argued that in the minds of Marx and Lenin the denial of freedom to the majority by a dictating proletarian minority was a measure of transition to be employed until the rest of the community should have submitted to the economic conditions of Communism, the awkward fact remains that this denial of freedom is always accompanied by violence, and that the use of violence—which is intolerance in action—is in itself a denial of freedom. What is more:

By the time the violence of a minority has reduced a majority to subjection, both the minority and the majority may have ceased to be capable of individual freedom at all.

Why should men want freedom? Is it not enough for them to say: Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die? This, roughly, would be the conclusion to which a strictly "materialist interpretation of history" would drive us. Yet the fact remains that men who valued their own lives have thrown to the winds all thought of self-preservation in the hope of gaining for themselves and others the freedom they held more precious than life. In these islands, and not here alone, men have fought and died to conquer the very boon which hundreds of millions of otherwise reasonable human beings treat to-day as of no account. Why have men thus fought? Was it only because they resented "taxation without representation"? Was it not rather because they were determined to affirm the worth of the human personality and the rights of the free human spirit? Was it not because they hated the cramping tyranny of kings and priests over men's minds even more than over their bodies? Was it not because they held freedom

of the spirit to be the highest good to which man can aspire? Whatever the motive it is certain that the struggle for freedom has been, still is and will be a struggle for spiritual rather than for material gains.

I foresee the objection that if freedom is relative, not absolute, that if it depends on circumstances both material and mental, if circumstances change from one generation to another or according to climate and place, there can be no fixed standard for measuring or weighing the value of freedom. Why bother about anything so changeful and elusive? The answer is that we have to fix standards of conduct, according to time and place and circumstance, to lay down principles and, while admitting that everything in human life is relative, to establish limited areas within which those standards or principles shall be unconditionally valid. Only in this way, I think, can we escape from vagueness on the one hand and from paralysing scepticism on the other. Politically, the area in which human freedom has to be determined is that covered by the nation or the community to which an individual belongs. With this freedom goes his responsibility towards the community, for there can be no

safeguards of individual freedom without individual responsibility. In the middle of last century John Stuart Mill, a philosopher of liberal mind though socialist in tendency, set down in his essay *On Liberty* a list of the responsibilities incumbent upon members of a free community and of the penalties for not discharging them. He wrote:

If anyone does an act hurtful to others, there is a *prima facie* case for punishing him by law or, where legal penalties are not safely applicable, by general disapprobation. There are also many positive acts for the benefit of others which he may rightfully be compelled to perform; such as to give evidence in a court of justice; to bear his fair share in the common defence or in any other joint work necessary to the interest of the society of which he enjoys the protection; and to perform certain acts of individual beneficence such as in saving a fellow creature's life, or in interposing to protect the defenceless against ill-usage, things which, whenever it is obviously a man's duty to do, he may rightfully be made responsible to



society for not doing. A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for the injury.

Here Mill put his finger on one of the weightiest aspects of freedom by insisting that men are answerable not only for what they do but for failing to do what they ought. He meant that active citizenship in a democratic community is a condition of that community's freedom, and that sins of omission may be as blameworthy as sins of commission. Free men, in a word, must "pull their weight" in the national boat. There is no room for aloofness or neutrality or "keeping out of it" when the defence of freedom is at stake.

Marx, the Russian Communists and their disciples make no bones about suppressing freedom in order to destroy "capitalism". Fascism and Nazism have made no bones about destroying freedom ostensibly in resistance to Communism. All are alike in suppressing criticism or opposition as being intolerable in a totalitarian State of like-minded citizens. We may think well or ill of what is called

the "capitalist system". But in countries that remain democratic there is this to be said for it: With all its faults it leaves its critics free to criticise it. And it is here that the true nature of freedom in civilised communities begins to appear. Freedom to criticise is really the hall mark of personal liberty and the source of human progress, both because it carries with it freedom of thought, speech and inquiry, and that other essential feature of any free society—the toleration of opinions which many, perhaps most, members of that society may think wrong. This matter of toleration is very important. It contains in a practical form the old issue between the Absolute and the Relative. Toleration admits that though men may honestly feel they are absolutely right, other men may feel quite as honestly that *they* are absolutely right, and that the best way to behave is for them all to respect each other's beliefs, to agree to differ, and to seek common ground in another direction. Toleration is a strong thing, not a weak. Intolerance—except resistance to intolerant action, such as violence or war, which may be truly a defence of freedom—really springs from fear lest a cause or an idea or an organisation prove

unable to withstand criticism. If there were only one political truth, intolerance of error might perhaps be justified though, even then, it would be a sign of weakness. But, since there is no absolute political truth, attempts to enthrone any human judgment as beyond criticism are inherently weaker than the recognition that certain political truths, relative though they be, may be accepted by the common consent of free minds as the soundest working rules in human affairs. The acceptance of these working rules is a sign of strength. It suggests that those who accept them have enough energy, sufficient reserves of power, to change the rules should they need changing. This makes for robust citizenship. Systems that bar diversity of opinion and suppress criticism tend to produce a uniform type of citizen and to cramp human conduct. The case for criticism is that civilisation cannot progress without it.

Even totalitarian systems change, not frankly, openly or in response to public desires freely expressed, but shamefacedly, secretly and under cover of falsehood. One thing they cannot change—dictatorship itself. Absolute systems, administered by a tyrant

or by one arbitrary authority from whose judgment there is no appeal, can only be changed by violence such as assassination, revolution, civil war or other social and political upheaval. It is the virtue of what are called democratic or representative systems that their laws can be changed by common consent, or by force of public opinion among a majority of citizens, without violence or catastrophe. From the standpoint of social safety this may be the supreme argument in favour of democratic freedom. True though it be that free democracies are not easy to work or to keep in a condition of high efficiency, because they demand a much fuller and more active sense of citizenship than is required or tolerated by dictatorships, their margin of inefficiency may be comparable to an insurance premium which they pay against the risk of disaster when change is needed. And they have proved themselves capable of a higher degree of spontaneous co-operation in time of danger than any dictatorship can enforce. There is all the difference in the world between the behaviour of a flock of sheep, herded by vigorous sheep dogs under an all-powerful shepherd, and the free co-operation of democratic communities

such as has been shown in this war, and in the last war, by the democracies of the British Commonwealth of which, in the late Lord Balfour's phrase, free institutions are the life-blood.

This is the freedom we are defending, together with the similar freedom of France and that of the smaller democratic peoples who are neutral in policy though not neutral in sympathy and thought. Even more anxiously than we who are fighting they strive to look into the future and seek to guess what sort of peace our defence of freedom will bring. Could they be sure that the overthrow of "Hitlerism" and all that it implies would enable them and their German neighbours to preserve and develop their liberties without fear of war, a heavy burden would be lifted from their minds. They cannot be sure; nor can we unless we know beyond doubt what peace in freedom will mean and are resolved not to stay our hands until we have secured it for others besides ourselves. It cannot be the troubled "peace" of the years before 1914, with its constant undertone of clashing ambitions and its pan-German schemes of world domination. Nor can it be the unstable "peace" of 1918-1938

in which a League of sovereign States, calling themselves the League of "Nations", regrettably recoiled from the responsibility of putting war as an instrument of national policy outside the pale of civilisation. Either the democracies will go under, and the freedom of Europe will perish with them, or they will conceive and attain a peace more stable, because more virile and vigorous, than any the world has yet known. They must lay the foundation not merely of a "better international system" but of a system in which free nations shall become and shall act as a community, observing as between its members the same rules of freedom as those which the members of national communities in free countries have learned to obey.

At all events I can see no other way through and out of this war if victory is to give us freedom in peace. To take this way, to choose it irrevocably, to make known our choice and to show, even as we fight, that we have chosen it, is the only path to safety. It must be our supreme war aim, to be defined and stated beyond possibility of doubt. How this may be done I shall suggest in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAY OUT

**W**E are only at the beginning of this war. Its course may be long or short. While it lasts its foremost aim must be victory. For victory we may have to pay a heavy price. The longer it lasts the more exhausted will all the belligerents become, and the more eager will be sections of the public even in allied countries to make some kind of a settlement without overmuch haggling for terms. Unless our war aims be now defined, the tendency to compromise upon them may become too strong for any allied Government to withstand. To define them now requires constructive imagination, the kind of imagination of which our present War Cabinet has given far too little proof. Such imagination must be of two kinds—reconstructive as regards liberties which Hitlerism has trampled underfoot, progressively constructive as regards the future conditions of European and world peace in freedom.

As the war goes on our own people and the people of France may need an ideal, a faith more positive and sustaining than the negative purpose of destroying Hitlerism. To set forth such an ideal, to give grounds for this faith is not, as some think it, "Utopian". It may turn out to be an indispensable condition of real victory, even of military victory. This truth is already grasped by many minds among us. Some have put forward their ideas. Others prefer to await a more convenient season. I think the convenient season is now. Indeed, within a fortnight of our declaration of war upon Germany, I sketched in outline and published my own "peace programme" of war aims. It ran, as a statement of general principles:

No recognition or toleration of any of the fruits of Hitlerite aggression. The watchword must be: "Back to the German frontiers of 1919!" This means that independence, and the right of independent decision, must be restored to Austria; to Czechoslovakia within her pre-Munich borders; and, of course, to Poland with Danzig. The Memelland to be given an opportunity of choosing,



without propaganda or pressure of any kind, its own allegiance.

The total disappearance of Hitler, with all the Nazi *personnel* and system, and the establishment in Germany of a Government based on a representative democratic system.

The formation, if possible during the war, of the beginnings of a federation or federal union between all the peoples allied or associated with the present enemies of Hitlerism.

After the conclusion of peace with a representative democratic Germany, the German people to be admitted to this federation, either as a political unit or as a sub-confederation of German States, when it has been ascertained that they have disarmed to the level requisite for the maintenance of internal order, and have set up institutions guaranteeing the personal freedom and individual rights of all Germans without distinction of race, class or creed.

Countries now neutral to be eligible for membership of this federation provided that their institutions correspond to the principles of the federation itself

which must exclude future neutrality towards aggression in any shape or form.

No bartering or other concessions in respect of colonies. Colonial possessions eventually to be placed under a federal trusteeship for the welfare of their inhabitants, and in order to secure equality of access to raw materials for members of the federation, provision being made for the development of present colonies, dependencies and protectorates into individual nationhood, eligible for membership of the federation.

The League of Nations, its Covenant and its institutions to be reorganised and amended so that they may become instruments of intercourse between nations within the federation and those that may remain outside it, on condition that war be not only renounced by all League Members but that all undertake to treat it as a felony depriving those who engage in it of intercourse with civilised peoples.

Let me take the points in this provisional "programme for peace". They are not meant as dogmas. They are open to discussion. Like this book itself they were written in an

effort to clear my own mind. Other minds may react against them or take them as starting points for more adequate thought. Such as they are I shall explain them one by one.

If we wish to destroy and to discredit Hitlerism we must convince the German people that armed aggression in any form, under any pretext, does not pay. To allow any of the "conquests" of Hitlerism to stand would be to put a premium upon future aggression. The watchword: "Back to the German frontiers of 1919!" is not only mine. Before the war began it was adopted and proclaimed by the wisest German leaders in England and France as the only principle upon which German freedom could be built up. These men have learned much in exile. They have seen that the unscrupulous propaganda carried on both under the Weimar Republic and by Hitlerism against the territorial arrangements of "Versailles" was a stalking horse for German militarist ambition, and that it provided leverage for the suppression of such freedom as the German people might otherwise have been able to retain.

This was not because these enlightened Germans look upon the frontiers of

“Versailles” as ideal. It was because any successful claim to change frontiers by force or threat of force is an element of insecurity. This element tends to divert attention from the truth that frontiers are obstacles to intercourse and understanding between nations only when they are looked upon as military factors in a nation’s own security, as pledges of its national integrity which it will defend at all costs. To have overridden this principle was one of the most disastrous effects of the “Munich Agreement” of September 30, 1938. In coercing the British and French Governments into an acceptance of “frontier revision” at the expense of Czechoslovakia, Hitler knew well what he and they were doing. They were destroying the remnant of stability in Europe, they were opening the road to the subjugation of a free people, and were rendering war inevitable unless—as Hitler believed they would—the Western democracies should again prefer a “negotiated” surrender to ordeal by battle.

The only way to prevent frontiers from being causes of discord is to render war so unlikely that frontiers no longer need to be fortified and guarded in arms. The undefended frontiers between the United States and

Canada, like the borderline between Norway and Sweden, illustrate this truth. Only when war and the prospect of war have been removed will trade and other forms of intercourse between free peoples tend to make international frontiers as invisible as are the borders of English counties or the "frontiers" between England and Wales and England and Scotland. Otherwise the shortest cut to war will be to tinker with frontiers in the name of "appeasement" or for the removal of alleged grievances. Without fear of war, nations themselves, in their own interest, may be trusted gradually to get round or overcome any obstacles which "strategic" or other frontiers may offer to the flow of trade.

How Czechoslovakia may reconstitute herself; in what relationship the people of Austria may wish to stand to other German or neighbouring peoples; how, in President Wilson's phrase, "an independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations" with "a free and secure access to the sea", may be matters for careful consideration when the moment comes to settle them, provided always that the right of the Czechoslovaks, the Austrians and the Poles to

a free and independent existence be neither questioned nor challenged. In the exercise of that right those peoples may desire, and should be encouraged, to associate themselves with other free nations in some form of federal union. To ignore or to override their right to freedom and to free decision would be to stultify the whole allied cause.

On the necessity for the total disappearance of Hitler, with all the Nazi *personnel* and system, and for the establishment in Germany of a Government securely based on representative democratic institutions, there should be, in principle, little room for dispute. In practice neither the one nor the other may be simple or easy. We may find that Hitler, with or without his chief supporters and lieutenants, has disappeared or been suppressed before the war is over, and that they have been replaced by another system no less opposed to all the decencies of international life than he and his system are. Under this altered, yet not new, system we might see the apparatus of terror, built up and developed by the "Gestapo" or Secret State Police, controlled and preserved by other men not less ruthless and unscrupulous than Hitler and his helpers have been. Could we make "peace" with such a

Germany, even were such a Germany to be backed by the weight and the power of Soviet Russia? So to do would be to acknowledge defeat. Much may depend upon the German people themselves, that is to say, upon whether any important section of them are prepared to work or even to fight for their own redemption. And their readiness thus to work or to fight may depend in no small degree upon their faith in the sincerity of allied war aims when those war aims have been defined, proclaimed and brought by every possible means to the knowledge of the German people.

It is here that the British and French peoples in particular need to search their own hearts and to think constructively both in the light of history, modern and less modern, and in the light of the "better international system" they wish to set up. In some quarters it is said that there can be no lasting peace in Europe, no better international order, until the centralised unity of Germany under Prussian control has been broken up, and the various German lands have been reconstituted as political units. I know enough of German history, and of the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership,

to understand how seductive this idea may be to some minds which look upon German unity as a mainly artificial creation. But I also know enough of the German people themselves to be convinced that any effort, from outside, to break up their unity would infallibly provide them with an incentive to revolt against any and every form of foreign interference, no matter how successful that interference might seem at first to be. In this sense it is true, and must remain true, that we are not at war against the German people. We are at war to defend our own freedom and the freedom of others, including the freedom *in peace* of the Germans themselves. How they might organise this freedom when it has been placed within their grasp, is primarily a matter for Germans, not for non-Germans. But it must be freedom in and for peace. Well-intentioned Britons, for instance, have in recent months and years been foolish enough to imagine that they can think German thoughts with German minds or lay down the law upon what should be "done for Germany". They have been suffering from a delusion to which British minds are especially prone—that of supposing that Germans are a slightly different kind of



Englishmen or Britons; and that the way in which we should like to be treated in given circumstances is the way in which Germans would like to be treated. For this assumption there is no warrant whatever. We may be able to help or to persuade or to encourage Germans to think out solutions of the formidable German problem that would not be incompatible with the establishment of lasting peace in Europe under a "better international system". But if we imagine that any kind of German is likely to welcome—without a mental reservation that he will get rid of it as soon as ever he can—any solution "made in England" or, for that matter, "made in France" we shall be courting disappointment and ultimate disaster.

If our chief war aim is to establish a better international system as the foundation for lasting peace in Europe, it stands to reason that the solution of the German problem must be such that the German people would not, in the long run, wish to get rid of it even if they could. In saying this I do not mean that any and every project upon which Germans may agree should be accepted off-hand or unconditionally by the framers of a

better international system. I mean only that in the long run—and we have to think of the “long run”—it will be impracticable to cut up, disintegrate or dominate from without seventy or eighty million Germans in the centre of Europe against their will. Our task is to be helpful, not destructive, or (except as regards any revival of aggressive militarism or nationalism) repressive. The trouble is that most of us, including many Germans, are thinking in terms of the past, not in terms of the present or of the possible future. We do not realise that we may be in the presence of a Germany torn by civil strife and utterly bankrupt and demoralised. Hitlerism stands upon a thin crust above an abyss. It is not only that immense outlay on armaments, on guns instead of butter, has been financed by paper credit which will be worth exactly nothing when Hitlerism collapses or is overthrown, but that millions of young Germans have lived upon the Nazi State and are not fit to live on anything else. Leaving aside for the moment the militant Nazi organisations—the Brown Shirts or “Storm Detachments”, the Black Guards and Himmler’s Secret State Police which, taken together, can hardly number less than two million

uniformed men—there is the Party Bureaucracy which duplicates almost every branch of the German Civil Service. Some years ago an eminent German administrator wrote and presented to Hitler a careful memorandum upon the measures that would be needed to put the internal affairs of Germany on to a relatively sound basis. His proposals would have involved the dismissal of some three million Party nominees who were holding and drawing pay for official positions outside the regular Civil Service. It is not surprising that Hitler read the memorandum without pleasure or that its author speedily found himself in disgrace. Hitler may well have asked, as we and others must ask: What is to be done with these men?

So the gamble went on. Everything was staked upon gaining successes without war by threat of war. In the Party itself corruption spread from top to bottom. The abominations now recorded in a British official publication (Foreign Office White Paper 6,120) as having been perpetrated in Nazi concentration camps and elsewhere have been mitigated only by the readiness of Nazi officials to take bribes from their victims for less inhumane treatment or for actual release.

I know of cases in which victims were released, after preliminary maltreatment, on payment of comparatively trifling sums. Large sums were always demanded; but rather than get nothing the officials ended by accepting one-tenth or less of the amount first claimed. Those who would not or could not pay often suffered the extremes of torture or death. But the question of what to do with these hordes of corrupt ruffians is not the least of the perplexities that will confront those who take in hand any solution of the immediate German problem.

Hardly less weighty, inasmuch as it bears upon the economic life of the German people, is the question of German industry and trade. Many industrial plants have been so worked out for rearmament and other purposes that they need complete renovation. The sums required to put them again into good working order would run into hundreds of millions of pounds. Railways, both as regards rolling stock and the permanent way, can hardly stand up to the strain of mobilisation, while ordinary passenger and goods traffic has been thoroughly disorganised during the past few years. Should Hitlerism, with its threat of war, disappear, is it likely that

the complicated system of barter, with its "frozen credits" and infinite variety of marks which the pernicious genius of Dr. Schacht evolved, would be able to procure for the German people the wherewithal to carry on even their normal trade? Far from having made Germany "self-sufficing" even in food-stuffs, "autarchy" has withdrawn not less than three million acres of arable land from the plough for the sake of multiplying military aerodromes and expensive motor roads for military purposes. These things doubtless belonged to a programme of progressive conquest, of constant claims for "living space", to be enforced by threat of war. But how is a Germany reorganised in a Europe set for peace to deal with them? Other countries which have been forced by Hitlerism to spend so much of their own substance on armaments will hardly be able adequately to help in setting "the German people" on their feet again.

In the best event years of tribulation and hardship would seem to be in store for Germany until her people can climb the yonder side of the abyss which Hitlerism has dug beneath their feet. In the worst event their present leaders (or the military successors of those leaders) may turn towards Bolshevism

and bring Western Europe face to face with problems of another kind. Hitler has long thought of Bolshevism as an alternative to Nazism. Even General Ludendorff denounced him for these leanings. Soon after his first great triumph in the German general election of September, 1930, Hitler declared at Frankfurt that there were only two possibilities of saving Germany—National Socialism, on the one hand, and Bolshevism, on the other. On November 8, 1930, he wrote in the *Illustrierten Beobachter* that it was his “hard will to lead Germany either to National Socialism or to Bolshevism”. As we have had cause to learn, Hitler’s words may mean little though his deeds may mean much; and his deed in concluding the agreement with Soviet Russia in August, 1939, has given the present war a complexion which few thought it likely to take on.

In my own view this new complexion may involve for Great Britain and France a danger more immediate than that of any eventual “Bolshevisation” of Germany. The spectacle of Russo-German collusion and co-operation has undoubtedly moved many minds in Western countries to wonder whether it would be wise for Great Britain and France to

wage war against Germany so vigorously as to inflict total defeat upon her, or whether it would not be more prudent to seek an understanding with "Conservative" elements, in the Reichswehr and elsewhere, so that with their help "Hitlerism" might be discomfited and a new order set up in Germany that would be the spearhead of an anti-Bolshevist front. Such notions have made a certain headway even in British and French quarters that may appear resolved to fight the war through until freedom and respect for law shall again rule over Europe.

My own conviction is that notions like these are as shortsighted as they are foolish. We have one aim of war—to vanquish Nazi Germany. Without military victory we shall not destroy the false legend of German military invincibility from which Hitlerism originally drew much of its strength. Nor shall we convince "the German people" that pan-German militarism spells disaster to them, no matter whether they live under a Prussian Hohenzollern or under a Third Nazi Reich. The immediate foe is Hitlerism. When we have dealt faithfully with it we shall be able to face Bolshevism with clear consciences and stout hearts. Were we to trifle with our

present task, to dodge the major issue in the hope of escaping what may be an ultimate but is still a minor danger, we should stand discredited before the German people and the world as poltroons and fools.

There are still in Germany strong under-currents of feeling that run in the direction of our hopes and intentions. They will be strengthened in proportion as we make it clear what future we wish to open to the German people. We cannot, we ought not, as foreigners with non-German minds, to suggest details of any internal German solution of the German problem beyond insisting that it must be based upon democratic freedom. This is a matter for those Germans who, now in exile, are nevertheless in more or less constant touch with their own followers and well-wishers inside Germany. With these men the British and the French Governments should make it their business to co-operate. But we shall help these men if we put forward our own well-considered policy for the future organisation of Europe and, as far as practicable, of the world. And it is here that what should be our principal war aim comes into view.



The third point in the "programme for peace", sketched above, runs: "The formation, if possible during the war, of the beginnings of a federation or federal union between all the peoples allied or associated with the present enemies of Hitlerism". As regards Germany, the next point runs:

After the conclusion of peace with a representative democratic Germany, the German people to be admitted to this federation, either as a political unit, or as a sub-confederation of German States, when it has been ascertained that they have disarmed to the level requisite for the maintenance of internal order, and have set up institutions guaranteeing the personal freedom and individual rights of all Germans without distinction of race, class or creed.

In these two points we may find the germ of a "splendid policy" that would not only render the prosecution of the war to victory almost an end in itself but would hold out a prospect to the German people of gaining admission, on a footing of equality, to a European, or a wider, federal union from

which the very thought of war between its members would be banned. Decisive moments in human history—and this is such a moment—demand bold thinking and high aims. To the idea of federal union many minds in many countries already assent. The practical difficulty is where and how to begin. If we wait until the end of the war we may fall into errors similar to those that were destined to ruin much of the work done by the framers of the League of Nations Covenant. We may try to form, with an elaborate written constitution, another League or federation of sovereign States, each jealous of its own sovereignty. We might find ourselves presented with a plan as monumental and unworkable as the original plan for our own Ministry of Information. In this matter the rule of thumb is the safest guide. We must work with the tools and the materials that lie ready to hand.

The nearest and readiest of these tools are Great Britain, France and the British Dominions. All stand on democratic foundations. France and Great Britain are now united, far more than allied, in this war. A "Supreme Council" directs their war effort. This union should be broadened and deepened

until the principle of a Supreme Council—in which, if their peoples desire it, the British Dominions could take part—would be embodied in a permanent institution. From it might evolve something in the nature of a federal Government for the British and French democracies—with one proviso of ultimately decisive importance. To membership of this federation and to a share in its government, democratic countries now neutral could be admitted at the end of the war, or earlier should attack upon them by the enemy or his helpers bring them into the war. No country without democratic institutions could be eligible.

The proviso “of ultimately decisive importance” is that whatever federal institutions may be set up, or federal government that may be formed, should be responsible not to the Governments but directly to the peoples of the countries belonging to the federation. As the American writer, Mr. Clarence K. Streit, has urged unanswerably in his famous book, *Union Now*, the main cause of the failure of the League of Nations was its character as a League of sovereign States, not a Union of peoples, each of the States-members of the League retaining its unlimited national sove-

reignty over affairs which by their very nature should have been common to all. Here Mr. Streit is on strong ground. One of the authors of the Constitution of the United States, Madison, learned from a study of confederacies, ancient and modern, that only those federations which were founded upon the assent of individual citizens, not on that of States, had endured or could endure. This is, indeed, the underlying principle of the United States of America, just as it is of the Swiss Confederation. Each member of a workable federal system must retain control of its own internal affairs while surrendering to a federal government, drawing authority from the peoples not from the States of the federation, sovereignty over affairs that are common to all.

Mr. Clarence Streit's thesis is too well known to need repetition in detail. It is inspired by what he feels to be the close resemblance of the distracted democracies in the world to-day to the condition of the Thirteen States of North America after they had won their War of Independence against England in 1783. Though they were linked together in a League of Friendship each State retained full sovereignty over its arma-

ments, finance, trade and other affairs which should have been common. Dissensions and chaos were the result. By 1787 the position was so bad that even Washington despaired of saving the country for which he had won independence. Then Hamilton, Madison, Jay and a few others saw that nothing short of union would serve. In two years, amid great difficulties, they worked out and secured the adoption of a Federal Constitution which transformed the Thirteen States into the United States. Like evils suggest like remedies. So Mr. Streit, convinced by eight years' observation of the League of Nations at Geneva, proposed that fifteen democracies of the world—the United States, France, Great Britain and the British Dominions, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and Finland—should join forthwith in a federal union to uphold their own freedom and to form a nucleus for a "better international system". Incidentally he saw that this federal union would get rid of the old bogey of neutrality. Since foreign affairs, trade and federal finance would be entrusted to a federal government elected by the peoples of the federation, the neutrality of any one of them in face of a common

danger would be as impracticable as the neutrality of any State of the American Union in the event of war. Within the Union, too, there would be a maximum of freedom of trade, intercourse and movement. Frontiers and prohibitive tariffs would alike lose their segregating power.

Independently of Mr. Streit's conclusions and projects, similar ideas were thought out and expressed by a group of young Englishmen who started a movement now known as "Federal Union". Partly by itself and partly under the impulse of Mr. Streit's book this movement has spread rapidly in this country and is attracting the attention of foreign democracies now neutral. Among those democracies all, except Switzerland, have formed a consultative association known as the "Oslo Powers". The near future may decide whether and to what extent those Powers will draw nearer to France, Great Britain and the British Dominions upon whose victory their freedom depends. No high degree of imagination is needed to see how wide a window the strengthening of these tendencies might open on to a future of which the horizon is now darkened by the clouds of war.

A possible "way out" thus reveals itself to the eyes of constructive political faith. The ideal which shines upon it would potently attract many of the peoples who still hesitate between submission to the threat of triumphant tyranny and association with the champions of freedom. As a "war aim", deliberately chosen and solemnly proclaimed, a federation of free peoples would fire the imagination of half the world and would endow the allied cause with a high moral sanction to which none could be indifferent. Even as "propaganda" it would be effective and might be decisive, that is to say, decisive in the sense that the only form of propaganda which compels belief is the propaganda which foreshadows and embodies a determined policy. Everywhere in Europe, and in some other continents, the peoples wish to know what will happen to them, how this war will influence their destinies, whether the course of the nations is set towards freedom in peace or towards enslavement by tyranny. We have the power, if we have the will, to set the course. When it has been set, all other problems such as those of the future control of colonial possessions, of access to raw materials, and of economic reconstruction at

home and abroad will fall into their proper places as details important in themselves yet subordinate to the main issue. Even the League of Nations may be found to have a special usefulness as a meeting-place and an instrument of intercourse and discussion between nations within and those without a federal union of free peoples. By degrees some approach to universality might be made, not by sacrificing any principle or by admitting the lawfulness of war as an instrument of national policy but on the understanding that all nations, members of the federation or members of the League, should be bound to treat war as a felony which could no more be the source of rights, neutral or other, than any crime can be.

War, I repeat, is the ultimate enemy. Until this enemy has been vanquished full disarmament will be impracticable. Disarmament can only go hand in hand with real collective security against war; and even then a limit may have to be fixed below which the armaments of free nations shall not fall lest they be unable to play their part in ridding the world of piracy and brigandage. The nations which renounced war under the Briand-Kellogg Pact of 1928 were unwilling



to face and to answer the pertinent question: What are the lawful functions of armaments in a world that has renounced war? The answer should have been: Police functions in the service of the Common Law of a warless world. This answer would have entailed not, indeed, the creation of an international police force to be stationed somewhere under somebody's command, but recognition that the armaments and resources of war-renouncing nations must be pledged to the effective outlawry of war.

One day, maybe, it will be enough to create an international air force to supply all that may be needed in the way of international police. Until then the forces of freedom will need to be co-ordinated under federal authority. Most important and most urgent of all, when once the present foes of freedom have been discomfited, should be the enrolment and the training of armies of helpfulness ready to succour the distressed, to repair the ravages of disaster, to undertake great works of engineering, in a word, to show mankind that there is a more excellent way of proving valour than in fighting, a higher form of national and international activity than armed strife.

This seems to me the high road to a better future for mankind. By-paths may tempt our feet, for the high road will not be easy, gradients may be stiff and surfaces rough and broken. But Great Britain and France have it in their power to-day to set out on this road. To begin to survey and to build it should be their war aim. Others will watch them, and follow if they move forward with resolute tread. Then they may find, before they have gone far, that they have hastened and given a new meaning to victory, the aim of war.



