

THE HITLER CULT

1939

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FOREWORD

AS one of the only "neutrals" Germany has ever had in this country--as the first English writer to produce a book upon the subject of Herr Hitler--I begin by announcing that I am no longer neutral. Nothing in my earlier neutrality has been retained, since it is obvious that the time has passed for that, and it could no longer serve any useful purpose. To-day, to be neutral is to be anti-British. Further, it is to be anti-European culture, as I understand it. And the eighty-million-odd Germans back Herr Hitler up much too heartily for us to be able to dissociate them from their leader. One can no longer retain a soft spot, therefore, for the eighty-million-odd Germans. That would be distinctly disloyal to the thirty-million-odd English --who have no Führer, and wouldn't back him up if they had, not if he turned out to be a camouflaged Napoleon.

It was not on account of Herr Hitler's beautiful eyes, or of the cute little face of Dr Goebbels, that I adopted "neutrality." It was because another war like the last one is hardly an event lightly to repeat. And to be on bad terms with Germany would entail that, I considered.

"It appears to us humanely desirable that Germany should win no war against France or England." I wrote those words (in my Editorial, Blast No. 2, at the outset of the last War). They are just as true as they were in 1914; and they express what I think to-day exactly as they did then.

But it is "humanely desirable," too, that no war should have broken out at all. So long as I thought it possible to avoid that, I regarded it as my duty to be "neutral." Even I have indulged--in the more restricted field of the written word--in efforts at "appeasement" beside which those of Mr Chamberlain pale in comparison. But to-day, with war following those efforts, there is an impasse, and neutrality will not help us out of it. That is more patent every minute. So I come back to my 1914 position: namely, the undesirability of England or France suffering defeat at the hands of Germany.

As to who "started it," who knows? Was it Edward the Peacemaker? It probably started at the time of the Partitions of Poland, in the eighteenth century. It is at least as old, I dare say, as the days when England was the "wool-farm of the

Hanse."

Nations are like children: they take a dislike to one another's face, or accent, or the way the other handles his knife and fork. And Prussia has been the playground-bully ever since he came to school. A rough boy, liked by nobody-- look how easy it is to collect coalitions against him to-day, among his playmates great and small! Even the Turk has turned against him.

Whether French, Turks, Spaniards, Slavs, or what not, we are all rather a happy-go-lucky, "decadent" lot to-day, thank goodness. Only Prussia and Japan aspire to be virile. In stupid and stiff-necked fashion they stalk about with glassy eyes, their chests stuck out. All the "decadents" were bound to throw themselves upon these two in the end and stop them from being so beastly efficient. "Curse braces. Bless relaxes," as Blake, a much more typical Englishman than Shakespeare, remarked.

These two communities, one in the West, one in the East, believe that a blow in the eye settles all arguments, and is the best answer should any one dissent from your point of view. In social life such a man is highly unpopular. A nation of that kind is no less so. And the odds against such a nation are so great that its fall is a foregone conclusion.

This book is about a religion--Hitlerism. The personal ascendancy of Herr Hitler, the cult to which he has given birth, with all its political implications, is so important, that the facial muscles, the diet, the sexual continence or otherwise, proneness to constipation, condition of the scalp, glandular set-up, the artistic proclivities of this man-god, and his early career, demand our close attention, and shall receive it.

But it is the cult itself, rather than its object, that is of prime importance. "If there were not a God it would be necessary to invent one." If there were no Hitler, would he be invented? And by whom, and for what purpose? It is my contention that he has been invented. And I will try and explain why, and how.

Of these latter-day "Caesarisms," the Hitler cult is by far the most potent. Shrines were set up for Augustus, but such a thing is unthinkable in the case of Mussolini. One cannot see Balbo pouring a libation. The Italians, as well as everybody else, would laugh--and after all they have the Vatican. But it is not at all unthinkable in the case of Hitler. And busts of him have in fact appeared in

the new "Nordic" temples, here and there.

The creed of this Jingo God is naturally a jingo creed. It is referred to as an "ideology." That suggests "ideas." In this war into which we have been forced we are fighting ideas: for it is an "ideological war" we are told. But there are precious few ideas there for us to fight, I am afraid. To make war upon ideas, when they are unsuitable, is the "highbrow's" only recognizable function in the modern state at war, and I can hardly find any there, good, bad, or indifferent, to attack. The average Briton need not lie awake at night on that score, anyway. Great Britain will not succumb to the "grey matter" of Herr von Ribbentrop or of his master: it will have to be a strictly physical ascendancy, if Germany is to overthrow Britannia. Such ideas as there are, I shall reveal, in all their intemperate crudity. They are the sort of ideas you would expect a nation to have who have taken unto themselves a Jingo God--of so homely, so rotarian an aspect as this bellicose yet vegetarian divinity.

But let me, without delaying this brief foreword any longer than is necessary, proceed to my introductory exposition.

I begin my book with an account of my personal contacts with Hitlerism. That part is in the nature of political autobiography. Then I deal with Herr Hitler in person. With ideology--with the philosophical stuffing of this Jingo God--I deal last.

PART I

I FIRST SIGHT OF THE NAZIS

TEN years ago a book of mine was published called Hitler. It made no great stir--for the excellent reason that Herr Hitler in 1930 had made no great stir. It was not topical. It might be described as pre-topical. It is just as bad to be pre-topical, as to be post-topical. I was on the spot five years too soon.

At that time Hitler had not tasted power--he was in his "heads will roll" period. Speeches of his were full of how heads would roll in the sand once he came to power--though no one felt his head particularly insecure on that account, for it seemed highly problematic if power would ever be his. He had tried once in 1923 (his Munich Putsch) and failed ignominiously. Then the Junkers thought a spoke had better be put in Schleicher's wheel--one of those mischievous "political generals"! And so half contemptuously they turned to Herr Hitler, in his old brown shirt. He was so blamelessly plebeian! He would put the Communists' nose out of joint, as well as frustrate the knavish tricks of such as Schleicher. Since then the one-time house-painter has never looked back. He was put in to keep the place warm for somebody else, bluer in blood than he was. But he has stopped there ever since--with a look in his eye that seems to say: "Kind hearts are more than coronets!" And the Junkers have had to put up with it and admit that on occasion a Kind Heart takes you further and is better at a bargain than Norman Blood (or the Prussian equivalent).

The "heads will roll" phrase is typical. I did not take it seriously, when first I heard it: I supposed it to be a picturesque schoolboy jargon--for Hitler, as well as being blamelessly plebeian, was also blamelessly mild and almost frightened-looking. But he has, in fact, been pretty free with the chopper since power has been his. A man gets his head chopped off in Germany for merely smelling like a Communist, or for looking too hard at the camouflaged mouth of an underground hangar.

Field-Marshal Goering collects the headsman's tool, we are told, as other people collect First Editions or "Penny Blacks." On the walls of his villa at Eberswalde hang headsman's axes, which have flashed in the hands of the head-hunters of the law. Morbid ornaments, Frau Goering must reflect, of a bleak winter's evening. But dear me!--boys will be boys, and they are such little savages

(especially Hermann), though rather darlings in their grim way, one can imagine that dutiful lady sighing to herself, as she surveys the domestic scene. Thank God, she must think, the lion cubs have gone!--after spoiling one of Hermann's new uniforms.

I first saw Hermann Goering at a meeting in the Sportpalast, when he was a simple brown-shirted politico, roaring like a bull for power, for two hours without stopping. That was a decade since. To-day--with six years of momentous history behind him--to see Hitler face to face is I suppose a bit of a sensation. (Many people seem to find it so, to judge by the numbers who repaired to Nuremberg every year, in the hope of getting a sort of electric shock from a hand-shake with a "world-conqueror," and by gazing into his "magnetic" eyes).

But when I first glimpsed the big shots of National Socialism the sensation all came from the crowd, whose nominees they were. The great leaders of to-day were then perspiring nobodies; I doubt if any British cabinet minister had so much as heard their names--barring that of Hitler. Hitler is an awfully good name to have. It sticks in the mind, once you've heard it.

Hermann Goering is or was a fine, rattling, spit-and-bellow orator. It was laid down in the Nazi text-books that the Nazi leaders should be Kampfnaturen, or combative-natured. "Fighters," we should call it. Goering had plenty of that, and a clever tongue in his head into the bargain.

The Sportpalast is the Albert Hall or Olympia of Berlin, and it was like being at a boxing match. The atmosphere was breathless and fierce, the crowd a boxing-match crowd. The police at the entrances had searched it for weapons; the S.A. lads had stood with their hands above their heads while the Schupos prodded them carefully for concealed revolvers.

Goering was in his shirt-sleeves; soon he was deluged with sweat. He bellowed defiance at Grzesinski, the Berlin police-president, and the crowd roared for that gentleman's blood. He shook his fist at the world at large. From the sea of people underneath (I was in the gallery) rose a surge of hoarse applause, sinking to a sultry murmur while it strained its ears for fresh incitements to riot, then suddenly ascending to a scream of hate. I shall always remember the giant rustling and breathing of this mastodon, in the intervals of pandemonium-- of

this Berlin mob, the New Proletariat in its first months of epileptic life.

So I knew where we stood with the Germans and what Europe was in for: I did not need to be a prophet to foresee something of what subsequently has befallen. To foresee all that has happened since, I should have had to have been a very exceptional seer.

At that time there seemed no possibility of a serious German come-back and I was rather amused. In my book, composed more or less on the spot, I told the British public that something outsize was on foot, which would repay watching.

"Germany, besides being `the political and economic hub of Europe' (in the words of Dr Bene*) is, as well, a very great country, and what it dreams and wishes and resents cannot be lightly set aside." So I wrote in the year 1930.

For that estimate I was called "an innocent abroad," I remember, by one of my distinguished critics. Hitler was a spent force; in six months his party would be petering out and he would never be heard of again. So said the reviewers. I am afraid I was right; more right actually than I knew.

Not so many years before, I had watched, as a soldier, the Richthofen Circus at work. That was on the Western Front. I had seen the tracer-bullets of its pilots darting at the parachutists, as it hunted the decamping "blimps," beneath their gas-bags in flames. British soldiers, gazing up at the sky, the indignant witnesses of this Kampfnaturenheit, would growl at each other: "See that 'ere, Bill! The dirty bastard!" (meaning low fellow for not sparing a man, even when he'd taken to his parachute).

So it is possible--seeing how often this scene was enacted at one period--that, technically speaking, I had had Goering beneath my eyes before; but as a slim young flying-officer. Now he was fat. Belted and top-booted, his brown shirt open at the neck, he looked rather like a sheriff in a cowboy film.

The Goering of the War-years was all a soldier should be. He succeeded Richthofen and was one of the most active of those celebrated birds of prey. Nazi technique was acquired, it is important to recall, in putting into execution the precepts of Clausewitz--namely the maximum of terror as a law of nature, since it was a law of war. And Blitzkrieg is (as we are so often told) certainly their big idea--since these people have been refused dominion by the "decadent democracies." It is certainly their best bet.

They are all of them soldiers; when Herr Hitler insists on this it has a good deal of meaning. He said the other day that Bethmann-Hollweg (he of "the scrap of paper") was a civilian occasionally dressed up as a major, whereas he, the present Chancellor of Germany, is a soldier who sometimes wears civilian clothes. One feels inclined to object that he was only a War-time soldier, like numbers of people in England, who are wholly unmilitary, in spite of their Military Crosses. But four years of soldiering takes a German differently from what it does an Englishman or a Frenchman. That is the trouble. Once a soldier, always a soldier, in the Fatherland. And this earnest, nervous, tub-thumping product of the Waldviertel has never demobilized himself, so to speak--whatever the State may have done round 1918 in the matter of dispensing with his services. If Herr Hitler would only demobilize himself, even now, we could all return peacefully to our normal occupations. But he will not. He forces us to be Kampfnaturen too.

One Nazi who was never a soldier, because he has a game leg, is Dr Joseph Goebbels. Him I saw in his first flush of revolutionary fervour, spitting like a cat, in the Sportpalast, in 1930. The last time I saw him he was grinning at me from the pages of a newspaper. That was a few months ago, when Prince Paul of Yugoslavia was visiting Berlin (presumably to demonstrate his dislike of Russia) and all the Nazi leaders were drawn up in a line, looking rather like a lot of fancy tram-conductors, to be presented to the visitor. Goering, baton in hand, accompanied Prince Paul. Goebbels was grinning "boyishly" at the proceedings--for Goering has stepped up on top of him, being an ex-ace with an old school tie.

To return to the Sportpalast meeting in 1930, Goebbels was Gauleiter of Berlin, and a more considerable person than Goering. His brother had just killed a Communist in the Rhineland, where the Goebbels family came from, and was in jail.

This was a feather in his cap. I was impressed by this little firebrand, with such a command of scorn. His personality was that of a cockily arrogant lawyers' "dog." He had a bitter, slightly faunesque physiognomy, which he used as a hammer--to imbue with percussion his shrewish vocables, which he spat at the "dark powers" which held Germany enmeshed and enslaved. To-day he is a highly unpopular tribune. He is the best-hated man in Germany.

Martha Dodd once repeated to me something "Putzi" Hanfstängl had said. He

was the musical jester of Hitler's court, and was the head of some sort of vague department for foreign contacts. This "towering jitterbug" was moving into offices in the Pariserplatz, and he had expressed himself as delighted with their situation. He would be able, he said, to hurl a hand-grenade into Goebbels's sanctum in the Propaganda Ministry, which was upon a slightly lower level than "Putzi's" new quarters.

That is typical of the emotions this small, crippled, waspish figure provokes. When I saw Hanfstängl myself in Berlin, some months before this, the mere mention of Goebbels was sufficient to overcloud his large, dramatic countenance. "Goebbels must understand," he frowningly exclaimed, "that he cannot teach art from the microphone." All the art world and the literary world of Germany is sulking in its tent, refusing to dance to the strident music of the Propaganda Minister.

But Goebbels is the most able of the Nazis; the least sentimental, the best journalist, the really square peg in the square hole. He is more perfectly at home in National Socialist Germany than any other man; and he is the symbol of what every German who is not at home there dislikes most about it. He has had a black eye; his enemies have got as far as that. It is unlikely that he will die in his bed.

Now, I saw these great revolutionary gatherings in the last phase of the Weimar Republic. I heard the words of menace proffered by the embattled middle class--dispossessed, and massed in a new-proletarian militancy behind Hitler.

This was a new force in Europe. It confronted the "new rich," the Schiebertum, which had brought it into being. The "new rich" was a thing Marx had never allowed for. But as to a new proletariat, still less had such a thing as that ever entered into his calculations. Here at all events, it was as large as life, newly born, and roaring its head off.

As to that colossal political mushroom which has sprung up between the Rhine and the Vistula, it has so greatly exceeded my expectations that I feel to-day I saw nothing at all in Berlin in 1930. Of the potentialities for sustained nonsense implicit in Herr Hitler and his friends I had no suspicion. So, in spite of the fact that I was so much in advance of my contemporaries in "spotting" Hitler, I

classed this new German political leader as a species, merely, of Teutonic General Boulanger (so describing him at the time). That in fact is what he was. Only the machine at his command, the Dritte Reich, is differently geared from the Troisième République. None of us allowed sufficiently for that.

Even to-day we must take care not to underestimate that machine, simply because it is a machine. A man-eating tiger is after all only a machine: a machine-of-prey. Its intellectual potentialities are nil. But you have to be very careful when you go out to hunt it. We must make certain in preparing the net with which to trap this machine-of-prey, that it be of very exceptional strength. Should the machine break through it, it might be all up with us.

II "NO JEW--NO HITLER!"

A TRANSLATION of that now prehistoric volume of mine, upon the subject of Herr Hitler, was published in the German language by the Hobbing Verlag, of Berlin. This was before the Nazis had control of Germany. It did not meet with the approval of the Nazi leaders, naturally--though Heaven knows, compared with anything else that was penned about them in those days, it was a song of praise.

When I was in Berlin one summer I presented myself at the offices of the Hobbing Verlag. All the partners were verreist, and I was received by a peculiarly uncivil cripple of the name of Schmidt. It was he who informed me that my book had been shown to Hitler and Goebbels and had displeased them. I displeased Herr Schmidt as well, that was obvious. The Nazis and the German people generally seemed to displease him even more. As I found Herr Schmidt exceedingly unattractive, that seemed to be okay all round.

Then the Nazis came into power. Goebbels's eye lighted on my Hitler book, still being sold in the Berlin bookshops. This much-too-fair and disgustingly non-partisan volume continued to offend his harsh little eye. He would have far preferred, I am sure, a good slap-up attack upon everything he and his pals stood for. Eventually, Hobbings wrote to ask me if I objected to its being made into pulp--what was left of the edition. They pointed out that the situation had changed, the Nazis were in power, there was no longer any point in circulating my book. I replied that I had no objection to its returning to pulp. And pulp it accordingly became.

Meanwhile, back here in London, my book was being spat at. Those were the days when Communists were really Communists-- not mere Trotskyists or Stalinites. Zwemmer's shop window, in the Charing Cross Road, where my book was displayed, was under fire; several times a day the assistant was obliged to go out with a sponge and duster to remove the Red spittle upon the plate glass.

When I told Hanfstängl this story he sprang up with a great "Ach Gott!" rushed to the other extremity of the room and back, in elephantine agitation, and drew up in front of me, shaking an out-size fist in the direction of the Charing Cross

Road. "Why do you call them Communists?" he roared. "Why don't you call them Jews!" I had to point out that most of our "Reds" were not Jews at all but pukka Anglo-Saxon puritans, who had lost Christ but had (at last) seen the Red Light, and were replete with evangelical gusto. He rumbled and muttered. The were not Anglo-Saxons! They were all Jews! he growled. We left it at that.

In my Ossington Street office I received a visit, a few weeks after the publication of my Hitler book, from the official representative of the Nazi party in London. Herr Thost was his name (pronounced toast). This was of course before Hitler became Reichskanzler: Herr Thost was the agent of a party, not a government. He did not come to make overtures of any sort, but merely to have a chat. Herr Thost liked the book. He said it was not at all bad for an Englishman. But he made one reservation.

Now what I should have supposed his reservation might refer to was my tepid response to the call of nationhood, which I was at no pains to disguise. As I remarked (upon p. 5): "I am exceedingly sceptical about, and unresponsive to, all `nationalist' excitements whatever." The "genre humain" of the revolutionary marching song still means more to me than any jingo music, and I have never pretended otherwise. That would disqualify anybody, in German eyes, as an exponent of National Socialism, I felt.

But it was not that which worried Herr Thost.<Note> There was a question which, to the exclusion of everything else, perturbed and preoccupied that gentleman. What filled his mind to overflowing was the Judenfrage--the Jewish question. And my attitude to that he found unsatisfactory. Jew-knowledge was not my strong point, apparently.

I replied that no Englishman would be likely to see eye to eye with his party about the Jewish question. What would interest English people most about National Socialism was (1) the economic side of it, its proposed reform of the credit system; (2) its drive for moral regeneration (its puritan side); and (3) its attack upon the Diktat of Versailles, with special reference to the French plan of a continued hegemony. The anti-Semitic machinery would bore and repel the Englishman. Also, I added that it was of secondary importance, after all.

There was nothing new in the so-called "Jewish problem." It had merely cropped up in a violent form in Germany for the moment, because of the slump. The Jews rode out a slump better than other people, and that caused bad blood. No

slump-- no Jewish problem! Perhaps I said something of that sort.

Herr Thost looked grave. He shook his large, rather wooden (and as a matter of fact somewhat Jewish-looking) head. He was another of those "towering jitterbugs" of which Germany produces a fair number--quite as tall as Putzi Hanfstängl; loosely put together, jerky or "jittery," about six foot four or five, with a face over-life-size and hands and feet to match. He seemed quite a decent fellow; and if he was partly a Jew, I am sure he was quite unaware of the fact--he probably would have committed suicide if he found out, and I hope this book never falls into his hands as it might have fatal consequences.

He told me, for instance, that his father had been a German naval officer, who had been acquainted with Lord Curzon. He had a letter, he said, of introduction to Lady Cynthia Mosley--a daughter of Lord Curzon. But could he present it? he asked me. Would he be welcome? I was at a loss to see why he should not present it, if he felt so inclined. He shook his head. (He often shook his head.) He did not suppose it would be possible--she would not care to see him, he mumbled, affecting chagrin and mysterious embarrassment. I laughed. But why not, Herr Thost? for the last time I demanded. I had met Lady Cynthia once or twice and assured him that she was not only a very beautiful but very intelligent woman, and that he should make a point of using the letter he had mentioned.

At last, laughingly pressed by me, he revealed the obstacle. It was her Jewish ancestry! Lord Curzon, the friend of his father, the German naval officer, had married, for some inexplicable reason, a Miss Levi Leiter, of Chicago, he informed me. So of course----! Having incredulously and politely pooh-poohed this technical hitch--and Herr Thost having again shaken his head several times, implying I did not understand what a fearful obstacle-race life was for a member of the Nazi party, winding his way in and out of the family-trees of his father's oldest friends--we turned to other matters. But we never got far away from his obsession: the Jew. "If you do not understand the Judenfrage," he assured me, "you have not understood Hitlerism. Without the Jewish question Hitlerism would not exist."

At that time I thought this hardly fair to the Nazi intelligence; for those Nazis I had seen appeared a pretty competent and cynical gang of agitators. And merely to object to the Jews is not a Bewegung exactly.

Anti-Semitism in Great Britain is a pastime--it is in the nature of a parlour-sport.

A political ping-pong. With us it is associated with a rather stupid type of retired army man, who is disposed to regard the Jew as not "white" and as suspiciously "clever." Too much damned brains--a Roman nose that has gone wrong--a tendency to try and get into exclusive clubs where he has no business! For the rest, an Asiatic--a sort of "native," with more money than is quite decent, which he has got by lending money to pukka sahibs at exorbitant rates of interest. That is the idea.

This is simply xenophobia--a sentiment very appropriate to the professional fighting-man; and of course, social exclusiveness--to be expected in the social snob. And what man who has habitually played polo and stuck pigs can help being a social snob? A British officer who was not a snob would be a crank. Absence of snobbery even would render his fighting value very doubtful, and cause anxiety as to whether his gaming debts would be met. It would attract so much dislike and suspicion that he would have to resign his commission.

German anti-Semitism is quite different. It would be impossible to run a nationalist movement in Germany without including a rather strong line of anti-Semitism. I saw that it was for National Socialism (unfortunately) an Agitationsmittel. But surely not an end in itself! Herr Thost, however, was adamant. No Jew--no Hitler. That was his dictum.

No one could have lived as a student in Germany, as I had, and be unaware of the great difference between the attitude of the average German towards the Jew and our view of the matter. In my student days--when neither I nor anybody else was interested in the "Jewish question"--except of course the Jews --I had observed just as much anti-Semitism as is to be found there to-day. The Englishman who has never visited Germany is inclined to think that Hitler invented anti-Semitism. That is not the case. Rather (for it appears that Herr Thost was right), anti-Semitism invented him.

The form German anti-Semitism took, before the War, was much more contempt than hatred, however. The Jew was regarded as an inferior, of a clownish stamp. He must not be admitted to the society of ladies (Damen!) for he was apt to get fresh. Not one, but a hundred, at once stern and coy German ladies have described to me how they "have felt they were being undressed" by the eye of a casually met Jude. This is a delicious obsession with them--though to go about undressing buxom Hausfraus with the eye, that has always sounded to me a peculiarly dismal pastime, and I have never for my part noticed a Jew amusing

himself in this way--though the moment a German woman finds herself near a Jew, she begins getting very coy, as if she felt her outer garments in danger of flying off her back.

Then what was thought to be the animal-like absorption of the Jew in the extraction of Pfennigs from his neighbours lent itself to much sly and heavy jocosity. All a Jew had to do, in the good old pre-Hitler days, was to complain that he had been overcharged by a shopkeeper or hotel-keeper, or indeed to mention money at all, to provoke nudges and winks. It was coming out!--the money-spinner was betraying his hereditary bent.

Highly irritating as this must have been for the intelligent, educated Jew, yet the disdain was too absolute for the Jew to have to complain of anything so disturbing as hatred. This is, in fact, a novelty of sorts. Hitlerian anti-Semitism is new in degree, if not in kind. It coincides with the rise to power of the small mercantile class in Germany, who were in market-place competition with the Jew--not looking down on him from the lofty vantage-ground of the officer-class.

My student-senses were sociologically unawakened. They were not exactly afflicted by what happened to this not very tactful member of society (as is the average Jewish bagman) in the way of insulting badinage. And anyway the latter seemed rather to enter into the spirit of it, much as the Scotchman does when his proverbial meanness is the subject of Sassenach pleasantries. And when I began to study Hitlerism, I thought that Hitler was only going on about the Jews as Germans always had.

But politics had reared their ugly head. Prior to 1914 the Jew was regarded as sharp at a bargain and an inveterate gambler on the stock-markets, but was not identified in the mind of the average German with politics. He went about "undressing" women, with his harem-keeping Asiatic eye; he sold you a pup, if you did not keep your wits about you; but as to regarding him as a "destroyer of the Aryan ethos," I heard nothing of that sort when I was studying painting in Germany. The master of the art-school which I attended at Munich was a Jew. There was no Kulturbolschewismus about him. He was irreproachably academic. He was respected and liked by the students, though probably they considered the fees typically extortionate.

As to the "destroyer of the Aryan ethos" line of attack in the Nazi doctrine, I

quoted in my Hitler book Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi, on the assassination of Rathenau, as follows:

"Rathenau . . . wurde in erster Linie nicht darum ermordet, weil er Verständigungspolitik trieb--sondern weil er Jude war."

From the time of the defeat of Germany the Jew took on, in German eyes, a more sinister aspect. He became, for the German, the arch-enemy of the society in which he found himself. And if he pursued a policy of understanding with the West (Verständigungspolitik) it was because he was a scheming Jew, not because he was a sensible German, who wished to put behind him the old disastrous dream of world-dominion, and live and let live, en bon Européen.

But of course, in so far as the Jew entered into political life directly, he was bound to pursue a policy of sensible accommodation with other countries, seeing that war, for its own sake, is a doctrine that has no meaning for him, and to military defeat no mystical disgrace is attached, in his eyes, as is the case with the German pure and unadulterated.

I remember that shortly after I was demobilized I met a Jewish friend of mine (a British Jew), who had very sensibly passed the War-years on a comfortable stool in the censor's office, though of military age. We talked of one thing and another, and one remark of his stuck in my mind. "Well," he sighed, with the whimsical grimace of a grown-up surveying a small boy who has returned home with a black eye and minus a couple of teeth, "you would have your good old Christian war, wouldn't you!" That is it. The Jew regards us frankly as a lot of childish lunatics. Yet if a German Jew, after 1918, advised the Germans to forget about war and attend to more important matters, he was apt to be regarded as a monster. That, it is quite obvious, was exceedingly unfair.

The Jew--I pointed out in this book which was the occasion of Herr Thost's visit--would not have to look far to find an answer to the "destroyer of the Aryan ethos" charge.

The Jew no doubt would retort [to quote from "Hitlerism and the Judenfrage," Part II, p. 88] that, coming as he generally does from Tartary, he cannot be expected to be much attracted by carol-singing, Protestant hymn-music, or the Teutonic Royal-Academicism of official painting, and that in any case he buys and sells--being a man of affairs--novelties that are good business propositions.

He might go more deeply into it than that, of course, and protest that it was not he at all, but the great "Aryan" inventors and technicians, who have been responsible for all the destructive "modernism" of the Western world. Western science is to blame, in short. He has made use of this (he could point out with some show of reason) but would of his own accord never have invented it.

I will not pursue this argument: but we will suppose that as we turn away we have heard the National Socialist demanding angrily what suspension-bridges, telephones, and elevators, in themselves, have necessarily to do with Jazz and Negro Art and (to give the Jew the last word) we can imagine that we hear him in his turn pointing out, always to some effect, that as to the latter, is it not the Negro, in the Land of Elevators, who is employed to operate same?--so the music of ex-slaves gets mixed up, not unnaturally after all, with the modernist machinery, employed to whisk cartloads of Babbitts up and down their megalopolitan steel and concrete towers. But we should immediately hear the National Socialist insisting that this New York civilization was rather Judeo-American than European-American. All the replies, and counter-replies, however, of this fierce dispute, we will allow to die away.

As to my personal contribution to the Jewish question, as it presses upon us all to-day, I must refer the reader to my recently published book, *The Jews--Are they Human?* There I expose the stupidity, much more than the inhumanity, of this demented post-theological animus, directed against a people who have many faults, like the rest of us (among which an exasperating idea that they have been especially picked out by the All-father as his favourite race is not the least, and is not rendered any more endearing by reason of the Nazi "Aryan" imitation), but who nevertheless, as a race, have acted as a leaven very often, in the more stodgy and backward of the European societies, adding the lustre of their irresponsible wit to what would otherwise have been a grim, dull business.

III BERLIN, 1930--"NUR LEGAL!"

I HAVE told you, at the beginning of the last chapter, what befell the first Hitler book ever written. Ten years have passed; thousands of books about Hitler have poured out of the printing presses of Europe and America. There is no scrap of information about him that has not been made public; there is nothing he has ever said or done, or that his parents or grandparents ever said or did, that has not been reported. As a subject Herr Hitler has been exhausted as no subject has ever been exhausted before.

All that is left to do is to reduce this mass of evidence to an ordered shape, to select, and arrange, what seems material. A synthesis is now required. This book is a first effort in that direction.

All that army of writers who have produced the great library of books mentioned above may have been men whose business it is to reflect or report opinion, not men who create opinion, or give opinion its final shape. They have been in every case either newspaper reporters, or else politicians in a small way, like Heiden, or itinerant gossip-writers, like Gunther. They have done their job, in some cases, extremely well. And they have done all there is to be done in that line.

As I have gone as far as it is possible for an Anglo-Saxon to go in the direction of sympathetic understanding of this egregious Führer--in my Hitler book No. 1--I am probably better qualified than most people to write as it were the last book about Hitler: as nearly an impartial book as can be written under the threat of bombs.

If my Hitler book No. 2 is not actually the last book to be written about him it will be one of the last, I believe. For we seem to me to be pretty near the end of the road in which books are written. Bombs will take the place of books before much more ink has flowed.

When I first offered this book to a publisher, it was the idea of that astute showman that it might be presented to the public as a phenomenon of the same order as M. André Gide's Second Thoughts on the Soviet book. "Mr Lewis succumbed to Hitler's charms"--so the blurb would have run--"just as M. Gide

succumbed to Communism. But Mr Lewis visits Germany some years later, and is bitterly disillusioned."

It would have been an attractive blurb, no doubt. But it in no way corresponds to the facts. It would be much truer to say that I also--like Gide--had succumbed to the charms of Communism (though platonically, not being such an emotional person as the distinguished Frenchman). Such books as *The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare*, or *The Art of Being Ruled*, are records of my tendency to aspire to a classless society and a world in which barbaric social values have no part. Though favouring always Proudhon rather than Marx, as a political thinker, some species of authoritarian control, it seemed to me, some "planning" from a creative centre, were imposed upon us. For of course the Führerprinzip was implicit in proletarian dictatorship (though our British Bolsheviks, of the parlour-red variety, blush at the mere idea of Lenin under a glass case--or the preposterous conditions which may one day give us a stuffed Stalin, in a barbaric mausoleum).

Then came the cold douche--to me just as it did to Gide, though it was not in Moscow I received it. The U.S.S.R. had been in existence over a decade. Here, after all, was just another revolution; not much better than a South American one, or a Mexican Putsch put across by an armed politico. Such a shake-up might better the lot of the peon (for it would be stupid to deny that, in the destruction of an ancient parasitism, Russia has released the forces of those who inherit nothing, neither name nor wealth). But was it anything but just another revolution, bigger than any other, that was all?

Human nature, it seemed, had failed Man again! Whether on account of the shortcomings of the Slav, or just the difficulty of guaranteeing incorruptible leaders, there was every prospect in Russia of a great socialist fiasco.

I am not here presuming to pass judgment upon the Stalin dispensation; I am recording my disappointment at a certain period of my life, and saying how that tended to put me out of conceit for a long time with theory, and with theorists--to throw me back upon the pis-aller of the traditional Western scene, with its routine half-measures, of which National Socialism was a spectacular specimen.

Consequently--and to bring to a close this tale of a publisher's dream of shekels which did not materialize--I was forced to tell the publisher in question that I was unable to represent myself as a Fascist André Gide. I had not become

disillusioned with Fascism, for I had never succumbed to its simple-hearted spells; Berlin was never for me what Moscow was for Gide, and in Rome the Pope was a figure who attracted me a great deal more than the Italian Dictator; I could not "find out" Hitler or Mussolini because the nationalist uplift in which they traffic has never appealed to me. In a word, boy scouts are not my cup of tea.

I had been the first to observe the birth of a bastard Communism in Central Europe, dressed up in a trim brown shirt, begotten upon a bankrupt bourgeoisie. That was all. I did not think it was beautiful. Indeed, it was fairly hideous. I saw that it was destined to give a great deal of trouble--as it looked then--mainly to the Poincarists.

But this publisher stuck to his brain-wave all the same. The best I could do for him was to agree that I had seen a certain poetical justice in the arrival upon the European scene of the Middle-class Juggernaut (the proper definition of Hitlerism). Then I am deeply versed in National Socialism, as I am in most contemporary ideologies. Therefore, being quite certain now (I told him) that National Socialism is a pernicious racket, that has got entirely out of hand, I am probably better qualified than most to write a book about it.

That was the best I could do for my prospective publisher. He was an American publisher and suddenly disappeared; Hitler had made a noise like an exploding bomb (as he so often does). The American publisher left for the States at an hour's notice! just before that event he was busy wondering whether he couldn't put me across as a Machiavelli in search of a Borgia! For it was quite useless to propose to him anything so simple as a man who had no axe to grind, but was interested in the truth about these maddening problems of Power. It was just a waste of time to talk like that to the American publisher.

But let me at this point relate the circumstances of my 1930 visit to Berlin. I took the road to the German capital for a severely practical reason--namely to arrange for the publication of a book in the German language. After a month, nothing had been settled. Meanwhile I had eaten up much time and money. Pre-Hitler Berlin was a sink of iniquity--the fingers of any moderately fussy patriot must have itched to spring-clean it. Its male prostitutes alone, with their india-rubber breasts and padded hips--the fairy hostesses of Eldorado--were a standing invitation to the Puritan to organize a "March on Berlin."

But I will quote the passage in my 1931 book where I report my experiences as an "Innocent Abroad." Here is the relevant text:

I must now for a moment take up the functions of a guide and quickly conduct the Anglo-Saxon reader around a characteristic Nachtlokal.

In the "Eldorado" of the Motzstrasse, first of all, everything is absolutely as it should be in the best of all possible Hollywood cabarets. There is the true appropriate glitter and nigger-hubbub--supersex and pink champagne. All that is quite regular: all is *comme il faut* as well. No sightseer entering "Eldorado," I imagine, would get the frisson of the exotic and the peculiar. Nothing of the sort. Quite the reverse, for all at first sight is depressingly normal. The sightseer might be disappointed even--he might certainly feel that he had been misled into visiting a respectable resort, where nothing naughtier than a simple-hearted Victorian strumpet was to be found. . . .

But the elegant and usually eye-glassed young women will receive him, with an expensive politeness, and he will buy one of these a drink, and thus become at home. Still, he will have to be a sightseer of some penetration not to think that his sightseeing eyes may not this time be destined to gloat upon what he had promised them they should find there. Then these bland Junos-gone-wrong, bare-shouldered and braceleted (as statuesque as feminine show-girl gardees), after a drink or two, will whisper to the outlandish sightseer that they are men. Oh dear--so after all the sightseeing eyes are going to be satisfied! And they will goggle at the slightly smiling bland Edwardian "tart" at their side--still disposed to regard this as a hoax after all, for it is too like, it is too true to nature by far.

But his companion will invite the sceptical tourist to pass his disbelieving paw beneath her chin. She will catch hold of it without coyness, and drag it under this massively fashioned feature. An doubt is then at an end. There, sure enough, the fingers of the sightseer will encounter a bed of harsh unshaven bristles as stiff as those of a toothbrush.

For six years this very well behaved and scented man has lived as a woman, the tourist will be told (it is always, for some reason, "six years"). But all these *trompe l'œil*, spurious ladies are so perfectly normal in their manner and the repose with which they prosecute their paradox--they are such perfect imitations--of rather dull, phlegmatic, Swedish, English, or German tarts (of a somewhat out-moded description)--that still the sceptical sightseer will blink, perhaps.

What if after all he is being deceived?

But this will not escape the observant person with whom he is sitting--indeed she has been expecting it. After a short interval it will provoke the gently smiling, roguish Juno at his side to carry her hands down within the low-cut evening frock, upon the discreet elevation of her breasts: and then her hands will reappear, each holding a wire cup, with cloth stretched over it. Upon this a red rosette is painted, to represent the nipple. On the other hand, the sightseer will later be importuned to give her hair a pull, to convince himself that it is real--a womanly attribute, to set off the male token of the chin-stubble. . . .--Hitler (Chatto & Windus).

In 1930 the German capital was the most diverting place in Europe for the sightseer, though, as you will have gathered from the above passage, the sightseer must not be morally squeamish. To-day it is strangely shrunken, and given over to political edification. For the Berliner, life has become like a never-ending film of *The Life of Adolf Hitler*.

In those bad old pre-Hitler days the future Führer played a quite different role. He was part of the fun. I sped from one *Nachtlokal* to another; but at every turn, as I moved about the dark and melodramatic streets, I was reminded of the fact that a political disturbance of the first magnitude was in progress, which rivalled, for sheer entertainment, anything the more orthodox "night-life" could show.

There is something catacomb-like about Berlin at night. In the big, ruined, residential quarters, the streets are imposing chasms--it is not the small decayed gentility of London's unfashionable districts; it is an overweening imperialism that has left its great rococo faces of beetling housefronts--a city of effete façades. The post-Bismarckian German middle class built itself in, with bleak and towering dwellings. That same middle class staked all upon a great war and lost.

Become a penniless rabble by 1930, they stalked and rushed at night in armed bands, in these cavernous, deserted thoroughfares, beneath the icy Prussian moon, spoiling for a fight. And the Marxist bands prowled there as well, automatic clutched in the pocket, contending with this dispossessed bourgeoisie for "the mastery of the street." Howls of defiance, revolver shots, the rush of booted and capped proletarians--of the new proletariat and of the old proletariat--were the order of the day. I often wondered at the great shambles of the Russian

Revolution. But if you go in for class-war, you must blot out, it is but too evident, the class you supersede. Otherwise you leave a destitute host, to plot a class-war of revenge, and form themselves overnight into a more formidable proletariat. This especially must be the case in such countries as Germany, France, or England, with their highly organized middle class. In England you would have to wipe out three-quarters of the nation in an anti-bourgeois revolution.

Issuing after midnight from, say, the Kakadu, and returning to a hotel near Unter den Linden, signs of the politics that underlay this glittering champagne-circus of easy money were never wanting, if it was only a lorry full of armed police rushing headlong to some centre of disturbance.

I was the witness of incessant riots and street-rows--the latter apt to occur at any hour of the day or night, between these furious partisans. I purchased the party literature of the new political religion. Its crude tracts, its violently polemical press (Der Angriff was already in existence), inculcated a sort of bourgeois-bolshevism. It was political rococo.

Capitalism was about to be bumped off by its destitute relations--or by its still respectful uniformed chauffeur! (Nur legal! as the Nazis sardonically reiterated, referring to the unimpeachable legal correctness with which their revolution was to be compassed.) I wanted to see that, so I stopped around.

I was, above all, glad the stupid French Chauvinists were about to have their noses rubbed in their handiwork. And the views on finance of Herr Feder were not without a certain appeal--they reminded me of our Major Douglas, who is the economic equivalent of Paul Klee in painting. A charming character. The idea of a "credit crank" being let loose in the second greatest industrial country in the world recommended itself to me. That would brighten things up! I thought Europe had asked for that, too.

But there was, somewhere in the background, a problem of conscience. Truer to type, I venture to think, than many of my Anglo-Saxon contemporaries, the spectacle of an utterly broken and defenceless Germany provoked my sympathy, National Socialism apart. The "Versailles shackles," designed to immobilize the stricken German giant, seemed unnecessarily galling and oppressive. To-day that is all over. Germany is blusterously imperial once more; nothing it seems should keep Hitler from the Black Sea; and what German, educated in the Kaiser-

tradition, could possibly resist the Baltic-to-Baghdad dream, once he had reached the Black Sea? That, however, would spell the downfall of England. England would become a small minor power. The English people would never be heard of again upon the world stage. (This sombre picture haunts me. I shall return to it again.) Would this matter a great deal? I don't know. I am enough of a John Bull to find it difficult to say absolutely No. And the opposite of "Kultur Bolschevismus" everywhere is an extremely depressing thought. For it to be a criminal offence to have a Blake drawing on one's wall (for William Blake was a congenital Bolshevist, that is plain enough) would be unpleasant. Finnegans Wake I am quite sure I shall never read. But I should probably find myself doing so-- with all the needless labour that would entail--if it were Auf's strengste verboten.

In 1930, finally, the German armed might was nonexistent. Belgium or Switzerland was the military superior of the Reich. Who could have foreseen the lightning recovery of that unpleasantly resilient country?

As regards the Versailles Treaty, I still (in common, today, with most people) regard it as a very bad treaty. This conviction is at present heavily qualified by the reflection that had Germany been victorious in war, an equally unlovely Diktat would have been imposed upon Great Britain (of which Brest-Litovsk can give us a fair idea). Furthermore, Germany would not have sat idly by while England, clause by clause, tore it to shreds. There would have been no Neville Chamberlain to acquiesce, a little reproachfully, in the process. As to asking Germany to give back colonies secured as a result of military victory, the only response would have been derisive Prussian guffaws.

We know a few things now which were not so evident at the time of which I am speaking. Yet even to-day the Versailles Treaty is not a popular document: this can best be proved by a couple of quotations.

People holding such different views as G. E. R. Gedye, and C. E. M. Joad--in such different books as (1) *Fallen Bastions* and (2) *Why War?*, the first violently anti-Chamberlain, the second blindly pro-Munich--write as follows on the subject of the Treaty of Versailles:

The victorious powers in the recent War, Britain, France, and Italy, had treated Austria ruthlessly enough, but they did not want to see her utterly destroyed. Germany had indeed been humbled to the dust, disarmed, starved, robbed of

territories, frontier provinces placed under the occupation of foreign armies, her industry and commerce enslaved to produce fantastic sums as "reparations" to the Entente which should cripple her for centuries. Yet there remained a fear of a German come-back--after many generations, of course--and a resumption of German power-politics.--Fallen Bastions (Gollancz), p. 11.

Next I will quote from Mr C. E. M. Joad:

The clearest illustration of the impossibility of setting bounds to the evils generated by war is once again afforded by the case of Germany. . . . At the end of the War . . . Germany was made to subscribe to a grossly unfair clause saddling her with the whole responsibility for the War; her colonies were taken away from her, and outlying parts of the Fatherland shorn off: a wedge of alien territory was driven through her eastern provinces by the Polish Corridor; her representatives were subjected to continuous humiliation at Geneva. At long last, and with infinite reluctance, she was admitted into the League. Meanwhile the allies, having starved her people by a blockade protracted without mercy and beyond reason for months after the signing of the Armistice, had failed to fulfil their moral promise to disarm. They had extracted grossly extortionate sums by way of reparations, and had continued to occupy the Rhineland with troops for twelve years after the War was over. As if this were not enough, the Ruhr was occupied by the French till 1923, and black troops were billeted on German households. In 1924 the mark depreciated so catastrophically that middle-class savings were utterly destroyed (p. 90).

Or again (p. 84):

For six months after the Armistice we continued to starve the Germans by our blockade, with consequences to the German children whose results may be seen twenty years after . . . we exacted by way of indemnity reparations which were so preposterous in amount that not only were they never paid, but when we had recovered from the blinding effects of anger and lust for revenge, we never even expected that they would be paid. In a word, and the word shall be Sir Eric Geddes's: "we squeezed Germany until the pips squeaked." Short of making a real Carthaginian peace, short, that is to say, of obliterating the towns of Germany as Carthage was obliterated, of ploughing up the land and sowing it with salt, of deliberately starving the Hun babies--this last suggestion was in fact seriously and widely made by large numbers of excited Englishmen at the close of the last war--it is difficult to see what further steps we could have taken to

weaken and to humiliate our late enemy. --Why War? (Penguin Special).

I am far from being such a good-hearted man as Mr Joad. But when I first learned what had happened I was sorry for the Germans. And these facts--enumerated above by Mr Gedye and Mr Joad--first became known to me through my perusal of National Socialist party literature in 1930. I said to myself that to be "humbled to the dust," "starved," "robbed," and "enslaved" cannot be pleasant. And I saw the point of Hitler--as that gentleman must appear to a humbled, starved, robber, and enslaved German. If now I see the point of him as he must appear to an exasperated world, waiting upon the violent whims of a would-be conqueror, that is because circumstances alter cases, as even they alter people.

IV THE PROPER APPROACH TO NATIONAL SOCIALISM

NATIONAL Socialism will die a violent death: everything points to that solution. I give it a few years at the outside. It may die in battle: it may blow its brains out: it may burst: it may merge insensibly into something else. But it will no longer be there in, let us say, six years' time. I should be sorry to assert that all those who execrate it are saints, or even honest men. But from whatever angle you observe it, it is not an attractive phenomenon. Hardly an intelligent man will be found who will regret it.

Mungo Park was the first white traveller to go to the Niger when the Niger was "Darkest Africa." And he reports a highly civilized system of warfare which he observed in those parts. He relates how the local kinglets would fall out, would marshal their hosts, and march against each other. When the hosts came face to face, they would halt. Envoys would step briskly out, salute, and proceed to count the opposing armies. The larger army was then adjudged to be the victor, and the smaller submitted to force majeure.

Something of this kind has been happening in Europe of late. The bloodless defeat of Czechoslovakia was a case in point. Memel was another example. But the respective ratios of strength are rapidly changing. When they have altered enough, to the disadvantage of Germany, will the same system obtain, only operating in the reverse direction? Not quite, it is to be feared. Memel will not be reoccupied by Lithuania. The Czechoslovak State will not be reconstituted. But it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Mussolini will get cold feet and rat on Hitler. And it is not to be ruled out altogether that the German people might have refused to enter upon a merely suicidal war. Under certain circumstances, Herr Hitler might oblige, by doing what he has so often threatened to do--namely, blow his brains out.

When German National Socialism expires, something equally violent will come in its place--these are a violent people; but something more in harmony with the present norm of the other nations. It has been a rebellion against that norm. But Germany is a stupid rebel; and to further its rebellion it has adopted the least desirable features of the armoury of its antagonists.

In the course of this book I shall give such definition as I can to this abortive reaction. What is all this turmoil about? In spite of the great number of books that have appeared about National Socialism, people still desire an answer to that question. I am bound to say that, in my view, it is about nothing of great importance. This is, I know, depressing. But I believe it to be a fact.

National Socialism has been compared to the Reformation; Hitler has been compared to Cromwell, Attila, Mohammed, and Napoleon Bonaparte. This is not only journalistic exaggeration. It is a case of the journalist being taken in by his own banner headlines and caught on his own publicity fly-paper.

Dr Joseph Goebbels is, as I have already remarked, the truest mirror of National Socialism, if you are looking for one: not Hitler--he is a distorting mirror.

The image of Nazism provided by Goebbels is, of all the images supplied to us, the most brutal, but also the most true. . . . Goebbels is the high priest of Hitlerian propaganda. The education of the German people requires a doctrine at once simple, ardent, and massive; it demands ideas to which millions of brains can respond simultaneously.

This observation seems to me very just. Hitlerism is a simple affair, and it can only be understood in simple terms. If you complicate it, you lose its meaning.

Dr Joseph Goebbels gets along with a minimum of theory. For him, what the Nazis have done was what had to be done. They were, and remain, creatures of circumstance. They reacted against events, in the way that their intelligence prompted. They are their milieu, nothing more. It just happened that they were better men (in Goebbels's view) than those who did not react: they were on the spot--he, Hitler, Goering, Frick, Hess, and the rest. They acted. They were endowed with a furious and vindictive will--to purge, stop the rot, build (hurriedly) anew. Someone just had to do something, no matter very much how or even what. There was not much time to think. If you are the right sort of man, why think anyway? A good man doesn't think. So let us dispense with a lot of unnecessary theoretical cackle! That seems to sum up the attitude of Dr Goebbels. It at least has the merit of extreme simplicity.

Anybody seeking to understand National Socialism will do well to follow Dr Joseph Goebbels's example, and not bother himself, in the first instance, with anything very complex. Such notions as that of the *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden*

requires a little more attention, certainly. But it all boils down to Blut. And jingoism is the same all the world over. Any jingo, anywhere, can understand Hitler, seeing that he is a Jingo-God.

As to the "Nordic" business, that is a childish retort to the Jews only, and their "Chosen People" complex. On the principle of fire driving out fire, a lot of Nazi doctrine is merely a turning of the tables upon the Enemy.

How serious the Nazis are about their Nordic nonsense it is difficult to say, but one gets the impression that most of them regard it as a joke. They say: "You English pay a great deal more attention to it than we do." And they laugh sheepishly. (For the more intelligent feel a little uncomfortable in their role of Nordic blonds, since they are as often as not swarthy Alpines, or dusky Slavs.)

There is something laughably simple in this "revolution." The men of the Nazi social epic were not preceded by anything so elaborate as "les philosophes," the French physiocrats. And since they came into power they have not had much time to think; although, as "men of action," they spurn thought, insisting that the doctrines to which they subscribe are self-evident truths, and to discuss them is sedition, or blasphemy.

It is this absence of theory, or of any well-considered plan, philosophically founded, which makes National Socialism rather difficult to describe. You may describe the actions of the National Socialists, and draw your own conclusions from them. But as all action is preceded by something or other (if you see a man punch another on the nose, that action probably has a history), I agree that there is more behind the National Socialist revolution than meets the eye. But not very much--or not as much as you would expect. That is my point.

I shall perhaps be accused of making all this too simple: I am prepared for that charge. And of course there is this: that in order to be able to "place" this political phenomenon, and to judge it at its proper worth, you must know something about the Romantic movement in Germany; the political beliefs of Hegel; the causes of Prussian Imperialism; the Reformation; and beyond that, the social structure of the Germanic tribes, the heroes of Tacitus.

Before I conclude this book I shall explore, very perfunctorily, a few of these more obvious backgrounds of what we see taking place under our eyes. It is not my fault if this movement is--in spite of what may be its fearful consequences

for all of us--very much a surface-matter and of not more intellectual consequence than a high-sounding street row, or a dispute between two charwomen, one of whom professes to believe she is descended from Charlemagne.

PART II: HITLER

I HERR HITLER'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

HERR Hitler himself must now be my theme. The Führer must be taken to pieces. This engine for producing mass-emotion is very interesting indeed. And in nothing is it so interesting as in what it offers to the eye. For this is, after all, a talking-box to be seen as well as to be heard. The cut of a soap-boxer's coat, or the colour of his hair, is as important as the timbre of his voice.

There are warlike persons who, perhaps with the intuition of the quarrelsome in recognizing another of their kind, spotted Hitler at once as a potential Tamerlane. There are some people, too, who go about looking for Tamerlanes. But heavens! what a flair a man must have to detect Tamerlane beneath that platitudinous exterior--that plebeian protégé of the junker Papen, with the humble cut of whose German sports-jacket, and with whose disarming toothbrush moustache, we are all now so familiar. Still, I confess that in one respect I was badly taken in, in 1930. What more than anything else caused my judgment to trip was that unusual trinity of celibacy, teetotalism, and anti-nicotine.

I was cowed at the thought of such superiority to alcohol, such a contempt for tobacco, such sublime indifference to the sex-urge. Yet that there was something sinister about this pointed abstinence was elementary. I should at once have been on my guard at the spectacle of more than two major inhumanities.

As it was, I allowed my suspicions to be lulled. This could not be a dangerous man--he was a crude puppet; and when he had served his turn he would be knocked on the head and popped back into his box, by his tough and wily junker masters--as came very near happening in June 1934.

I gazed at Herr Hitler with complete equanimity. No one had anything to fear from so commonplace an agitator: who would probably do his stuff; clean up a social mess beyond the Rhine; put the French jingoes and armament crooks in their places, and save Europe from war--not bring back that boring phantom, which is what has happened.

The argument from his abstinence was unsound. But what two things are more inseparable than alcohol and war? My experience as a soldier had established

that fact firmly in my mind. And then there was no meat either. Somehow milk and watercress do not seem to rhyme with blood and iron.

Every fool knows, however, that the non-smoker and non-drinker is the most dangerous of all amorists. Here was a man who was a strict abstainer from women too. It was really a clear case of something very unpleasant indeed. But there was that anchoritic shack in the Bavarian Alps. I pictured this harmless little patriot sitting in his log-cabin and concocting his simple-hearted speeches. And then one day I saw a photograph of a gigantic spa, containing (so I read with dismay) forty bedrooms: a vegetarian spa, it is true, but a different place from the humble shack of Nazi propaganda.

Last of all, I heard of the traffic in interviews: that an audience with Herr Hitler costs three thousand pounds for five minutes. Herr Hitler had become an industry. And as to the Nazi bonze, strutting about in the neighbourhood of the shrine, he is not an attractive type.

When three years ago I informed an English admirer of Herr Hitler that I was going to Germany he wrote me to say that it had been arranged that I should see the Führer. That, however, I had no desire to do, and I told him so. I passed through Germany en touriste, as I have always done, except for a few contacts with literary people and casually met officials. I have never seen Herr Hitler except in the distance, but the masses of photographs that accompany the propagation of this cult inform one, with a thoroughness that leaves nothing to the imagination, as to his personal appearance. He has been taken from every conceivable angle, and dished up in every possible mood, from playful buffoonery to savage admonition. And a more prosaic person it would be difficult to find.

Of all the accounts I have read of Hitler I consider that a woman's is the most useful. It is to be found in my friend Martha Dodd's book. I have already mentioned her in connection with Hanfstängl; she was the daughter of the United States ambassador in Berlin. She knows Nazi Germany "like her pocket," and has an excellent eye in her head. The following is her description of the Führer:

We went to the Kaiserhof, and met the young Polish singer, Jan Kiepura. . . . Hitler came in with several men. . . . He sat unostentatiously at the table next to us. . . . Putzi [Hanfstängl] left me for a moment, leaned over the Leader's ear, and returned in a great state of nervous agitation. He had consented to be

introduced to me. I went over and remained standing as he stood up and took my hand. He kissed it very politely, and murmured a few words. . . . I went back to the adjoining table with Putzi and stayed for some time . . . receiving curious, embarrassed stares from time to time from the Leader.

This first glance left me with a picture of a weak, soft face, with pouches under the eyes, full lips, and very little bony facial structure. The moustache didn't seem as ridiculous as it appeared in pictures. . . . As has often been said, Hitler's eyes were startling and unforgettable--they seemed pale blue in colour, were intense, unwavering, hypnotic. Certainly his eyes were his only distinctive feature. . . . This particular afternoon he was excessively gentle and modest in his manner. Unobtrusive, communicative, informal, he had a certain quiet charm, almost a tenderness of speech and glance. He talked soberly to Kiepura, and seemed very interested and absorbed in meeting both of us. The curious embarrassment he showed in meeting me, his somewhat apologetic, nervous manner, my father tells me--and other diplomats as well--are always present when he meets the diplomatic corps en masse. This self-consciousness has created in him a shyness and distaste for meeting people above him in station or wealth. As time went on, Hitler's face and bearing changed noticeably--he began to look and walk more and more like Mussolini. But this peculiar shy strain of character has to this day remained.--My Years in Germany (Gollancz).

Not very like Tamerlane, is it? There may really be some excuse for not detecting at once the calamitous vanity and thirst for power concealed beneath so much modesty and mildness--such exemplary commonplace. I was not the only person who was deceived. The Junkers who put Hitler where he is obviously held much the same view that I did of this deceptive person. To-day I have a higher, and not a lower, opinion of Herr Hitler than formerly, though I regret that in my rather contemptuous tolerance of him I overlooked the danger latent in so much harmlessness.

Hitler is not in the same category, of course, as the curled and beautifully dressed Borgian dandies of the Renaissance, about whom Machiavelli instructs us. But he has a feminine strain. He has the "shyness" and the "gentleness" (cf. Miss Dodd's account above), if he has not the Borgian sleekness and seductive grace.

The young Baglionis, Vitellis, and Orsinis grouped round Signorellis preaching Antichrist at Orvieto are the veriest assemblage of harmless dandies, pretty and insipid; we can scarcely believe that these mild and beardless striplings, like

girls of sixteen, are the terrible Umbrian brigands, condottieri --Gianpaolos Simonettis, Vitallezzis and Astorres.

I quote from Euphorion.

Hitler, when he became Reichskanzler, was a stocky, middle-aged ex-soldier, uncouthly South German, and so it might seem far-fetched to compare him with "colourful" robber-princes of Machiavelli's Italy. Yet these mild externals, in the case of Herr Hitler, are the stumbling-block, just as they were for the lady quoted in the last paragraph. Such "harmless dandies" ferocious political bravoes! Impossible!

But Adolf was far more deceptive even than that. Great elegance is always vaguely suspect in the Anglo-Saxon eye. Whereas the homeliness which the personality of Herr Hitler exudes is a very different matter. Why, in his way, Hitler is as disarming as Mr Chamberlain.

In this age of "Unknown Soldiers," or of "cosy," commonplace, Mr Everyman-statesmen, it is with the Stanley Baldwins we should be on our guard, rather than with the "brilliant" and spectacular Churchills. The latter are innocuous in comparison. Most of the really gigantic harm (of the Ottawa Agreement type) is done by the quiet and disarmingly "stupid" person. And it is done quietly at a conference to which the public pays no attention at all. With these dangerous (given-the-opportunity-catastrophic) nobodies Herr Hitler is to be classed. A "peculiar shy strain" is still his stock-in-trade-- even in these days of unchallengeable power, when he has become afflicted with a "fatal Napoleonic strut."

All the same, and making full allowance for the snags to be met with in these dangerous shallows of democratic technique-- where the insipidity of the protective colouring becomes more and more pathetic--I do not believe (for reasons that I will later on develop) that Herr Hitler will be such a handful as Napoleon. I still cannot think of Herr Hitler as anything more than two-dimensional. This is not an iron Chancellor. He is a softer variety of Chancellor than that. I no longer regard him as papier mâché, that is all.

Nietzsche, who was a philologist de carrière, believed that the word Deutsche was to be traced to the same root as the verb täuschen (to deceive). The Germans, he said, were "the people who deceived": a deceptive people. This

etymology rather pleased the author of Zarathustra: he considered it appropriate; for those innocent eyes of Teutonic blue did hide, he believed, a quite respectable amount of guile.

But before going any further into the probable psychology of this much-discussed person, I must revert for a moment to the statement with which I began. I was a soldier in the last War, and as such I am far more pacific than most confirmed civilians. Also, of course, it is natural for me to believe that others who have been soldiers, or Frontkämpfers, as it is sententiously called by the Germans, are apt to be pacific too.

The Germans seem particularly prone, however, to mass-violence. That they are unteachable everything goes to show: for if the last war did not open their eyes nothing will. One often has heard it asserted that the German people are not to blame, only Herr Hitler. But I should say that they had chosen their leaders far more truly than we have chosen ours, and are more responsible for them; for their vices as well as for their virtues. Take for instance our Führer. I have inherited Mr Chamberlain, I feel: whereas I should have had some hand in the creation of Herr Hitler, if he were my Führer.

II HITLER AS A FAIRY-TALE

IN the last chapter I have considered Herr Hitler's personality, with reference especially to his lack of all distinction, or indeed distinctness. Physically, he is an insignificant blur. My view is that he is like that all through, as regards texture; but that a dynamo--or if you prefer a demon--has got inside him somehow. A mechanical activity of unusual drive has to be reckoned with; but that does not affect the quality of the mind that is driven.

In order to analyse the secret of the success of the man who is styled Reichskanzler, but who is in fact the German Emperor, the background must be painted in at the same time as the man. And the background is as much metaphysical as physical. For such an undertaking I shall require a good many pages of this text.

That so much should depend upon the personality of one man is exceedingly odd, to start with--in an age when the "personal equation" is at a discount. But that such is the case is generally conceded. Germany is now National Socialist: and National Socialism is Herr Hitler. The National Socialist régime could not survive him, and would not have come into being without him.

Neither Strasser, nor Goering, nor Goebbels, nor Hess, could have created the Dritte Reich, nor could any other National Socialist leader preserve it intact for a single week if Hitler were not there. It has come together as if by magic; and were Hitler withdrawn from it, it would fall to pieces as if by magic, too.

This statement seems to suggest, as a corollary, that Herr Hitler is a magician. But, in fact, it is much more in a sort of necessary grouping of personalities and of events, than in the genius of any individual, that this "magic" is to be sought. The genius of Herr Hitler consists in being the sort of man he is, rather than in any rare and compelling qualities possessed by him as an individual.

National Socialism has been called a religion. Let us accept that description. At bottom it is Hitler-worship; and its weaknesses are naturally to be sought in the limitations of its Leader, as well as in the limitations of that species of religion.

That Communism had become a racket seemed plain enough to some of us by 1930--though it started from a great principle of social justice, and was planned as a great feat of social engineering. To-day a majority probably of "the intelligent" agree that Russia is a very imperfectly Socialist state--though the feud of the Stalinites and the Trotskyists makes of this a fearfully controversial statement. But in 1930 the Anglo-Saxon political smart-alecs had just caught up with this big idea. Typically--upon the same principle that a great poet or artist generally becomes known to the world at large only after he has ceased to be a live intelligence, or is in his coffin-- communism was discovered after it had ceased to be communism.

Now Hitler's function was to debunk another racket; not to start one of his own, as has of course occurred. He is not a figure to be taken seriously, upon any plane except the opportunist, or as standing for anything more than the fustian accessories of patriotic demagoguery. He is a stay-put thinker: his merits are merely conservative. He can be guaranteed not to move about a lot, though his displacements, although short, are sharp, and effected with great violence. Under certain circumstances that is praiseworthy--at times when a promising idea has so badly miscarried.

With a big palpitating heart upon his homespun sleeve: with a handful of claptrap, and with a perfectly good case for the revision of a stupid treaty, he weighed in ten years ago, and "saved" what was left of the old and tried, in the midst of a workers' revolution that had gone wrong. For Herr Hitler is a product of German Communism.

At his best he is a counter-something. Himself he is nothing but a tiresome Nationalist (though his movement has turned out to be Marxian nationalism); and a nation is only one of the many facets of human society. It has no universal meaning, only a geographical one. As a religion nationalism makes nonsense. You might worship a parish, or have a cult for the house in which you were born. But that is the sort of religion a dog has: namely, for his master's backyard, or for the shoes in which his master waddles about.

Nationalism in its place and time is not to be despised: it might be necessary for us to-morrow to go Nationalist. We might applaud a British jingo-Führer, as a counter-Hitler. But when he had done his stuff we should have had enough of him. The English are not cut out to be Nationalist in that sense, and they do not suffer Führers gladly.

A be-all and end-all the nation cannot be--even in Germany. And it was only as a part of the mysticism of kingdom--or Kaiserdom--and of a thousand years of Christianity, that nationalism functioned with the pre-War German.

I am the last person to deny to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, or to blood the things that are blood's. Before now I have been a not ineffectual advocate, defending the White European, submerged as he has been in a "dark" flood of African barbarity.

That capitulation to the jungle I invited my contemporaries to resist. They did not resist (they like capitulating, that is the fact of the matter). But that was not my fault.

Here, however, is surely another jungle--called Das Neue Deutschland. By it we are about to be submerged. But this time it is a technically "civilized" jungle, which is, of course, the worst sort of jungle. Herr Hitler has suppressed the tomtoms of "hot" music. But what great civilization is he putting there in its place? An inferior marching-song, a schoolboy's snobbish philosophy, of "play up, you chaps!"--a lot of drably pretentious arty architecture. That is his contribution, it would seem.

Well, long ago those who regarded him as a handy antidote to a corrupt and savage version of the Socialist dream of the West have had enough of Hitler. Even Mr Shaw says that Hitler has "let him down." Hitler as a political corrective, and Hitler as Augustus, are two different things. As the latter he is neither an attractive nor an impressive spectacle: not attractive because as artist he is mediocre, as an intelligence a mere obstreperous politician, neither more nor less ignorant than most politicians: not impressive, because this power of his, even, has a synthetic look.

The Dritte Reich has the appearance of a Hollywood "set." Or it is a Reinhardt Reich, a thing of a few brief noisy years, with a blackout--a big stupid war--at the end of it. Not something solid and difficult to banish from the world, like the Prussia of Frederick the Great, but a mushroom affair, which I am certain in ten years from now will be a memory only--classed probably as "an episode in the history of the Jews."

As to Hitler himself, he seems to me no "enigma," as is so often asserted. The only thing that is enigmatic about him as far as I can see is (1) how the various

explosive materials concentrated in him--by reason of his high office, by reason of his highly emotional nature--will blow up; and (2) when.

Of course Hitler has had great luck--if it can be regarded as lucky to occupy such an uneasy eminence; and, what is more (not being blessed with the cynical detachment of his fellow-tyrant at Rome), suffering the tortures of the damned, as we are given to understand by his associates.

But Hitler possesses certain picturesque features which distinguish him from other revolutionary politicians. It is these features which have led him to be called the "Joan of Arc of Germany." Hitler hears voices. He is fey. This most outwardly commonplace of men is a paradox to that extent, in that he is "psychic," and is reported to be in supernatural communion with the powers of the earth and air.

Hitler is a politician with a Muse--just as if he were a poet. And his Muse is Germania. If he were a poet he would be one of the most boring of poets.

Hitler is not quite real, that is probably the main thing to be remembered about him. This little brown-coated man, Herr Adolf Hitler, is a fairy-tale. This is not a real man that we read about in the newspapers, or in *The House that Hitler Built*. Even his name is like a name on a nursery rhyme--Hitler; it is somehow painted and wooden. His power belongs to the realm of folk-lore and fable. Embalmed in the breast of the peasant are the beliefs of the poets and saints. Hitler is a peasant. He is a peasant with a "soul"; the embodiment of "Ye Olde Germanie," as archaic as a Christmas card--as one of those Christmas cards that he once made a living by painting.

If you sit in the beer-cellar of the Rathaus in a German town, encased in dark oak panelling, stiff with all the archaic accessories of such places, the Gothic characters of its advertisements cutting you off from the Latin West, you are taken back into the spacious countryside of Albrecht Dürer. The battlements of buff-green cities; the rafted farms with their precipitous roofs; the village musicians going up to an untidy bluff from which they can look down into the village street, to sweeten the evening air with the strumming of their rustic instruments; the twentieth century is left behind, you are back amongst the *Zeitgenossen* of Dürer or of Altdorfer.

Mr Christopher Isherwood has a very relevant passage in his book *Good-bye to Berlin* (Hogarth Press), where he is describing his Gothic lodging in a typical Berlin apartment-house of to-day:

The extraordinary smell in this room when the stove is lighted and the window shut; not altogether unpleasant, a mixture of incense and stale buns. The tall tiled stove, gorgeously coloured, like an altar. The washstand like a Gothic shrine. The cupboard also is Gothic, with carved cathedral windows; Bismarck faces the King of Prussia in stained glass. My best chair would do for a bishop's throne. In the corner, three sham medieval halberds . . . are fastened together to form a hatstand. Frl. Schroeder unscrews the heads of the halberds and polishes them from time to time. They are heavy and sharp enough to kill.

The Grimm atmosphere--if I may allow myself this pun--of the German capital even worked so effectively upon the fancy of this brilliant but matter-of-fact young Oxford man, that we find him describing it in archaic terms of the peasant-imagination. "But the real heart of Berlin is a small, damp, black wood--the Tiergarten." And the peasant-boys who are driven in there from the plains in the winter-time are deceived by its false electrical glare in the night sky. "Its warmth is an illusion, a mirage of the winter desert. It will not receive these boys. It has nothing to give. The cold drives them out of its streets, into the wood which is its cruel heart." So they huddle under the black trees of the Tiergarten, like characters in a sinister fairy-tale.

If the Past is everywhere in the great cities--wished there as a factor in dreams of very modern dominion, in oppressive fake-antique--it is more omnipresent in the provinces. In Berlin it was consciously retained, in Weinstube or Biersalon, until the Jews built the Kurfürstendamm--a typically Jewish misdemeanour, in the eyes of Hitler, the Luytchens-manqué of Germany. Even the jokes the German makes are Gothic jokes, sly, hearty, and animal, assimilable by the gargantuan mind of the cowherd as much as by the Chef de Protocol.

When you enter a souk at Fez you walk headlong into the Past. Nothing has changed: quite authentically you are invading another dimension. In Germany it is quite different from that; you are never far from factories. This is not really the world of Luther or Aلدorfer. But like a mirage, artificially induced, there, nevertheless, blended with the new, is everywhere the Mittelaltertum. The Gothic past still lives: it is not only tolerated sentimentally, but it is energetically preserved, upon equal terms with the Present.

In the midst of all this fustian, and half-fustian, Hitler is the real thing--or to be more precise, almost the real thing. Hitler did not "put the clock back," as Mr Edgar Mowrer said he did. For him it had stood still: it had never moved, or scarcely at all. He is an emanation of the old many-schlossed, spiky, and bosky landscapes, the feudal valleys of the Oesterreich. Passionately he has desired to remain a part of that old dream. In the midst of the petrol-age that was very irrational. Hitler is nothing if not irrational.

In Faust we meet with "the spirit which wills the evil and does the good." There is, throughout life, its counterpart: namely the spirit which wills the good and does the evil. Whether or not Hitler wills the good according to the humanitarian canon--and he has given way to vindictive passions which nowhere could be regarded as very edifying--certainly he is of the "good-man," or bonhomme, type, the standard peasant. He is what Nietzsche described as an "agriculturist of the spirit."

Evil spirits, as Nietzsche points out ("evil" according to the agriculturist morality) have been those who awakened the spirit of contradiction--the delight in the new, in the adventurous and untried. To the agriculturist mind all that is anathema--to the peasant mind.

The new [to quote from Nietzsche] is under all circumstances the evil, as that which wants . . . to uproot the old boundary-stones, and undermine the old pieties. Only the Old is the Good! The good . . . go to the roots of the old thoughts and bear fruit with them--the agriculturists of the spirit.

Good, in the sense of unsubversive, the enemy of the New, Herr Hitler is. As well as in social origin, likewise in mind and in the quality of his morality, he is the agriculturist. The Soil (about which you hear so much in Nazi tracts), just as it is--the men who live upon it, just as they are--constitutes the good. This transcends all more universal moralities. It becomes a mystical absolute, in this emotional philosophy.

As a sort of consequence of this, other people's soil, the earth of alien peoples, is not exactly evil, but yet not good, in the way that German soil is. It is not quite "the gaud earth." For there cannot be two goodnesses, or two measures of goodness. To be foreign, to the Hellene, was to be "barbarian." To be foreign to Herr Hitler is to be a barbarian, too. But it takes with it a further handicap. What is foreign is wanting in goodness (since Herr Hitler is not an artist, like the

Greek, but a moralist instead). And it is an easy step from that (especially if the foreigner displays a lack of appreciation of the German goodness) to being downright bad.

This man in his agony of peasant nostalgia would make use of the machinery of the Machine Age to defend this sacrosanct past from our machines. He would make himself proficient in the arts of the civilization he hates, so as to have weapons terrible enough to defend his Heimat, which is threatened by that civilization.

That is the situation. In France, when somebody forecloses and gendarmes have come to arrest a defaulting farmer, one has often heard of the enraged peasant barricading himself in his house, with his sons or brothers beside him. The officers of the law have been peppered with buckshot; a siege has ensued. That is what Hitler is like. Only Hitler has howitzers and tanks. Great armies must go to fetch that defaulter.

Yes it is quite certain that Hitler would, without compunction, massacre every one who irreverently invaded his archaic wonderland. "Let us alone!" how often has he not cried --when compelled to pay attention to some importunate demand made on him by the Western politicians. "Lass' uns doch allein!"

Yet obviously this non-interference he demands is to-day an impossibility. For his dreamland, however idyllic, bristles with engines of destruction, as I have said, just as modern and unsuitable as could be found in the unromantic backgrounds of any of his "pluto-democratic" enemies.

We have our dreams, too. That is another thing not to be ignored. Paris, Manhattan--even Berlin Westen, in his own native land, which the Jews built with their customary optimism.

The fact of the matter is, as regards this quarrel between Herr Hitler and ourselves, we do not belong to that particular conte de fée, nor do we want to belong to it. We do not recognize its importance. Yes, it is all right, we agree; in its time and place. In a World Fair we might drop into Ye Olde Bavarian Gasthaus to have a Seidel. But all this is on a par with Celtic Twilights, with Ossian, Tibetan Monasteries, The Moon and Sixpence--"Noa Noa": a thing that cannot be reconstituted and that certainly is not worth massacring millions of people to bring back.

One or two of us, here and there, can understand the passionate regret of this misguided peasant for the dream that was handed down to him, and which he all too faithfully and naïvely has received. The Yeatses, Singes, and the rest of them --even Mr James Joyce, I suppose--would see the point of it. But it is a madman, merely, who could suppose that it can be defended with phosgene and with bombs.

But defence, of course, involves and entails a remaining upon your own native territory. And where that "goodness" of Hitler's passes over into evil is that this good German earth does not end abruptly at the frontiers of the Reich. This mysterious excellence that pertains to the soil of the Fatherland gives the Fatherland a kind of prescriptive right over all neighbouring soil: since, as we have just seen, to be foreign is to be less good; and to wish to deny--in your unworthy egotism --to the more good access to what is less good, may easily become exceedingly evil, and worthy of condign punishment. And so it is that it comes about that this benevolent Führer (as he seems to regard himself) is apt, in the eyes of other people, to be the personification of evil.

The Australian economist-journalist, Mr Stephen Roberts, asserted that "Hitlerism cannot achieve its aims without war; its ideology is that of war." Its aims postulate "the complete disappearance of six nations and the mutilation of several others." That obviously could not be effected without war. This conclusion of Mr Roberts has proved to be a perfectly sound one. For the soil business acts both ways. All Germany's neighbours have "soils" as well. And whether it is stupid--or even wicked--to do so or otherwise, they will automatically defend them. So that fairy-book vocable, "Hitler," spells war.

But it spells unsuccessful war for Germany, because this peasant-dream runs counter to many other peasant-dreams--not to speak of all the other very solid realities it affronts. This soil-imperialism is less promising, on the face of it, than any other kind of imperialism--say financial imperialism--because it is so undisguised, and so perfectly calculated to stir up the maximum of mystical resistance.

III KULTUR

HAVING in the last chapter canvassed the soil-doctrine of National Socialism, it will next be necessary to fit it into the race-doctrine. They are not identical; since transplanted Scotchmen, for instance, thrive in New Zealand, which is the "soil" of the Maoris by all rights: and although the German soil may become infected with Slavic soil at the fringes of the Reich, yet the inhabitant of the last German farm, before Poland begins, is racially okay, it is to be assumed.

Then, hovering in the background of Race and of Soil--of Blutsgefühl and Boden or Blut und Erde--is a pestilential phantom labelled Kultur, about whom a lot was heard at the time of the last great disturbance. This is a most unprepossessing entity.

But let us take it next and see what it really amounts to. Hitlerism stands or falls according to what value you assign to these three notions, Soil, Race, and Kultur, which tend to coalesce, but of which obviously Kultur is the most important. There is no excuse for any international disturbance at all if these principles of all Nazi action do not hold water. And philosophically they are as unwatertight as a sieve.

Arising out of the questions examined in the last chapter, there is one aspect of that matter of the defence by the peasant of his dream, upon which I shall now direct your attention. It is an aspect which it would occur to very few people to include in the reckoning--for most of us do not discriminate between dream and dream, but only between dream and no dream. But as far as dreams are concerned the Teutonic one is very far from being the most beautiful.

Here is where the question of Kultur is identical with that of Soil. By his Soil-doctrine the Nazi of course means the quality of the life that is, or has been, lived above that particular soil, by the human society historically identified with it. (The Patagonian Indian, it is plain, would have no right to philosophy about his soil, because he has no culture; merely a right of long tenure, for what that was worth, to the soil itself.) Consequently the value between one dream and another

is of capital importance. And here the German is weak, or by no means on such unassailable ground as he affects to believe. For my own part, the Gothic has no attractions at all: but whatever your personal reactions, the Slavs and of course the Celts, by general consent, have much more beautiful dreams than the Teutons; more delicate and penetrating--dreams in a different class altogether.

Then, last of all, there is, in the grandiose, strenuous, macabre solemnity of the medieval dream of the Teuton, one great fault--from the standpoint of art, and so, in the last analysis, of dream. The Teuton dream is infested with morality. It is portentously righteous. In that respect it has obvious analogies with the Hebrew dream. It is not the dream of an artist--as is the Slav, or the Celtic, dream--but that of a pedant or a hot-gospeller.

This moralism is encountered everywhere in the teachings of National Socialism: to be good and ugly is so much more important than to be beautiful and bad--or just beautiful without ethical import. Great gusts of wrath surge through Nazi party literature, provoked by the contemplation of that Whore of Babylon, the Jewish mind, for instance, threatening the Nordic canon of hearty Commonplace.

Unless your appetite for platitude is gargantuan you cannot get on at all with the characteristic fruits of the German mind. You reject them instinctively, as a Parisian stomach gives an adamant No! to "roly-poly" or tapioca pudding. I would go so far as to say that the sceptical detachment of the modern Jew (since we have mentioned him) is like a breath of fresh air in the midst of this moralistic fug.

Of the steady-going German nature [to quote Matthew Arnold] the bane is . . . flat commonness; there seems no end to its capacity for platitude . . . it is only raised gradually out of it by science, but it jogs through almost interminable platitude first. Or:

The humdrum, the plain and ugly, the ignoble; in a word das Gemeine, die Gemeinheit. . . . The universal dead-level of plainness and homeliness, the lack of all beauty and distinction in form and feature, the slowness and clumsiness of the language, the eternal beer, sausages, and bad tobacco, the blank commonness everywhere. . . .

That is as severe a reaction as I know of to the shortcomings of the German.

Unfair, if you like; but it comes from the heart. And there is no platitude so suffocating as the moral platitude. The fact that the Guter Kerl is the first cousin of the "Good Sort" does not help matters from our point of view. Rather the reverse.

Since the days of Arnold Germany has undergone considerable change, but less so than its Western neighbours. Since the War the Germans have been in quarantine. That seclusion has had its effect. As a result of the complete loss of their colonies, and on account of what they call the "war-guilt-lie," they have been debarred from moving about, and they have slipped back a lot. They have deteriorated into a cruder German altogether. It is rather shocking to visit them for one who knew them in their pre-War condition. The National Socialist party and Herr Hitler at its head represent that part of the nation nearest to the Gothic prototype.

I have quoted Arnold, but there are German witnesses at least as emphatic. Nietzsche's view of German culture, for instance, was the same as Arnold's. I will quote from *La Gaya Scienza*, a book written in praise of the Latin culture, so greatly preferred by this "good European" to the German. Here is a passage that is particularly apposite: as he wrote it he might have been looking at the Germany of to-day. Writing in the last decade of the nineteenth century, anything but in love with what he saw--a society conscripted into obedience to a harsh, aggressive ideal--he referred to himself as a man without a home. He did not recognize that blatant Fatherland as his. But here are his words:

We Homeless Ones. Among the Europeans of to-day there are not lacking those who may call themselves homeless ones in a way which is at once a distinction and an honour. . . . We children of the future, how could we be at home in the present? We are unfavourable to all ideals which could make us feel at home in this frail, broken-down, transition period: and as regards the "realities" thereof, we do not believe in their endurance. . . . No, we do not love Mankind! On the other hand, we are not nearly "German" enough (in the sense in which the word "German" is current at present) to advocate nationalism and race-hatred . . . on account of which the nations of Europe are at present bounded off and secluded from one another as if by quarantine. We prefer much rather to live on mountains, apart . . . in order merely to spare ourselves the silent rage to which we know we should be condemned as witnesses of a system of politics which makes the German nation barren, by making it vain, and which is a petty system besides: will it not be necessary to plant itself between two moral hatreds, lest its

own creation should immediately collapse? Will it not be obliged to desire the perpetuation of the petty-state system of Europe. . . . We homeless ones are too diverse and mixed in race and descent as "modern men," and are consequently little tempted to participate in the falsified racial self-admiration . . . which at present display themselves in Germany . . . which strikes one as doubly false and unbecoming in the people with the "historical sense." We are, in a word, Good Europeans, the heirs of Europe . . . the too deeply pledged heirs of millenniums of European thought.

It is mere impudence on the part of the Nazi doctrinaires to claim a man with such views as these as a precursor: though, of course, Nietzsche was a dual personality. There was a side of him that conforms to the Nazi pattern. Whereas one-half of him reviled the empty imperialism imposed by Prussia upon the rest of Germany--"that system of politics which makes the German nation barren, by making it vain"--the other half allowed itself to become intoxicated with hallucinations of power. So it was that he became the outstanding prophet of war-for-war's-sake. He gave intellectual currency to the military dictum of the Prussian--that what we call "peace" is merely intervals interrupting a state of war. As such the Nazi imperialist can claim him as an ancestor.

It may have been because this very complex and sensitive man was so responsive to the claims of violence--because he had made it so much his own--that he understood its opposite as well as he did. The notion of domination, and of the struggle for domination, obsessed him. But he was also obsessed by those refinements of the intellect which cannot coexist with the struggle for existence.

He was an extremist, and extremes meet, as it is said. He recognized--with painful intensity--that the intellectual and artistic values which he prized above everything could find no place in that power-State of the militarist Prussian mind in which his lot was cast. While, athirst for popularity, he supplied it with a sensational creed, of an appropriate berserk cut, he relieved his feelings by uttering the most disobliging things that any German has ever addressed to his fellow-Germans.

The very language that he spoke he was thoroughly ashamed of, and he did his best to approximate his writing of German to the Gallic model, of clarity and of grace.

I believe that the sound of the German language [he says] in the Middle Ages,

and especially after the Middle Ages, was extremely rustic and vulgar; it has ennobled itself somewhat during the last centuries, principally because it was found necessary to imitate so many French, Italian, and Spanish sounds. . . . German must have sounded intolerably vulgar to Montaigne, and even to Racine; at present, even, in the mouths of German travellers among the Italian population, it still sounds very . . . hoarse and outlandish.

When he was staying in Venice Nietzsche preferred to be regarded as a Pole, not a German. When he heard some people saying, as he passed, "there goes the Pole," he was flattered; he considered with complacency his heavy Polish moustaches, he dwelt upon his Polish patronymic.

It was upon Wagner, and German music generally, that he lavished his critical displeasure. To take only a few passages from the book of his which I happen to have to hand (*La Gaya Scienza*), he speaks of "the essentially Wagnerian element in Wagner's heroes." By this, he added, "I mean the innocence of the supremest selfishness, the belief in strong passion as the good in itself; in a word, the Siegfried trait in the countenance of his heroes." I do not require to stress "the Siegfried trait in the countenance of the heroes" of National Socialism, with Goering at their head. And as to "the belief in strong passion as the good in itself," that is to be met with in the same quarter. All the present German leaders give interminable displays of "strong passion." At that they excel.

But how important all this criticism of Nietzsche's is for an understanding, especially of Hitler, will be obvious from my next quotation. Nietzsche is analysing German music--which is the principal cultural glory of modern Germany--and Nietzsche condemns it in the same accents Goethe used. (The latter, upon hearing Beethoven for the first time, put his fingers in his ears and hurriedly departed, asserting afterwards that he was afraid the roof was about to come down on his head, so unbridled was the orchestral uproar.)

German music, more than any other, has now become European music; because the changes which Europe experienced through the French Revolution have therein alone found expression; it is only German music that knows how to express the agitation of popular masses, the tremendous artificial uproar.

[Here--it should be noted--Nietzsche, as the apostle of the aristocratic ideal, greatly disliked the French Revolution and what it brought in its wake.

Supposing Stravinsky had succeeded, instead of anticipating, the Russian Revolution, a twentieth-century Nietzsche might have felt the same about the *Sacre du Printemps* as did this nineteenth-century "aristocrat" about Wagner and Beethoven.]

There is the additional fact that in all German music a profound bourgeois jealousy of what is noble can be traced, especially a jealousy of esprit and of elegance. . . . Even the Graces are not allowed in German music without a touch of remorse. It is only with Pleasantness--the country sister of the Graces--that the German begins to feel morally at ease; and from this point, up to his enthusiastic, learned, and often gruff "sublimity" (the Beethoven-like sublimity), he feels more and more so.

If we want to present to ourselves the man representative of this music--well, let us just think of Beethoven as he must have appeared beside Goethe, say, at their meeting at Teplitz; as semi-barbarism beside culture . . . as the man given to exaggeration and distrust beside the man of reason--as the crank and self-tormentor . . . the pretentious and awkward man . . . "the untamed man"--it was thus that Goethe characterized him, Goethe, the exceptional German, for whom a music of equal rank has not yet been found.

As a stylist, Nietzsche himself is a little "untamed," and I have had to prune these passages a little. But I think you will agree that out of the mouth of this German critic of the German we have been receiving significant indications of how Kultur and Race go hand-in-hand, and what the value of this particular Kultur looked like to one of the sharpest-eyed among the intellectual gods of the German pantheon.

I am not, let me remark, accepting Nietzsche's estimate of German music. Nor do I feel attracted by his "aristocratic" theorizing--very far from it. Any sensible Englishman has enough stale "aristocratism" rammed down his throat in his schooldays (if he is sent to a great public school) to last him for the rest of his life.

Yet if the top-dog ideology (tricked out by Nietzsche in such highbrow terms as to make Philosophy safe for the Snob)--if the ideology of the kind that evolved "The English Mistery"--is repellent; its opposite, the ideology of the Mob, is no better. And the mob-music of Wagner has no advantage over the ceremonious tinkle of the minuet.

But Herr Hitler is the slave of Wagner--that is why I have been talking about Wagner. In listening to Wagner he feels in his element. This is significant: for show me what music a man likes listening to, and I will tell you what kind of man he is. An exclusive diet of Wagner tells its own tale.

Adolf Hitler bathes in the music of Wagner much in the same way as Walt Whitman bathed in the surf of the Atlantic Ocean. In the oceanic percussion of great German orchestras, our dreamy Führer consorts with Baldur, Fria, and Odin. He lives with the Nibelungen, or with those Gothic travesties of Welsh mythology, Tristan and Isolde.

This musical opium it is a thousand pities he could not have been persuaded to leave alone. It would have been better for all of us if he had applied himself to a little serious reading. Yet it is said that Herr Hitler never opens a book. He used to read Edgar Wallace before he came to power. He does not even do that now, apparently.

That the destinies of Europe are being hammered out in that smoky labyrinth, The Ring, is as melancholy as it is comic. As art it is dead and past, and might soon, we had hoped, be no longer heard even at Covent Garden. Wagner was an epoch, much more than Shakespeare was. A bad epoch, it has been thought for many years--the epoch of Victor Hugo, Gustave Doré, G. F. Watts, Böcklin. It is as if we heard that the fate of the world hung upon a novel of Hugo's, to learn that it might be decided by the score of Parsifal!

That Hitler is hallucinated--that he sees Mr Chamberlain and his Umbrella, M. Bonnet and his Nose, Mussolini and his Sword of Islam, in terms of Scandinavian mythology--is probably true. There was once a melancholy Knight who lived the Tale of the Cid, among the commonplace objects of everyday domestic Spanish life, chopping away at them with his sword, or courteously approaching them with a stately Castilian bow, as the case might be. To-day there is a genuine eccentric at large --and he rules an enormous nation--who mixes us up with the personae of the Sagaman.

Believe it or not, but the history of post-War Europe is being written by a Don Quixote in real life--a twentieth-century German Don Quixote, in a little brown double-breasted coat and a toothbrush moustache. We English are one of this deluded man's biggest and most dangerous windmills--alas! for this knight is differently armed from him of La Mancha.

To return to *The Ring*, to conclude this part of my argument: I hope I shall not incur the wrath of some Cavalcade-minded British musician if I declare that Wagner is and always was a vulgar habit of the idle rich. They got their mob experience at second-hand in *The Ring*. Mob-music in the worst sense, it is not, however, only a resuscitation of the barbaric past of the German. It is itself barbaric.

Wagner's music (whatever the rest of German nineteenth-century music may be) is, as Nietzsche saw, barbaric mass-music: it was the great sensation of the fashionable world for fifty years, to be succeeded by Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky-- the big lumbering prima donnas, with corn-yellow locks, giving place to the savage leaping and stamping of the Slav corps de ballet (a change for the better, but still upon the same barbaric plane of inspiration).

Now, whether you relish the barbaric or no--and that is not what I am concerned with here--at least it is perfectly evident that no whole-time votary of such cultural barbarism, as is Herr Hitler (a barbarism which Nietzsche described as having its origin in the furies of the French Revolution), can set up as the champion of European anti-barbarism. That is impossible. It is even far-fetched for such a man to talk about Kultur Bolshevismus. For Wagner is merely an out-of-date Bolshevik, after all. Perhaps--you might add--Hitler is merely an up-to-date one: a decade ahead of Stalin.

You cannot have things both ways, even in politics. Abandon yourself to stimulants such as these, and you are out of court as a doctor of souls--of souls who have fallen sick as a result of romantic infections. Floodlight all your own performances, surround yourself with a barbaric symbolism, conjure up a torch-lit scene in which to hold your million-headed corroborées--copy the technique of the Reinhardt Mysteries-- such things do smack of the barbaric; it will unquestionably disqualify you for the role of guardian of the European order against the hosts of outer barbarity. This is the point.

Wagner and Reinhardt between them are the two great cultural influences in National Socialism: or rather, the only two elements that have anything to do with cultural life as such. The very scale of Germany economically and industrially is the work of Jewish bankers and business men, who taught the German to think big. Wagner teaches Hitler to feel big. Reinhardt (at second-hand) teaches him to look big.

But there is a further thing to be noted about bigness. This cult of the Kolossal is the symptomatic expression of the new barbarity of machine-age man. The vast face of the Massenmensch--the enormously magnified visage of the Little Man--is a degeneracy. The Sphinxes are not the greatest works of art in Egypt; they are only the largest. It is the same with the giant Buddhas. There is scarcely a work of art of the first order that is over life-size. Such magnifications are inartistic. And the very impulse to impress by scale is a barbarous impulse.

But, for the purposes of this inquiry, there is something much more important than that. A false impression of strength is conveyed by these arts of the mammoth producer. It immediately occurs to any fairly observant person to ask--when confronted with such physical deployments of power as the Nazi indulges in: What is the real stature of all this, seeing that the apparent stature is admittedly artifice; a trick of lighting, a mere mechanical multiplication of something in itself small?

Herr Hitler himself is magnified upon the same principle. But if it is our task to ascertain his true weight--and that is what I have offered to do--these arts of the illusionist have to be taken into account. Propaganda, the political counterpart of advertisement, is the means by which illusion is produced. In the world of authorship and journalism there are persons who are called best-sellers, whose names are as well-known as that of Shakespeare. Nat Gould and Edgar Wallace, to take two examples. They come to the tongue as readily as the name of the author of King Lear. I hope it will not be regarded as *lèse-majesté* if I remark that I have always suspected that Hitler, as a politician, bore certain analogies to that.

Then there is Herr Hitler's transparent honesty, or what looks like it. Is it not possible to liken that to Lord Baldwin's? Lord Baldwin's success in politics is supposed to have been due to his stupidity--though he surely proved that he was the shrewdest duffer who ever sat in the House of Commons. Hitler is not stupid. But probably his honesty is the key to his success much more than his cleverness.

Let me now sum up what I have been saying in this chapter. Later on, in greater detail, I shall examine the cultural pretensions of National Socialist Germany. The Germans are living on their past, or deriving most of their "cultural" advertisement from it, yet doing nothing to prolong such conditions as might be productive of "culture." In the blatant power-state in which the modern German

lives and has his being, the arts could have no part in any case: but the present masters of Germany seem to go out of their way to assure that they shall not. Yet that in no way prevents them from using the names of great poets and philosophers to advertise themselves, as a toilet-apparatus might be called "The Shakespeare," a soap push itself under the name of "Sappho," or a safety razor rejoice in the name of Albrecht Dürer. The Nazi leaders are more militantly philistine than any polo-playing Bengal Lancer, or stockbroker whose main topic of conversation is his golf handicap or his form at bridge. And Winckelmann, Goethe, Hölderlin, Kant, or Hegel have no more to do with the entourage of Herr Hitler than they have with the Esquimaux of Coronation Gulf, or than Christopher Marlowe has with Mr Herbert Morrison. They speak a language with many points of superficial resemblance with that used by a Black Guard, but there the resemblance ends.

IV RACE

OF Blut und Erde we have examined Erde: and it has been seen how Kultur hovers, or is supposed to hover, over earth; and to confirm with its intellectual prowess, the dream of the peasant, for more and more Erde. Now we come to Blut. There is not much difficulty about the National Socialist race-doctrine --if one wishes only to arrive at a common-sense, man-in-the-street view of it--and this will not be a long chapter, consequently.

Rosenberg, a Balt, is one of the leading Nazis. If there were a Politbüro, as there is in Russia, composed of nine members-- the supreme rulers of the nation-- Rosenberg would be amongst them. His book, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, is the main reservoir of racial doctrine. But not to multiply quotations, which for some reason fatigue the general reader, it is best to go to the one paramount source, which contains all the others --Hitler himself.

Although Hitler is no literary genius, he expresses himself just as well as his lieutenants; and whether it is Rosenberg or Darré about race, or Streicher who specializes in Jews, or Schacht whose province is finance, the Führer has the last word and is their inspiration, not the other way round. "Là ou Hitler affirme avec la brutalité sommaire qui lui est naturelle, Rosenberg se donne des airs de théoricien dont l'esprit est farci de multiples lectures." Let us have the summary brutality, and dispense with the "theoretical airs and graces" of a Rosenberg.

So we will turn to the Hurst & Blackett edition of *Mein Kampf*, (my quotations are all from this edition), and on page 238 you will read as follows:

This principle [of nature's] may be called the inner isolation which characterizes each and every living species on this earth. Even a superficial glance is sufficient to show that all the innumerable forms in which the life-urge of nature manifests itself are subject to a fundamental law--one may call it an iron law of nature-- which compels the various species to keep within the definite limits of their own life-forms when propagating and multiplying their kind. Each animal mates only with its own species. The titmouse cohabits only with the titmouse, the finch with the finch, the stork with the stork, the field-mouse with the field-mouse, the wolf with the she-wolf, *etc.*

There is no reader of this book who will be required to be told that Herr Hitler deduces from the above that the Northern European stands over against the Chinaman, the Jew, or the Negro, exactly as the wolf does to the mouse. It is a physical impossibility--that is the only difference--for a wolf to cohabit with a mouse; but it is perfectly feasible for a Northern European to cohabit with a Negress, and it is often done.

Herr Hitler advertises his pride in being a German. But there is another pride (in this case mine) which I find is somewhat ruffled by the above zoological catalogue. Am I then a titmouse, a wolf, or a stork, I am inclined to ask? My conceit as a man, in other words, is somewhat wounded by this imagery. As homo sapiens it repels me. This pride is not so inordinate, I may say, as is that of Herr Hitler: nor does it take violent and destructive forms. But in reading the above passage I find that I object to the suggestion that my freedom of action should be curtailed, as if I were a finch or a wolf, creatures of so much more limited aptitude than myself.

If I wanted to, I should certainly cohabit with a Negress, or wed (if I were not already married) Anna May Wong, if that beautiful Chinese and myself were of a mind to become man and wife. As to a Jewess, that is not an ethnological term, but belongs to a widely distributed and extremely mixed community. The Jews in Morocco, for instance, are many of them quite fair, and much less "Semitic" looking than the Arabs. This is natural, for they probably are not Semitic at all. Members of the Swedish or Danish Jewish community, likewise, are apt to look like anybody else--or just like rather plump Vikings. On the other hand, as we all know, quantities of people labelled "Jew" live up to their name in a peculiarly full-blooded way and sport features that can be spotted a mile off.

The fact remains that, without being told, it is often exceedingly difficult to know--unless you possess the second sight of a Streicher--who is a Jew and who is not. I have often thought people were Jews who were not, and vice versa.

Had I married a Jewess under a misapprehension--supposing her to be, say, a Danubian aristocrat--and then discovered my error, should I feel like a wolf who had mistakenly cohabited with a titmouse, under the impression that he was in contact with another wolf? So much racial punctilio would be meaningless to me. If I had been deceived, I naturally should conclude that the difference was so slight that it was not worth bothering about.

"There are certain truths," writes Herr Hitler, "which stand out so openly on the roadsides of life, as it were, that every passer-by may see them." And one of these truths is, it seems to me, a truth that Herr Hitler is constitutionally unable to grasp. I refer to the fact that a "colour-bar," not only social, but also biological, does exist; and is quite sufficiently effective to prevent any really unsuitable cross-breeding. It certainly is powerful enough to discourage the magnificent Nordic Aryans of New York City from intermarrying with the Negro to any great extent: or to put it in another way (and one of a type less familiar to the mind of Herr Hitler), to prevent the Negroes from going out of their way to mix with the Whites.

Here the fact of the Skin does come into action, on one side and the other; though there have been many White Europeans, and not the least gifted among them, who preferred the dark skin to the fair. Gaugin and Baudelaire are hackneyed examples.

Les cocottiers absents de la superbe Afrique caused the latter to be unfaithful to the gentle poplars of his native land, and prefer Jeanne Duval, with her jungle heart, full of hate and corruption, to some unexotic Marianne, with a sweet little heart like a tinkling madrigal.

But the other day I was in a tea-lounge with a woman, and of our fellow-customers quite sixty per cent were Jewish-- refugees, probably. This fact was remarked upon by my friend, with displeasure. The female refugees appeared especially to arouse her resentment. She rather surprisingly observed how Jews liked their own kind and how apt they were to marry Jewesses. The Jews must really think us a queer lot, and strangely difficult to please. For in Germany they are liable to have their heads cut off if they betray an interest in a German girl; whereas here was a complaint against them of a diametrically opposite order: namely that they were men of no taste, and too apt to rest content with their own womenfolk.

But as far as Skin and Blood is concerned, in the modern world it is far better to leave these things to nature. Nature is not a pedant, not a patriot, but in her rough-and-ready way she sorts the sheep out from the goats with considerable zeal.

In spite of all temptations

To belong to other nations,

I remained an Englishman is a doggerel with more sense in it than all the Nuremberg Laws. Nature is, if anything, too zealous a divider.

If you do not leave things to nature, look what happens! The moment man takes a hand, and with his crazy bigotry begins legislating against "race-pollution," events occur of a nature to make the angels weep. Here is Martha Dodd's account of what she saw in Nuremberg:

We stopped in Nuremberg for the night. . . . As we were coming out of the hotel we saw a crowd gathering and gesticulating in the middle of the street. We stopped to find out what it was all about. There was a street-car in the centre of the road from which a young girl was being brutally pushed and shoved. We moved closer and saw the tragic and tortured face, the colour of diluted absinthe. She looked ghastly. Her head had been shaved clean of hair, and she was wearing a placard across her breast. We followed her for a moment, watching the crowd insult and jibe and drive her. Quentin and my brother asked several people around us what was the matter. We understood from their German that she was a Gentile who had been consorting with a Jew. The placard said: "I have Offered Myself to a Jew."

Now is it worth it--for Blut und Erde? The American Negro-lynchings are things of the same order. And the extreme case of the Negro is probably a better one to take than that of the Jew --for the latter belongs to a race that can hardly be described as "backward," whereas the Negro has displayed a certain lack of emprovement in ascending the cultural ladder--and even a tendency to lie at the bottom of it lounging in the sun. To quote again from Miss Dodd, apropos of the Nazi objections to the participation of "Afro-Americans" in the Berlin Olympic Games:

It was the Nazi attitude, which I once heard expressed by a supposedly intelligent assistant of von Ribbentrop [though why Miss Dodd should have supposed an assistant of von Ribbentrop to be intelligent I cannot understand], to consider Negroes as animals, and utterly unqualified to enter the Games. This young man elaborated his thesis, saying that, of course, if the Germans had had the bad sportsmanship to enter deer or another species of fleet-footed animal, they could have taken the honours from America in the track events. He added that it was an unfair advantage we took when we let non-humans, like Owens

and other Negro athletes, compete with fine human Germanic products.--My Years in Germany.

But how does that tally with the exclusiveness of the stork, the titmouse, and the wolf, pointed to by Herr Hitler? As I have already mentioned, it is a zoological law which has not usually been observed by the White--at least not by the Boer, Portuguese, Spaniard, or always by the Frenchman. When stated as you see it above--when it is asked--If a Negro, why not a deer or an ostrich?--its absurdity becomes apparent.

What is even more important, it has a class ring about it, which is familiar. A large percentage of British middle-class matrons, in their attitude to the "lower orders," reproduce this objection of Von Ribbentrop's assistant, and would frown upon intermarriage between the "lower orders" and the "upper classes" just as much as the Hitlerite frowned upon the participation of a Negro in an international sporting event. Let a young workman fresh from a coal-pit try to marry the daughter of a Harley Street physician, and he will find that, although with soap and water he can wash off the blackness of the coal-dust, nevertheless he might as well possess a black skin--for all the human equality he can claim with the offspring of the "educated" and well-to-do. "Skin" is no worse a thing than "accent." The same mentality is at work in both these social taboos.

Lastly, if you equate deer and Negro, does it mean that you reserve to yourself, because of your white skin, the privileges that as a man you possess over against the quadruped? Conspicuous amongst these privileges is the licence to kill; when the quadruped becomes "venison" and you eat it. Would you be within your human rights to kill the Negro? You would not eat him--for then you would be a "cannibal." But you might find it convenient to shoot him.

I am afraid what goes for the deer goes for John Crow: all such ways of thinking as those propagated by the Nazis do involve inhumanities (unless the Nazi is to be altogether inconsistent). But if you yourself become inhumane, it would seem to follow that you descend into a class yourself that is less than human. And then (on the analogy of the Negro and the deer) people will begin to feel that you are fair game as well: that it is in order to pot you just as we shoot animals. Which is exactly what is happening in Europe to-day.

By putting others outside the human canon the Germans have, in the sequel, man*uvred themselves into the same undesirable position. Such a boomerang is

a race theory, after all. And once you start erecting barriers you are apt to end by finding yourself outside, instead of inside, as you had thought.

V HITLER A "SOLITARY" (COMPARISON WITH ROUSSEAU)

THERE are certain facts, however hackneyed, and to be found in all the books about him, that have to be mentioned, for a proper understanding of the German Chancellor. I should perhaps even have said that Herr Hitler is an Austrian, that he was born at Braunau, in Upper Austria, in 1889. It is remarkable how slowly people digest the simplest facts. I am not sure that I ought not to say that Austria borders on Germany, and is, as both Schuschnigg and Dollfuss were obliged to confess, "a German land." And therefore to say, "Hitler is an Austrian," as if that made him not a German, is inaccurate.

The fact that Hitler was born an Austrian is important, but not because he is in consequence less German, but rather the reverse. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was a multinational State, in which only the Austrians were Germans. And so, sharing their nationality with so many other people--Hungarians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Bosnians, Rumanians, Croats, Slovenes, and Ukrainians--the Austrian Germans developed a pan-Germanism of the most virulent type.

Here is a law of politics, I think. It might be stated as follows: The more racial feeling, the less class feeling. Where a race problem is present the class problem cannot flourish.

All Nationalists understand this law very well, and avail themselves of it without stint. For a Nationalist is a man who worries very little about social inequality, except where race is the cause of it. So it comes about that the Jew is the almost perfect antidote to Marxian infection, as Hitler early realized: seeing that the Jew is rich, and consequently absorbs a good deal of class-hatred, *par-dessus le marché*, into the xenophobia he attracts, which confers upon the latter an intensity that is as the passion of Kosciusko and that of Karl Marx rolled into one.

In Hitler "class-consciousness"--that is to say, animosity of the poor man against the rich--was almost totally absent. Yet he was born a peasant--or almost a peasant.

Hitler's father was socially aspiring. He had lifted himself above the workman class, into the "official" class. He proudly wore the customs uniform of the Dual Monarchy--which was better than sticking to his last. (By birth he was a cobbler.)

Such an advancement is the first step to the professions. Speaking of his father, Herr Hitler says: "His most ardent longing was to be able to help his son to advance in a career, and thus save me from the harsh ordeal that he himself had to go through." In England social steps-up of that order eventuate, if all goes well, with the grandson going to Uppingham and Oxford. This great gentleman then hands down a beautiful Oxford accent and an old school tie. But Hitler did not take the hint; much to his father's mortification. He was the "artist type"-- the sort that lets all the chances go by. He was idle. "My school reports were always in the extremes of good or bad, according to the subject and the interest it had for me. In one column my qualifications read `very good.' . . . In another it read `average' or `below average.'"

Hitler sank back (with disgust) into the proletariat. But not just into the proletariat--right down to the bottom of it. From 1910 to 1913 he lived in a doss-house. All the time he believed in his "genius," but his stomach went empty, and he existed among the lowest of the population--"creatures that once were men." And in spite of the satisfaction his immense power must procure for him to-day, artists are not his favourite class of person.

It is perhaps odd that Poland's dictator, Smigly-Rydz, should have been a popular portrait-painter before he took to politics, just as Hitler was a commercial artist--not to mention Paderewski, the pianist-premier. That is one of the things that as Englishmen we have to get used to, in reading about continental politics. For it is difficult to imagine Augustus John as British dictator, or even John McCormack in De Valera's shoes.

Yet of course politics and art have much in common. Both are occupations that demand very little intelligence and no training to speak of; both are a refuge for people who could shine in no other walk of life--for human throw-outs in short.

These artistic proclivities, anyway, are a major fact in the life of Hitler. The bad artist is a very embittered man as a rule. Some are quite jolly about it. But as a rule, not. All artists, as you know, are "geniuses." Artist and genius are terms it is impossible to distinguish. And then Hitler had a pretty tough break, even for a

man starting without capital. He was trampled on by everybody. He learnt young, as he tells us, duplicity: he "adopted an attitude of circumspect silence," in face of his father's severity. He is certainly very deceitful to-day. England's elder statesmen who have shown a tendency to "repress" him have probably assumed the role of that domestic dictator, Hitler père, in the Führer's unconscious.

To English ears Hitler is a name that has a touch of absurdity. It probably means "hut dweller"--since "Huttler" was the earlier form of it, and "Hutt" means "hut." By the way, in this chapter, where I have to recapitulate the main biographical facts of our hero's life, I am mainly indebted to Herr Konrad Heiden, who has written the best books about Hitler. It was he, I think, who ferreted out these facts about the variants of the name "Hitler." He was engaged in Left politics in Munich at the same time as Hitler, just after the War, and has probably scuffled about with him in beer-cellars.

If Hitler sounds vaguely absurd in English, it sounds all right to Germans, on the other hand. But it is a mere accident, we learn, that Herr Hitler is not Herr Schicklgruber. It was only when Hitler's grandfather was eighty that he legitimized our hero's father, and so the latter acquired the name of Hitler, having formerly been known by the even less euphonious patronymic. It is generally conceded that with such a name as Schicklgruber Hitler would have been no trouble to anybody. We should never have heard of Herr Adolf Schicklgruber. He would have been born to blush unseen--to blush at the thought of course of the name he bore.

Herr Hitler's manner has always been embarrassed. "People in business, to whom he offered his little drawings, found him shy and unwilling to look them in the face." That was when as a young man in Vienna he picked up a living by commercial draughtsmanship.

Whenever I think in the abstract about Herr Hitler I think of a flower--the violet. This sounds absurd. He is a human violet, however: his bashfulness is real if nothing else is. He is almost a monster of shyness: and the brazenness of my strange violet--its pushing itself forward so rudely, as if it were a sunflower or something, and absorbing the attention of the world, in its struggle for a "place in the sun," requires some accounting for. A paranoiac violet! A strange variety indeed. But this male Joan of Arc is a strange man.

I should think the answer to all these contradictions is to be sought in the doctor's case-book. The tubercular bacillus is the real hero probably. His father died of a haemorrhage of the lungs. His family has a record suggestive of the ascendancy of this disease. At the age of thirteen, we learn from *Mein Kampf*, "my lungs became so seriously affected that the doctor advised my mother very strongly not under any circumstances to allow me to take up a career which would necessitate working in an office. He ordered that I should give up attendance at the Realschule for a year at least." So that, pathologically, appears conclusive. It would not be the first time that mankind owed all its troubles to a bacillus. And if it had not been Herr Hitler's, it would have been somebody else's. Let us console ourselves with that reflection.

Hitler is the same class of man as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Mein Kampf* even has some points of resemblance to Rousseau's *Confessions*: in tone here and there, in the loneliness that seems to dog the narrator, or to be natural to him. Also the squalor is the same. There the resemblance ends. For Hitler's reticence upon his sexual experiences is as great as Rousseau's absence of reticence is exemplary. And then Hitler was never a rogue. If he borrowed half a crown he would pay it back. Which is more than can be said for Jean-Jacques. And he has no innovating genius, nor any literary talent. He is a pedestrian and highly respectable member of the Rousseau class. And he only perhaps suggests that he belongs to it because of his bashfulness, and because he is one of those people who go about the world by themselves.

This question of the class of man to which Herr Hitler belongs is of capital importance. And it is in accounts of his early life that that question is answered. There you can classify him better than as the great Führer. The essential fact is this: the human type to which Herr Hitler belongs is not a tough type, but a soft one: which applies to his mental as well as his physical make-up. I may of course be doing the Führer an injustice. It is well to remember that Heiden and most of his biographers would disagree with me.

Hitler is what is commonly called the "artist-type." This does not make him an artist, in any effective sense; for, as has often been remarked, no great artist conforms to the "artist-type," just as no first-flight pianist or painter has artistically tapering hands.

The genus "artist" is volatile, nervous, prone to emotional excesses. With that other type-form, the "feminine," the artist has much in common. It is to the

"feminine" order of man that Adolf Hitler belongs--or so it seems to me--with a certain immaturity that goes with that (upon the Schopenhauerian principle that for child-bearing and the care of the young a childish disposition is essential). That is why big masculine chaps, like Major Yeats-Brown, feel sorry for Herr Hitler. They want to protect him.

The present German Chancellor is in the habit of threatening suicide; he weeps with considerable facility, his perorations are shaken with sobs; he storms and raves like a hysterical prima donna; he is very alive to flattery. Yet he is not homosexual, like so many Germans. It is that that makes him a puzzle of a man.

The "Iron Chancellor" was an opposite type of man to this Chancellor. Bismarck was a bona-fide brute, from the spike of his Pickelhaube to the heel of his jackboot. At the Prussian G.H.Q. before Paris he sat down with barbaric zest to table, to the sound of the guns battering the French capital into submission. Hitler, under similar circumstances--as nervous as a cat--would discuss a tomato salad, sip a glass of Horlick's, and nibble a rusk. He would probably burst into tears from time to time when anything went wrong, and threaten to blow his brains out.

As to Frederick the Great, another of his models, to whom Hitler is sometimes compared, no two men could be less alike. That arrogant homosexual tyrant had about as much in common with Adolf Hitler as the Duke of Wellington would have with Lord Nuffield.

Hitler has acquired "a Napoleonic strut." His countenance has developed a respectable statesmanesque jowl. And of course he has a ceremonial great-man frown. But there is little of the Corsican tough about him--quite apart from the not unimportant question of the vast ability of Bonaparte. It is odd that without anything more than political agitation to his credit, such comparisons should have been indulged in. But I have satisfactorily explained how that has come to pass, I think.

I have said that Hitler makes me think of a bashful violet. To abandon such absurd comparisons, in speaking of this old Frontkämpfer, with the sagging trouser-bottom and the postiche nose (as it comes out in photographs), Hitler is a fragile type, stood beside Stalin, Clemenceau, Mussolini, or our political Galento, Churchill. There is certainly nothing of the Italian robustness and the indiarubber nerves required for the life of happy violence. Hitler is a sickly

human plant--a creature of worry and torment.

There is a further shortcoming in this conquistador. Nothing of that more subtle iron, provided by a considerable intellect --the sort of hardness that saves the great artist from that degrading condition, "the artistic temperament"--is to be detected in the author of *Mein Kampf*. When, gripping the rostrum and squaring his jaw, Hitler assures his audience in a sepulchral growl "Ich bin so stark!" (a speech I heard in 1930) it is comic stuff, outside the domain of wolf-cub heroics.

The "strong man" label in Western politics generally covers something very soft. Hitler, with epileptic eye, keeps pointing to his label. One is reminded of those synthetic Samsons who stand with inflated biceps in the advertisement pages of health magazines. Underneath, in a letter, the "strong man" informs us that as a baby he only weighed an ounce and a half, and at ten years old was so delicate he was given three months to live by the panel doctor.

I am aware that what I have said sounds almost like persiflage but it is not so intended. All things considered, Hitler has put up a very good show for a weak man. He is like those spectacled athletes from office stools who, spurred on possibly by outsize inferiority-complexes, put up records in field events.

Hitler has been a politico with a flair for the weak spot in an opponent which has won the admiration of every crook from Wall Street to the Bund. He is a byword for smartness. It surprises me, however, that he has lasted as long as he has. That he can stay the course--and such a course!--is unthinkable. For Herr Hitler to win "a war of nerves" is a proposition that is self-evidently absurd. As for winning a real war, nobody wins that, not in the twentieth century.

Herr Heiden, and other enemies of his, say what "an extraordinary man" Herr Hitler is, and I suppose he must be; but I still think he is more an entranced medium than anything else. He has been caught up in a vortex of passionate events. Chaplin in his *Dictator* film has, I believe, put his finger on the spot. The film involves a story of mistaken identity. Charlie Chaplin, as a little Jew refugee, is mistaken for the great Dictator of a Central European country. It is in vain that he protests. He is compelled against his will to play the part of despot. That, I feel sure, is Hitler's case. Only Hitler has played the part with considerable enthusiasm, and of course he is not timid.

Like Lord Halifax, Herr Hitler affects to wield power as a stern duty and against

his private inclination, which is for a quiet life. "Therefore he [Hitler] will perform the great final deed:" (it was Rudolf Hess speaking) "instead of drinking his power to the dregs, he will lay it down and stand aside." In "this last sentence is the whole of Hitler," his historian affirms, "with his uncomprehended and unfilled longing for a carefree private life."

If this is true (and it has a sentimental smell to me) it accounts for Hitler calling himself a "sleep-walker," and feeling like one. Obviously the mountain with the elevator running up the middle of it in the Bavarian Alps, with a bomb-proof sun-parlour at the top of it, belongs to the land of dreams.

VI THE SLEEP-WALKER

I CONTINUE the life of Herr Hitler. But in the ensuing chapters I am confining myself almost entirely to the text of Mein Kampf (the Hurst & Blackett translation). The British Communist, Mr Harry Pollitt, is "answering Hitler," it is announced, in a book shortly to be published. He is taking Hitler's text, and confuting him step by step. That is a little what I am doing, for a short while, in the present instance. But the confutation is incidental; or it takes the form of a hostile, potted, biography, all done with the Führer's own words, and such mental comment as they necessarily set up in the mind of the reader. But let me proceed.

This "sleep-walker," with his unerring tread, started his amazing dream in 1914, when he sank down upon his knees and thanked Heaven for the beautiful war that Providence had provided for him. The world seemed entirely to have gone to pot: it had been "delivered over to what was called peaceful competition between the nations." (I quote Mein Kampf.) "This simply means a system of mutual exploitation by fraudulent means, the principle of resorting to the use of force in self-defence being formally excluded." And now--thank God!--the principle of force (i.e. war) was once more to come into its own. For the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had obliged, and got himself murdered at Sarajevo. Hitler heaved a sigh of relief.

For me these hours came as a deliverance from the distress that had weighed upon me during the days of my youth. I am not ashamed to acknowledge to-day that I was carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment and that I sank down upon my knees and thanked Heaven out of the fullness of my heart for the favour of having been permitted to live in such a time. . . . I felt a proud joy in being permitted to go through this test. I had so often sung Deutschland über Alles and so often roared "Heil!" that I now thought that it was as a kind of retroactive grace that I was granted the right of appearing before the Court of Eternal Justice to testify to the truth of those sentiments.

One has considerable sympathy with Herr Hitler's view of the world in 1914. It was (as always) fairly lousy. He tells us that his spirits were damped by the thought that he had been born at a time when the world had manifestly decided not to erect any more temples of fame except in honour of business people. . . .

This trend of affairs . . . seemed bound eventually to transform the world into a mammoth department store. Or again:

Why could I not have been born a hundred years ago? I used to ask myself. Somewhere about the time of the Wars of Liberation, when a man was still of some value even though he had no "business."

That stirs an answering chord in me, at all events. For the world as "a mammoth department store" is none too good a place. And the stockbroker enthroned is a sight that affects many people disagreeably, besides Herr Hitler. But a world war, as an alternative to a world store, has its disadvantages. And they are disadvantages to which Hitler is oddly insensible. He takes it for granted that a poison-gas attack is preferable to a bargain basement.

He tells us that he had really despaired of ever having a war in such a rotten time as he had got into. Then the Boer War put in its appearance--a Heaven-sent little scrap. "Then the Boer War came, like a glow of lightning on the far horizon." He "devoured the telegrams and communiqués" about that. The world was not such a bad place after all! A small war, true--and a long way off. But still men were at last killing each other again, for a change.

The Russo-Japanese War found him older. He was more able to really savour, with a stern and judicious joy, that tit-bit. Far away still--at the other end of the world. But better luck next time.

Of course he took sides--for all wars were emotional affairs for him. All in fact turned out to be "wars of liberation." (Kill somebody and you're sure to free somebody, even if it wasn't the person you meant to free.) Here was one, obviously, in which the brave little Japs were saving the world from the abominable Slavs.

Austria-Hungary was full, all too full, of horrible, low-down, Slavs. And Hitler wanted the world saved from the Slavs. For two pins he'd have gone and helped the Japs. Later on he was glad he hadn't, for he got the war of his dreams: a proper German war, at his own front door, in which he could fight to "liberate" Germany from the encircling habits of the wretched Slavs, Frogs, Britishers, and Yanks--not to mention the treacherous Wops, who stabbed Germany in the back, and showed their mettle at Caporetto.

But he had no desire to deliver the Hapsburgs from anybody. Yet he was an

Austrian, which was a bit awkward. He "petitioned His Majesty King Ludwig III" to let him fight for Germany. And His Majesty King Ludwig III of Bavaria graciously replied by return of post. "I opened the document with trembling hands: and no words of mine could now describe the satisfaction I felt on reading that I was instructed to report to a Bavarian regiment." And he adds: "The most memorable period of my life now began."

Adolf Hitler acquitted himself remarkably well as a soldier. He bluffed a lot of poilus into surrendering (by pretending there were a hundred Hitlers there instead of only one, as was the case). He marched them back to his battalion headquarters, and received the Iron Cross.

Hitler was not popular with his comrades. He was as a matter of fact a military prig. He took the beastly war far too seriously, even for a German. The others were quite willing to fight, but did not relish being lectured about it all the time.

His quixotic misunderstanding caused him to mistake this capitalist war for a "war of liberation," though of course most of his fellow-Fritzes had more sense than that, and had a shrewd idea what it was all about. If he was not popular with his comrades, neither were they over-popular with him. The certain detachment of the "cannon-fodder" exasperated him very much.

This confirmed Hitler in his belief that the average man is a dirty piece of work, whether met with in a casual ward or in a front-line trench. He is constitutionally incapable of appreciating a "great cause." It was the same sort of difficulty he had had with his fellow-workmen in Vienna. They, when they were sweating and toiling on the scaffolding, to provide a block of luxury-flats for a lot of splendid stockbrokers to live in (not all Jewish), just could not see that a great cause lurked at the bottom of all they were asked to do. For these purblind bricklayers and plasterers there was nothing the capitalist could do that was right.

Now it was no different. Even if the capitalist went to war with other capitalists it was all the same--he still was in the wrong: though surely that was a case where no man--capitalist or otherwise--could go far wrong! War was always good, was it not? And the man who made it was a benefactor--even if he didn't know it. Hitler would have "sunk down upon his knees" and thanked the Devil in person if the latter had promised to start a new Thirty Years War. Certainly in Munich in 1914 he would have done so.

Now it is not difficult to imagine Hitler's mortification and dismay when at the end of all this beautiful war (he was badly gassed) he learnt that many of these anything but idealist troops had turned against the magnificent generals by whom they had had the honour of being led in the field. Even they hinted that that dazzling symbol of Wagnerian Teutonism, William II, because he had hopped it into Holland, was a bit of a louse, and they thought they might do without a Charlemagne of that sort in future. In a word, they proposed to set up a republic. Oh, horrid thought! that could only occur to a double-dyed traitor!

All this came to pass at Pasewalk. "I was sent into hospital at Pasewalk in Pomerania, and there it was that I had to hear of the revolution." ("That I had to hear" suggests him almost with his fingers in his ears and his face screwed up, and is typical of the style in which Mein Kampf is written.) "For a long time there had been something in the air which was indefinable and repulsive. People were saying that something was bound to happen within the next few weeks, although I could not imagine what this meant" (Mein Kampf). That any one should feel a little peeved with the House of Hohenzollern was unthinkable. "Appreciation of the Royal House--its services to Pomerania, to Prussia, indeed to the whole of the German Fatherland," was second nature to Herr Hitler and must surely be second nature to all other good men and true.

One can see him propped up in his hospital bed--with a really beautiful dose of poison-gas--scarcely able to believe his ears when he heard the men around him speaking with a certain lack of respect of the upper classes and their military ways, and--worst of all--calling in question the beauty of war itself! But he had learnt to be "circumspect" in Braunau on the Inn. He said nothing. He listened.

In fact, from that moment began his career as an informer. For his next step (more or less sleep-walking, like all his steps) towards the top of his ladder was taken upon his return to Munich. There he lived in the barracks of the Second Infantry Regiment.

A few days after the liberation of Munich [from the "Soldiers' Councils"] I was ordered to appear before the Inquiry Commission which had been set up in the 2nd Infantry Regiment for the purpose of watching revolutionary activities. That was my first immersion into the more or less political field.

Hitler has been described as a "coppers' nark." His job, at all events, seems to have been to collect information. He would mix with the civil population, as a

military spy--attend political meetings, frequent the beerhouses. What the military wanted to know was what the "civvies" were saying about them. After Verdun and the rest of it that was not unnatural.

This great military nation in defeat, which had had its Spartacus insurrection, and short-lived Kurt Eisner régime in the south, still had the army. Cut down to the size of a police-force, the army became the rallying ground for political reaction, and functioned as a political as well as a military body. Just as the British Secret Service is supposed to promote assassinations, the Reichswehr had a swarm of agents, and political murder was a thing that rather appealed to them than otherwise.

It was while engaged in espionage and snooping round meetings of a suspect description, that Hitler happened upon the budding National Socialist German Workers' Party (at that time the "D.A.P."). And a nasty little party he must have thought it, when first he saw it. More likely than not he reported to the military that he had spotted a new brand of subversive activity that would repay watching. "I felt that here was just another one of these many new societies which were being formed at the time. In those days everybody felt called upon to found a new party whenever he felt displeasure with the course of events" (Mein Kampf).

He watched. He listened. As he listened a big idea dawned in the murky depths of his sleep-walking mind. Here was a little party that called itself Socialist. Yet it was as loyal to the royal house, and the German Army, as you could wish. Was it possible? Could, after all, the cannon-fodder and the generals be reconciled? They could! His heart (beating faster, you may be sure) told him that they could. The listening spy joined in and shouted louder than anybody. He placed himself at the head of the D.A.P. Since then Herr Hitler has never looked back. Ambition reared its ugly head. The future Führer was born in that beer-cellar, where he had gone to snoop, but decided to try his luck as a bogus revolutionary. To sell the revolution, yes! But also to change his tactics.

The Führer-to-be almost immediately made a remarkable and epoch-making discovery. He discovered that he was a "spell-binder." It must have been a tremendous event in his life. He had tried to enter the schools of painting, and the schools of architecture, and engage in that laborious apprenticeship that after years of study leads (sometimes) to fame. Now he found-- after thirty years--that all the time the solution lay right inside his mouth. No training, to speak of, was

necessary. The jaw-muscles would soon get used to delivering verbal broadsides and discharging torrents of pent-up sentiment. It was sufficient to open his mouth and out would pour a whirlwind of platitude which simply swept everybody off their feet.

The ex-orderly corporal turned as if by magic into a perfect Pied Piper. Soon he was at the head of quite a crowd of people. In February 1920 the famous Twenty-five Points of the German Workers' Party were drawn up: and in 1921 he stole the party for himself from its original founder, Anton Drexler. For there is nothing original about Herr Hitler, thank goodness. Gottfried Feder--one of the original members--supplied a sort of Douglasite economics, which the "spell-binder" accepted intact. He thought it was good spell-binding material (especially as it objected savagely to any one receiving interest on money loaned: obviously that had always been the snag in borrowing money, that you had to give back more than you borrowed--and pay quicker than you liked). Then he took over lock, stock, and barrel the Fascist technique from "that great man beyond the Alps," as he called Mussolini, ten years before the Axis was born. For if he is not original, he is not ungrateful. And it had not yet occurred to him that he was a "great man" himself (for Herr Hitler--another virtue--is not especially conceited). That came much later. He began to regard himself as a "great man" about 1925, when the party was reconstituted. He had got over the damping effects of the Putsch by that time, and was getting ready for the slump (which he knew must come), and which, in effect, by 1932, whirled him up to the supreme office in the State, and beyond it, to a pinnacle of power undreamt of even by Bismarck (who remained to the last a mere "pilot" who could be dropped).

Hitler's "spell-binding" was in the starkest sense the effect of his sincerity--his simplicity, if you like. He believed in the army. He believed in Deutschland über Alles. He believed in the royal house. Only to a fantastic extent! He is undoubtedly very eccentric. He was possessed by a trite passion. He was possessed by it to such an abnormal degree that a salvationist technique was as natural to him as it ever was to a plantation-nigger.

Ten years of this technique has had its effect upon the "sleep-walker" who stepped half-blinded out of the hospital at Pasewalk. Has it converted him to socialism? Not to the sort of socialism professed by the "Kaiser's Socialists," or by our Labour Party, nor yet to any orthodox brand of authentic socialism; but to the Socialist end of National Socialism? However that may be, he has certainly

cooled off in his "appreciation" of the House of Hohenzollern and the Wittelsbach dynasty. Having bumped off or given the boot to a few generals it is doubtful if he has retained his sensations of blind devotion regarding generals. He is very far now from the half-blind patient of Pasewalk.

Well, having got at the head of a party--with twenty-five articles of faith that were fairly radical-looking, but did affect to reconcile the cannon-fodder to the generals--he established contact with Ludendorff. The latter was the brains of the old imperial army. By this time our hero had come to discriminate between soldiers and soldiers--and generals and generals. The Reichswehr was the awful shield of the people, yes: but this army was not necessarily as good as a still better army might be.

In November 1923 came the Beerhouse Putsch (so-called because Hitler started it in a beerhouse where all the generals were junketing). It was really a private affair of the army's. Hitler attempted, with the help of Ludendorff, to revolutionize the Reichswehr. And--seeing that Hitler is a youth-racketeer, and National-Socialism, like Italian Fascism, had a violent "youth-at-the-helm" plank in its platform, a policy to "catch 'em young"--it was a rebellion of the Young Reichswehr against the Old Reichswehr. It had nothing to do with the people at large.

Hitler was still very servile. When he was congratulating one of the generals who had agreed--at the pistol-point--to do what he wanted, he exclaimed: "Excellency, I will stand behind you as faithfully as your dog!"

On 9th November 1923 Hitler and Ludendorff at the head of great numbers of armed Nazis marched through the centre of Munich. A police detachment met them and opened fire. Hitler-- the seasoned Frontkämpfer--flung himself down with such violence that he sprained his shoulder, but the bullets passed harmlessly over him. Ludendorff, quite unused to real war-- never having seen it at closer quarters than the G.H.Q.--head high, marched proudly forward. All the rest of the Nazi army vanished--Hitler was among the first to leave the stricken field, and was hidden by Hanfständl up in the mountains. Ludendorff suddenly found himself alone, like the boy on the burning deck, and was put under arrest. Goering, who was wounded, hurried away to Sweden.

This was all extremely depressing--or would have been to any one less peculiar than Hitler, and in a time less obviously propitious to the sort of revolution that

Hitler, and Hitler alone, had in mind. Also Hitler had tasted the sweets of power; and what "faithful dog" that has done that is ever content to return to his kennel? Further, he knew his world, by this time, wie seine Tasche.

He had to wait five years for the great American slump. Gottfried Feder--who had hard-and-fast views regarding the policy of the Federal Reserve Bank, and the immense calamities that awaited everybody as a result of its machinations--predicted the crash in the midst of American prosperity. It was certain to hit Germany. It hit everybody. And when it hit Germany, Hitler could go Putsch-ing again.

When German unemployment figures reached the six-million mark, Hitler came up for the second round. He won by what might be termed a "technical knock-out" in 1933. For there was no March on Berlin, as there had been a March on Rome.

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg declared Herr Hitler the winner. "Old man--step aside!" Herr Hitler boomed at the aged president. And in the end there was not even a referee left in the ring. Herr Hitler's cloud of seconds held their Führer's strong right arm on high. The sleep-walker had won his Kampf.

VII HITLER, 1933-1939

IT might be possible to explain and estimate the Führer without running through his political history, as I am doing. But seeing that his actions speak so very much more eloquently than anything he may ever have said or written, I do not believe it is possible to separate Herr Hitler from the Reichstag fire, the liquidation of Röhm, and the rest of it. So let us devote a few pages to tracking him from 1933 to 1939.

It was in the spring of 1933 that Hitler became Reichskanzler. He did not immediately control all the machinery of the State, but he was very rapidly to do so. The Reichstag fire was a great help. In October 1933 Germany left the Disarmament Conference at Geneva; and at the same time Herr Hitler dissolved the Reichstag. These were the beginnings of that long string of thunderclaps which historically are strung out over the last six stormy years, and which represent the successive steps by which Herr Hitler has destroyed--or almost destroyed--the Treaty of Versailles, and restored Germany to its former position of military and political preponderance in Europe.

Pausing to examine a few as we go along, let us run through these events. First, the Reichstag fire. Gallons of ink have been wasted to prove the Nazis set fire to the Reichstag. Goering was the Guy Fawkes, some say. "We all knew that the only secret passage to the building led directly into Goering's home." Along this passage Goering travelled thickly muffled, set the match to the combustible material, and returned to bed.

There seems no evidence which could bring home to Torgler the "crime." And seeing how useful it obviously would be for National Socialism, if there really was a secret passage from Goering's house to the Reichstag building, he would have been very stupid to refrain from using it. Even the "crime" I have never quite appreciated, except that, belonging as I do to a parliamentary democracy, I see how wicked it was to burn down Parliament or to try and blow it up, as Guy Fawkes did. (On 5th November I am always rejoiced to see that objectionable papist burning in effigy. Pfui Teufel!)

Here we have a trick that any filibuster-politico, whether Communist or Fascist,

would indulge in automatically; he could not help himself, if the opportunity offered--and of course blame it on some other party. The wicked Count Helldorf--you have probably heard of him--may have set the Reichstag on fire; or that old schoolboy Goering; or Communists may have been busy setting a match to it at one end of the building, while the Nazis were doing the same at the other.

For the rest of 1933 Hitler was preparing to set fire to something much more important than the Reichstag, namely Europe. And the securing of arms was the first step. That started in October at Geneva; and the next year, 1934, German rearmament began in earnest. The diplomatic wrangles started between those big babies, the so-called "Great Powers," as to how many big guns and how many small ones the naughty boy beyond the Rhine should be allowed to have: whether eventually if she was a good boy (if you will excuse the sexual confusion) she should be allowed a third as many pop-guns as France. She said she'd willingly scrap everything, to the last machine-gun, if other people would. But that was just her objectionable levity, for she knew that it was like proposing that people should wear no clothes, not even a fig-leaf.

The year 1934 was the most violent year in the National Socialist revolution; for it saw both the suppression of the Röhm faction--the famous "purge" of 30th June, and in July the murder of Dollfuss, the pocket dictator of Austria. "Dolly Dollfuss" as his Nazi enemies called him, because he was barely five feet high. They used to release small pigs in crowded Viennese streets, which rushed between people's legs, with "Dolly Dollfuss" painted on them.

Otto Planetta, the young Nazi who shot Dollfuss, was hanged by the neck, but it was really strangulation, for he was strung up in such a manner as not to kill him outright. I mention this to show how both sides were comparatively savage. I could never understand what Dollfuss wanted, seeing that he had participated in the destruction of the Left Wing parties in Austria, and was not particularly sympathetic towards the Jews. I am not fussy about things not being clear-cut in politics. I like a little mystery. But here were political distinctions that appeared to me frivolous like, say, the high-hatting of a hotel shoeblack by a bell-hop.

Herr Hitler's account of the Röhm-Schleicher "purge" was that Röhm had been plotting with Schleicher to overthrow the régime, and that agents of foreign powers were in the plot. That sounds a little phoney, but it is best not to dismiss it at once.

It had been whispered for some months in London that something was going to happen--I mean, that Hitler was going to be displaced, and National Socialism was coming to an end. This was to happen, also, in June or July. When one considers how many reasons a political general like Von Schleicher had for trying to get rid of Hitler--and in view of the persistent and confident rumours abroad that something of first-class importance was on foot--there seems no insuperable obstacle to the plot-story, as told by Herr Hitler, being true.

At the time of the "purge" it was said that Herr Hitler cruelly and treacherously bumped off his pals. Actually Röhm and Hitler were not pals. They had had several quarrels long before 1934, and were probably none too fond of each other. Then Captain Röhm's homosexuality was spectacular. It was not only distasteful to the puritan Führer, but a great embarrassment to the other Nazi leaders.

The Röhm "purge" may almost be regarded as a show-down between the homosexual end and the non-homosexual end of the National Socialist movement. Hitler, Goering, Himmler, Goebbels, Frick, etc., being on the normal side; Röhm, Ernst, Heines, etc., being on the abnormal side.

Hitler had always had complications with his brown-shirted praetorian guard, as was to be expected. Röhm (a Reichswehr officer originally), who had been instrumental in raising and organizing this three million strong militia, was not a very reliable colleague, and Hitler had probably wanted to see the back of him for a long time. He who lives by the revolver shall die by the revolver: and Röhm had promoted assassination as a matter of course and all his best friends were murderers (like Heines). So he at least cannot have been particularly surprised when Hitler made away with him. He probably expected it.

"Hitler's indifference to the moral character of his subordinates can perhaps be explained by the superiority of a personally irreproachable character devoted solely to the cause itself." So says Herr Konrad Heiden. Or it may just have been that that variety of sexual delinquency was so prevalent in the German Army that it was impossible to be too fussy, in a movement of such great scope, and one bound to look for its support among the younger Reichswehr officers and Free Corps eccentrics.

In the early days of National Socialism Röhm quarrelled with Hitler over the use to be made of the S.A. [Sturm Abteilungen, or private army], and went out

into the wilderness without so much as a word of thanks from the Leader who called himself his friend. For years after his departure the party lacked a proper S.A. Röhm wanted to exclude party politics from the S.A., and to forbid the political leaders of the Nazi party from issuing instructions to the S.A. leaders. In this demand Hitler saw a limitation placed upon his own personal authority. For his part he demanded of Röhm that the S.A. should be completely subject to the party leadership. At this point Röhm broke off the conversation, and on the next day handed to Hitler his resignation as leader of the S.A. He wrote to Hitler . . . asking him not to deprive him of his friendship. He never received an answer. His official letter of resignation remained unanswered. . . . Hitler kept silence both in private and in public.--A History of National Socialism (Methuen).

All this happened ten years before the "purge" of 30th June 1934, in which Röhm was left alone in a prison cell, supplied with a revolver, and told to remain alive as short a time as possible. (Other stories say he was shot.) Therefore, to give the Führer his due, it was not quite correct to represent Hitler as suddenly polishing off his bosom friend and loyal comrade.

But there is another thing. All these people think in terms of courts-martial. That is a point that the English public has all along failed to allow for. They feel themselves at war. They have done so from the start. And at last they have made even Mr Chamberlain feel as if he were at war. (Our Prime Minister remarked when he introduced the Military Service Bill a short while ago: that this could hardly be called peace, and so he did not feel bound by his promise never to introduce conscription in peace-time.)

Röhm, as much as Hitler or Goering (if not indeed more so), thought in terms of courts-martial, and would not have comprehended the outcry about the "blood-bath," any more than a soldier at the Battle of Verdun would have seen any meaning in an appeal from some nice old lady who had strayed into the trenches against "the cruelty of all this bloodshed"; or than Sir Roger Casement would have sympathized with a denunciation of the British Government on the score of "inhumanity" in sentencing to death a convicted rebel.

All this has to be said lest the public in Britain, influenced by its orderly traditions and immunity for so long from civil violence, should take too sensational a view of Hitler, and lose the sense of the real shortcomings of the German leader in exaggerating his homicidal tendencies.

No one could say that Herr Hitler is a strikingly humane person. His persecution of the Jews alone would preclude us from supposing that. He has descended to petty and stupid malignity in his pursuit of the Jewish minority, which is an extremely ugly mark against him--quite apart from our condemnation of his general policy regarding the Jewish community. But it is unlikely that the Röhm episode is any more than what happens in Chicago when one gang muscles in on another's racket. It is just as likely that Captain Röhm double-crossed our hero, as that our hero double-crossed Captain Röhm. And who would put it past certain foreign Governments to intrigue with disaffected Nazis? They would be stupid not to. The Nazi would be stupid not to take appropriate counter action.

In Hitler's upward journey, 1935 was a very full year. It is well stuffed with such important landmarks as the Saar Plebiscite and the Anglo-German Naval Treaty. The Saarlanders afforded an example of the potency of the pan-German bug. Over ninety per cent of them voted for their return to the Fatherland, against the personal interest of most of them. For the average Saarlander would have been much better off as he was--a League pet. Courted from both sides, by the French and the German, this small minority had a brilliant future in front of it, sitting on the fence. Yet even the Catholic bishops gave their support to Hitlerian Germany.

The Anglo-German Naval Treaty was a fine example of Herr Hitler's technique in dealing with foreign states. To say he renounced for ever the idea of a fleet comparable to the English or French navies was to make a virtue of necessity; and also to lull the British Admiralty's suspicions and consign them to inactivity, while Germany made such headway as it could with its new submarine flotillas.

It was in '35 that the announcement was made by Goering that Germany had an air force. This was of course a crime. But he did not specify how big a one. From that moment until well into '38 it became a sort of game with public men in Great Britain to assert that upon the best authority they had it that the German Air Force numbered three thousand first line machines --four thousand--five thousand--ten thousand: until at last, throwing all restraint to the winds, a newspaper magnate put the figure at twenty-five thousand, I think it was. On unimpeachable authority! That sort of broke the bank, or it ended the bidding. No one could say that Germany hadn't got twenty-five thousand machines against our fifteen hundred. It was left at that. And with great reluctance the British Government began putting aircraft construction upon a semi-war footing, and I suppose every sensible person put his money into shadow-factories, and began recouping on the domestic swings what he had lost on the foreign

roundabouts.

In addition to the shock about the new German Air Force, there was the 16th March announcement of the reintroduction of compulsory military service. But in the autumn of that year (1935) a shock was administered to the world that put even the German shocks in the shade. Mussolini invaded Abyssinia.

Without that--or rather without the unspeakably stupid reaction to it on the part of the Western Powers; without Sanctions, the Hoare-Laval imbroglio, and all the rest of it--it is doubtful if Hitler could have proceeded on his stately course. He could hardly have passed from coup to coup with a light-hearted indifference to the howls of dismay that each fresh enterprise provoked. Things would have gone nothing like so quickly--Hitler would not have appeared so great a man.

It is impossible to say which of his little surprises made the world gasp most. The occupation and remilitarization of the Rhine was the most breath-taking thing that had been done up to date (though of course walking about in your own back-garden, or upon the banks of your own river, could not be regarded by the man in the street such a black crime as all that). Herr Hitler risked war then for the first time--against the advice of most of his generals. But these successive shocks acted as shock-absorbers for the next shock. For it is doubtful, had no shocks preceded it, whether the annexation of Austria in March 1938 would have been swallowed as easily as it was-- though of course that was complicated for the Western Powers by Italy's very natural defection and decision to act against the European concert.

By the time we got round to Czechoslovakia, we were almost in a hurry to accommodate Hitler regarding Sudetenland and all that lay behind it. And probably Stalin was correct when he asserted that it was hoped by the Western Powers that Hitler would proceed with this new rape as promptly as possible till he reached the tip of Ruthenia, and was really beautifully placed to make a piratic grab at the Ukraine. Then Russia and Germany would engage in a death-grapple, and the west of Europe would be spared the attentions of both these disagreeable monsters for a long time to come.

So much for the doings of this "sleep-walker" whose followers boast that he never makes a false step. This claim I find it very difficult to accept. He has taken a great many steps, none of which so far have had ill results for him. But these steps were only not false ones because none of the things that he has done

up to the present was worth a world war, looked at cynically. The Governments who endured these shocks were cynical Governments. They rapidly got used to shocks. They have, I believe, actually come rather to enjoy them. M. Bonnet has a look in that eye of his, at the side of his prodigious nose, that seems to signify amused acceptance of the fearful diplomatic wallops administered by the Brute across the Rhine. And Mr Chamberlain's immunity to shock is a thing of which he is justly proud.

VIII A POLITICIANS' HERO

HAVING got so far, by way of the text of Mein Kampf, and by a reconsideration of a few of the major facts of his career, of his Putsches and coups, I must now (still sticking to the text of Mein Kampf) endeavour to arrive at an estimate of Herr Hitler's character and importance. Before I take leave of him, and pass once more into the troubled political field encompassing--he says "encircling"--this small and perplexing figure, I hope I may, without having contributed any new and sensational information (and indeed, as I have remarked, I do not believe there is any more of that), have succeeded in stressing the smallness of this personality, and removing as much of the glamour as possible.

The glamour is a mistake. All politicians, in our false system, get too much of it. Having set the world by the ears, Hitler is advertised by the very people who hate him most. They make a devil of him, just as his own countrymen regard him as a god. It is best to set our faces against the devil-picture as much as against the god-picture.

I do not wish, on the other hand, to undervalue this Jingo God, or Despotical Devil. What Heiden and so many other people-- all, be it noted, bitter enemies of his--have said of his superb strategy may be partly true, for it is obvious that Hitler is not devoid of cunning. He is shrewd as well as bold. But this is the sort of admiration that is felt for a great newspaper proprietor, or department-store magnate, all said and done. That is the great point I would make. Herr Hitler, on this showing, is a hero of the same order as Lord Northcliffe or as Woolworth. But that is not at all the sort of hero that Herr Hitler wants to be.

This scorner of the Geschäftsleute turns out to be, most ironically, a business man's hero! At most he is a politicians' hero--which is much the same thing. He will never be a military one--except in the matter of common bravery as orderly corporal. Bravery of that kind, as we know, usually leads to a man selling matches in the gutter, or at the most to a situation as commissionaire at the door of a fashionable night-club. Bravery alone would not have taken Hitler far.

I will quote Herr Hitler again on the subject of the triumph of the money-hero.

During the years of my youth nothing used to damp my wild spirits so much as to think that I was born at a time when the world had manifestly decided not to erect any more temples of fame except in honour of business people . . . the tempest of historical achievements seemed to have permanently subsided, so much so that the future appeared to be irrevocably delivered over to what was called peaceful competition between the nations.

That is the passage with which Chapter V of his book, *Mein Kampf*, opens. It is instructive to analyse it. What he is saying is that the romance of history had ended. Then the Great War occurred, and history came to life again with a bang. I have italicized that expression, "the tempest of historical achievement." For that phraseology is immensely revealing. In Hitler's view, history is a tempest, a tornado--the tempest of war. Only a storm--a storm of steel--is an "event" that is worth while. Such puny "events" as the discoveries of Galileo or of Newton, the mere idle philosophizing of such sedentary persons as Socrates, or Spinoza, or as David Hume: the harmless scribbling of a Dante or a Shakespeare, is small beer compared to Attila's sensational performances--or a good gruelling religious war. That is the best of the lot. Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, but Hannibal was a tempest. And as to Attila, he was a typhoon. Phew! There was history for you! The whole of this passage is a beautiful example of a belated *Sturm und Drang*.

Hitler is an incorrigible German romantic. But it is important to emphasize that he is a romantic of a vulgar order. He is not a great romantic--he is not a Schiller. He is more like a dreamy-eyed hairdresser, who reads Schiller, without understanding him, in between haircuts, and wallows in the obvious at the slightest provocation.

"Romantic" is a term to which it is difficult to give a popular definition. If you read in a work of popular fiction, "The moonlight was on the water of the lake. Joyce was feeling romantic. Anthony took her soft hand in his," that means that an emotional state, conducive to amorous experiences, was produced in a young woman by the blue beams of our satellite upon the surface of a sheet of water at night. Joyce became dreamy--the moonlight made things look a little unreal. Anthony, for the moment, looked like Clark Gable.

In popular speech "romantic" is usually associated with sexual experience. But in the above scene at the lake-side it is the unreal quality of the moonlight that precipitates the "romantic" sensations, and induces a dreaminess, in which the laws of cause and effect lose their sharpness, and geese look like swans. The

whole of the rest of life, all the consequences of whatever action may be taken, are lost sight of in the "romance" of the moment.

The romantic mind presents everything to itself in an unreal light. Reality is subjectively distorted--in a sense favourable to the subject, of course. And the nature of the danger inherent in romantic thinking it is hardly necessary to stress--the danger both from the standpoint of the romantic subject, and whoever may have the ill luck to encounter him. If he mistakes geese for swans, he also mistakes quite average persons, neither better nor worse than other people, for devils incarnate.

The born romantic is permanently intoxicated. All sense of distance, of time, and of measure is lost. He feels that he has seven-league boots; that to-day is so momentous that nothing before or after matters; that he has the strength of a St George, and could destroy a hundred dragons--which he proceeds to do.

But there is a saying that a drunken man never comes to any harm. Once I knew a country postman who was always intoxicated. He fell over a bluff, or cliff, without being any the worse for it the next morning, and I was told he had done so several times. It never affected him.

Herr Hitler has some of the qualities of an alcoholic. He possesses some of the good luck of the toper. That probably is what he means, when he refers to himself as a "sleep-walker." He would fall over the little cliff, like the postman, and be none the worse for the experience.

Still, a romantic pure and simple would be very easy to deal with. His imperfect sense of the actual would expose him to attack. An opponent whose judgment was not impaired by emotional exaggeration would have no difficulty in getting the upper hand. Hitler is not vulnerable like that. This is because he sleeps and dreams with one eye open. He has his wits about him. Every one allows that he is shrewd--though his followers insist that he does the right thing on all occasions because of a kind of second sight. Intuitive judgment is almost his speciality.

Is Herr Hitler sincere? That is a question closely associated with what I have just been talking about: namely, his romanticism.

I will not trouble you here with any of the abstruser problems depending upon the word "sincere." However, only the very stupid man is sincere--in a stupid

sense. Hitler is, I believe, a sincere man, and so a stupid one. But he is so violently sincere--and therefore so violently stupid--that his is not a simple case.

The way he expresses himself in *Mein Kampf* has an almost alarmingly bogus sound at times. How bogus is it? Here is an example. Let us listen to the tone of the voice, in reading the passage, and see if it has a false ring or not. It shows us the young workman, Hitler, in Vienna, watching a labour demonstration.

It was with a quite different feeling, some days later, that I gazed on the interminable ranks, four abreast, of Viennese workmen parading at a mass demonstration. I stood dumbfounded for almost two hours watching that enormous human dragon which slowly uncoiled itself there before me. When I finally left the square and wandered in the direction of my lodgings I felt dismayed and depressed. On my way I noticed the *Arbeiterzeitung* (The Workman's Journal) in a tobacco shop. This was the chief press-organ of the old Austrian Social Democracy. In a cheap café, where the common people used to foregather and where I often went to read the papers, the *Arbeiterzeitung* was also displayed. But hitherto I could not bring myself to do more than glance at the wretched thing for a couple of minutes; for its whole tone was a sort of mental vitriol for me. Under the depressing influence of the demonstration I had witnessed, some interior voice urged me to buy the paper in that tobacco shop and read it through. So I brought it home with me and spent the whole evening reading it, despite the steadily-mounting rage provoked by the ceaseless outpouring of falsehoods.

Is this a true account of his sensations; and if so, why should he feel so "dumbfounded" and "dismayed" at the herds of the poor and underpaid wage-slaves of a heartless and irrational system doing all it lies in their power to do--namely demonstrate how numerous they are--how much of one mind in the matter of obtaining some small measure of justice?

Without such demonstrations as these, as we all know, these victims of a racketeering, competitive system would be entirely at the mercy of a handful of people, who regard them as no better than sheep or cattle, and even resent, in some cases, their possessing a human form at all and having the (quite unnecessary) power of speech.

"The *Arbeiterzeitung* was also displayed. But hitherto I could not bring myself to do more than glance at the wretched thing." This rather comically priggish

language is typical. How real is it? How far is it the language of the "coppers' nark"? As for the "outpourings of falsehoods" which assailed Herr Hitler when he opened the Daily Worker of Vienna, he must have known these were matched by an "outpouring" of a suaver type certainly, but even more offensive in the great "popular" press. So why this declamatory substantive--why this self-righteous "rage"--as if every one except the Socialists were great gentlemen, who could not soil their lips with an untruth?

When one considers what an audience he had in mind when he wrote Mein Kampf, however, the issue becomes clearer. Hitler was writing for the unemployed military, the Reichswehr and its hangers-on, and principally the officer and reserve officer, along with their discontented relatives in the learned professions. Mein Kampf is a book of opportunist military philosophy; almost as much as the Putsch of 1923 was a private affair of the new army. These are all military politics.

All men are sincere to some extent, and in one way or another. They are true to an unalterable pattern of feeling: to their "personality," as we say. Hitler's particular sincerity resides in the fact that he was genuinely servile; or, if you like, enthusiastically subaltern. He made an admirable orderly corporal--he was not aggrieved because he failed to be promoted a sergeant.

The proof that he was sincere was that he was enthusiastically subordinate first. It was only afterwards that it occurred to him that his exemplary subservience might be put to good account, and be made to serve his own ends. He was an authentic "faithful dog" before he became a top-dog.

How soon did he realize to the full how profitable these qualities of innate subordination, properly advertised, might be, in the post-War Reich? At the time of the first of his great meetings, in the Krone Circus Hall, he knew he was on to a big thing. But did he not know how big it was, and how big (with luck) he could become?

However that may be, his innate self-effacement, like his gallantry in action, are genuine. And it is that original stock of humility that has enabled him to reach his present position. It was in that that he differed from Goebbels, Strasser, Goering, and the rest. They have allowed him to lead them because they felt they could trust him: that, at all events, has been a big factor in his success. Then he has no weakness that is dangerous to his confederates. He is not too fond of

women, like Goebbels; or of pretty boys, like Röhm, or of good cheer, like Goering. I am aware that many people will regard this insistence upon his native humility--now that he has acquired a "Napoleonic strut"--as a paradox.

I am not quite sure that the orderly corporal entirely approves of Herr Hitler, the great Führer. I think we can detect something of that sort in the Führer's eye.

IX HERR HITLER AND "PIG-HEADED INTELLECTUALS"

THERE remains to be considered Herr Hitler's attitude to the German people. That is involved, obviously, with the question of his sincerity, and with the fact of his romantic temperament. Does Herr Hitler love the German people? I believe he does feel drawn to the German qua German. He feels great sympathy for a certain down-and-out Austrian of German blood, about 1906, surrounded by herds of detestable Jews, Czechs, and Wops. And his sympathy for that romantic outcast-in-his-own-land (the young Adolf) gives him a sort of kindly feeling for all Germans. Or rather that is so until he encounters them face to face; when of course he realizes that ninety per cent of them fall very far short of the German ideal, and consequently are rather Germans in name than in fact.

I should extend my affirmation of Herr Hitler's sincerity in the last chapter to a further affirmation: namely, that he is more sincere than most people. But we must return for a moment to the problems of sincerity again.

All people, as I have observed, are sincere in one sense, merely by reason of their being. Human life implies a personal principle to which you must be true, whether you will or no. A Mayfair "society" blackmailer or cut-purse is, for instance, sincere inasmuch as he conforms to a certain type of man. Jack the Ripper, again, was sincerely homicidal. A fox is sincerely foxy; and a foxy man is sincerely crafty and predatory. But the cut-purse, the homicide, or the three-card-trick man has to cloak his true nature. Therefore he is insincere in his dealings with his fellows. Most of our parlour Communists, or ultra-patriot Fascists, are insincere in the opinions they affect. What is more, they would be extremely surprised if they learnt that you took them at their word and regarded them as sincere. The first thing an honest mind has to realize is that honesty (that is to say, an interest in truth for its own sake, or the ability to make it real and concrete) is peculiarly rare.

To have an interest in the truth is one thing; to be equipped to master it is another. Herr Hitler has an appetite for the truth: he was born honest, if poor in intellect. Being endowed with a tawdry romantic intellectual outfit, reality eludes him. But he does try to establish contact with reality, and to be real himself,

which is more than can be said for most people.

He knows this--that his intellect is not very bright. He has been told it often enough. And it makes him very angry. In Mein Kampf he delivers attack after attack upon the "Intellectual." It is said that he avoids all men of any literary distinction or of learning. Which is merely the jealousy of a soap-box orator, who has risen to his present eminence, after all, by means of words, for anybody who understands words better than he does, and is a little fastidious as to their use.

But let us hear him--for there is nothing like Mein Kampf for revealing the way his mind works.

It is just typical of our pig-headed intellectuals, who live apart from the practical world, to think that a writer must of necessity be superior to an orator in intelligence. This point of view was once exquisitely illustrated by a critique, published in a certain national paper . . . where it was stated that one is often disillusioned by reading the speech of an acknowledged great orator in print.

This, I should hazard the guess, was a speech by a "great orator," called Adolf Hitler!

That reminded me of another article which came into my hands during the War. It dealt with the speeches of Lloyd George. . . . The writer made the brilliant statement that these speeches showed inferior intelligence . . . moreover they were banal and commonplace productions. I myself procured some of these speeches . . . and had to laugh at the fact that a normal German quill-driver did not in the least understand these psychological masterpieces in the art of influencing the masses. . . . That Englishman's speeches were most wonderful achievements, precisely because they showed an astonishing knowledge of the soul of the broad masses of people.

There you have the mob-orator defending his renown. "I may talk a lot of nonsense," he says in effect. "But look at the way it gets the masses by the small hairs! My reasoning may only be fit for an infants' class--my phraseology may be coarse and `commonplace'--I may appeal only to the lowest emotions, and say things that would only be listened to with patience by a moron. But what of it? And aren't most people vulgar and stupid? And aren't I `intelligent' to have seen that, and learnt how to flatter, frighten, and cajole them?"

To which the "pig-headed German intellectual" might reply:

"Yes, you are smart in your way. You probably understand the moron better than, say, Goethe or Kant would, because you are a bit of a moron yourself. You may be able to speak to the vulgar, with the tongue of the vulgar, because that is also your native tongue. But since you have got so much out of it, why do you aspire to have your speeches accepted as anything but what they are, emotional hogwash? And why do you not live and let live: why cannot you let us poor 'intellectuals' alone? Is it not sufficient that you make a million people blubber every weekend with your soap-boxing--and inhabit a glittering palace as a result of this unpleasant gift of the gab? Must you also aspire to the laurels of the poet or the austere rewards of the philosophic man? Be a 'man of action' by all means, and use the jargon appropriate to a man of action. But do not be so stupid, or so vain, as to seek to prove that it is the only kind of action."

I answer for the German intellectual--since he, poor devil, if he remains inside the Reich, cannot answer for himself. If any German living in his native land wrote to-day what I have just written he would have signed his death warrant.

As this is a side of the Hitler situation which holds especial interest for me, I will proceed a little further in my analysis of this touchy mountebank, and this particular vanity of his.

That a mob-orator, whose speeches find their way into cold print, should consider it worth while to insist upon their intellectual value, is as if the song-writer who has many "hits" to his credit should assert that creations of the Lambeth Walk type, since they go straight to the heart of the masses, are verbally in no way inferior to Herrick or Yeats, and musically a match for Mozart. Or, instead of the song-writer, take the after-dinner speaker. A successful after-dinner speech is a psychological triumph, for it is marvellously attuned to the audience. But it is probably the nastiest accomplishment on earth. (I speak of course of English after-dinner oratory.)

It is true that all Herr Hitler said was that it was awfully intelligent of him to talk such emotional rubbish. It proved he was no fool. That may be conceded. But he always implies that, although a little primitive, his orations are really rather fine stuff: and that a man incapable of such a platform performance is in some way inferior. We are intended to come away with the impression that it is rather stupid to write at all--talking is better: or alternatively to use words, either

written or spoken, that do not do something in the practical field, is a waste of time. It is the utilitarian argument.

There is something of which he seems unaware: namely that emotional rubbish, printed for public consumption, has an objective existence. In itself it is highly distasteful to some people. That shoddy inflammatory verbiage has a diametrically opposite effect upon a "pig-headed intellectual" (German or otherwise) from what it has upon a mob. Because these "pig-headed" people are not a mob, but few in numbers--their voting strength nil--that does not alter the case; although Herr Hitler always suggests that it should.

Herr Hitler is a numbers-snob, as is natural in a demagogue. It is perhaps to be pig-headed to point out bare-faced inconsistencies in the text of a spellbinder. But I think that I should, all the same. "All human civilization," Herr Hitler says, "has resulted exclusively from the creative activity of the individual. . . . Marxism represents the most striking phase of the Jewish endeavour to eliminate the dominant significance of personality in every sphere of human life and replace it by the numerical power of the masses." In spite of the fact that he speaks in this beautiful way about quality as against quantity, he does not hesitate, when it suits his book, to invoke "the numerical power of the masses"--quite like the most degraded "Marxist Jew." The "pig-headed intellectual" is reminded of his numerical impotence. And in the next breath the future Führer will be covering with scorn the "multitude."

To return to the question of this mass-oratory, and Herr Hitler's defence of it: could these demagogic appeals be made by way of music instead of speech--how much better that would be! It is because the democratic or demagogic orator uses words, and--alas--arguments, that his speeches, when printed and read in cold blood, cannot but come beneath the same criteria as all other examples of rational discourse. Or if they are deliberately irrational, as much poetry is, then they must be judged on the same footing as other poetry. If they are bad poetry--as they are negligible as rational statement--then they are verbally an offence, however many heads may have been broken as a consequence of their utterance.

It is out of the question to think that the French Revolution could have been carried into effect by philosophizing theorists if they had not found an army of agitators led by demagogues. . . . These demagogues inflamed popular passion . . . until that volcanic eruption finally broke out and convulsed the whole of Europe. . . . The masses of illiterate Russians were not fired to communist

revolutionary enthusiasm by reading the theories of Karl Marx, but by the promises of paradise made to the people by thousands of agitators.

It may be that demagogues and agitators are not my favourite type of man. I have not the same enthusiasm for them as has Herr Hitler, certainly. Karl Marx is obviously very much more important than the agitators who interpret him in the market-place, just as Beethoven is more important than the executant who interprets him at the piano. Indeed, the agitator is of so little consequence, that no one would trouble to discuss whether he was stupid or not, so long as he did his stuff competently. It is only because Herr Hitler pretends to be something more than an agitator--in fact, a sort of anti-Marx, a prophet, a "philosopher"--that one finds oneself engaged in this discussion.

I have said that Hitler is a business-man's hero. What is more, he has his full share of the business magnate's jealousy for the "artist" or "intellectual" (especially as he started life as a sort of artist himself). But how odd it is--once more-- that he should give himself such airs when referring to the stockbroking standards of the time!

The arguments of this touchy demagogue to which we have just been listening might quite well have emanated from the pen of a Lord Northcliffe. That gentleman made his fortune with such papers as *Answers*. It was a miracle of business astuteness. For he was the first man to realize that, since the poor are so much more numerous than the rich, the pennies of the poor are better worth fishing for than the tuppences of the well-to-do. An article upon a chicken-run in a back-yard will bring you in more money than an article upon how to water your tennis lawn; because for one person who has a tennis lawn a thousand have a back-yard. And by attending to the back-yards and garbage-tins you become a peer in Great Britain and a Reichskanzler in Germany. Honour to whom honour is due.

Contemplating the achievements of the creator of *Answers*: "This was genius!" roars the commercial enthusiast. "Genius" is the word we use to describe the work of Shakespeare or Newton, and, in our "Bankers' Olympus," the activities of such men as Lord Northcliffe, or of Horatio Bottomley (creator of *John Bull*), of Herr Hitler, or of Adolf Zukor.

Adolf Zukor--that gives us another illustration. If an actress of the standard of Edith Evans, or an actor as good as Emil Jannings or Raimu, observed that the

Hollywood film was a disgusting travesty of the art of acting (as they quite well might), the Hollywood magnate could reply, upon the same principle as Herr Hitler: "The cinema is a popular art, of the same order as a 'penny dreadful' or sappy love-story for the scullery-maid or office-girl. Box-office receipts are my sole end, for I am a business man. I have brought to a fine art the daily supply to the Anglo-Saxon public of the sort of stuff it likes. I aim at the lowest intelligence in the small-town audience, and I get a bull's-eye every time. The 'art of the theatre' worries me about as much as the existence of life in Sirius."

The attitude of Herr Hitler, it will be seen, is almost identical with the response of Big Business if attacked: or (since neither Big Business nor Herr Hitler waits to be attacked) it is reminiscent of the sort of attacks upon the "highbrow" for which Big Business is responsible.

Herr Hitler--to conclude this part of my argument--is to be classed as a destroyer of culture alongside of the Hollywood magnates, the "geniuses" who invented the Yellow Press, and papers of the "Sappy Bits for Sappy Minds" order. He disdains democracy and all its works. Yet he himself, as a demagogue hanging upon the emotional suffrage of the masses, is a typical democratic statesman--and this in spite of the fact that the agreeable *laissez-faire* of Western democracy has passed over, with him, into a demagogic despotism.

It is impossible for any one to peruse *Mein Kampf* (typical passages of which we have been examining) without its giving rise to some misgiving, in even the most credulous, as to whether this "spellbinder"--so ready to gossip about his trade, and tell you how the trick is done--is a complete charlatan or not. Were a conjurer, before he began his trick, to explain to his audience exactly how the deception was to be compassed, the audience would experience no illusion. The trick would fall flat. And that would not be very intelligent! In attempting to demonstrate his smartness this celebrated demagogue has in reality demonstrated that he is not so smart as all that. He should have left well alone. But this brings us back to the question with which the chapter opened--Is Herr Hitler sincere in his claim to love the German people?

What does Herr Hitler stand for? Does he stand for the German people? One answer to this is Yes. Another is No. First let us take the No.

The "masses" Herr Hitler frankly detests and always did. Yet the "masses" with which Herr Hitler has always had to do are German "masses," are they not? In

that sense he does not stand for the German people. He hates the sight of them. And this applies as much to the greater proletarian mass as to the lesser bourgeois mass.

Once we have understood the impenetrable stupidity of our public we cannot be surprised . . . the bourgeois as well as the proletarian herds of voters faithfully return to the common stall and re-elect their old deceivers (p. 315).

Where the answer is Yes--that Herr Hitler does stand for the German people--can be presented as follows. I will take a typical passage of heroic affirmation. "We were fighting for an ideal so lofty that it was worth the last drop of our blood." Did Hitler ever believe that? Was he ever sincere--in the stupid sense--when giving expression to such sentiments?

Yes. As an actor Hitler believed it: and he was only sincere when he was acting--acting romantic and rather stupid parts. (He was really talking about the technique of his trade, and not his beliefs, in the Lloyd George passage.)

The National Socialist agitator was the favourite role of that melodramatic pro, Adolf Hitler. And it was his favourite role, not because it suited his type of beauty best, but because, by tradition and upbringing, it was the most natural to him.

He could not have been a Communist. There is every evidence that he got cynical enough in the course of his professional career as an agitator. Who could help doing so? Much of the phraseology and spirit was borrowed by him from Marxism, and he did not remain uninfluenced by Marxian dialectic.

But emotionally always for him "the Red Scum" were unspeakably low fellows--"ruffians," "sub-men," "rabble," *etc.* If he had not been a star actor upon the political stage he would have been an obedient and enthusiastic follower of somebody else running the same kind of movement. He would never have followed Marx.

He does not seek to disguise anywhere in *Mein Kampf* his indebtedness to Marxist technique.

"I was now able to feel and understand" (after observing a monster Marxist rally in Berlin) "how easily the man in the street succumbs to the hypnotic magic of such a grandiose piece of theoretical presentation" (p. 408). That is why Hitler

deliberately chose red, as he tells us, as the Nazi colour. He repeats that it was in order to irritate the Marxists. But first and foremost it was to steal their Red thunder. All along in Mein Kampf Hitler is boasting of his cunning.

National Socialism is a copy--but not a "bourgeois" copy, rather a military copy--of Marxism. It has been said that the only difference between communism and Hitlerism is that the latter works. It is because they are not so far apart as one would have expected, in view of the character of the orderly corporal with the Iron Cross, and the deep respectability of his countenance, even to-day, that it is necessary to scrutinize these bona fides of the anti-Marxist agitator.

Seeing what has happened in Germany, how sincere--or shall we turn it round now, and ask, rather, how insincere--was Hitler in the inflexible respectability of his anti-Marxism? On a visit to Coburg, in the early days, at the head of his storm-troops, he purged that city of the Red "pest."

The Coburg experience had also another important result. We now determined to break the Red Terror in all those localities where for many years it had prevented men of other views from holding their meetings. We were determined to restore the right of free assembly (p. 458).

That was in 1922. Now, in 1939, all men "of other views" from those held by Herr Hitler are prevented, not only from holding their meetings, but from expressing their opinions in private. Not only "the right of free assembly," but any freedom at all, has been destroyed.

Again, the "Red" organization (which had certainly become arbitrary, as it had the upper hand) had been called into existence in the first instance to protect (by force) the majority--the "proletariat"--from being too much fooled and butchered by the small and "ruthless" possessing class--the territorial aristocracy or lords of industry.

To the question: "What does Herr Hitler stand for? Does he stand for the German People?" there are ways in which No seems the answer, and ways in which it is Yes. I have indicated the nature of the duality. Hitler's misanthropy does not harmonize with his cult for all things Germanic. Typically German, Russian, French, or English qualities belong to life lived at a fairly sensual-average level. Consequently a misanthropist is not the person best fitted for the role of jingo-patriot.

Here is a passage from Mein Kampf in which "the nation" is simplified for us, by Herr Hitler, into classes of good, bad, and indifferent citizens.

Every national body [he says] is made up of three main classes. At one extreme we have the best of the people: taking the word best here to indicate those who are highly endowed with the civic virtues and are noted for their courage and their readiness to sacrifice their private interests. At the other extreme are the worst dregs of humanity, in whom vice and egotistic interests prevail. Between these two extremes stands the third class, which is made up of the broad middle stratum, who do not represent either radiant heroism or vulgar vice.

The stages of a nation's rise are accomplished exclusively under the leadership of the best extreme.

Again, I fear, we have to struggle against an air of unreality --the note of bogusness. For is anybody expected to take seriously this Sunday-school picture of a nation composed of two sets of positive people--one extremely bad, the other extremely good; with a negative mass in between? The "radiantly heroic" and virtuous lot would be Herr Hitler and his friends, of course. His opponents are "the dregs of humanity." It is very simple.

The reserved, the "cold," Englishman, when he attempts to convey passion, or sincerity, is a great failure. To any one who did not know him he would sound false and unconvincing. Hitler's intellectual limitations sometimes cause him to seem less sincere than he is, just as that happens with the bad actor.

Yet in the above passage, just about how Herr Hitler actually thinks is made evident--in tired, moralistic terms, of virtuous and wicked persons; in which his side would always be the virtuous. Herr Hitler cannot think better than that. It is as near as he can get to the truth. He does intend it to be taken seriously.

If you asked him whether he seriously held the view that the British Empire--to take the "stages of the British nation's rise"--had come into existence as a consequence of the sudden leadership of a class of virtuous men who subordinated their "private interests," and regarded only the common good, he would probably burst out laughing. He is quick enough for that. "No--not the British Empire!" he might retort. "I was talking about a virtuous nation's rise! I agree that the English didn't come by what they've got that way!" Or he might frown and bluster. It would depend what mood you found him in.

But the idea of an élite is one that seems fundamental with the ex-orderly corporal. It must be an élite that is not too intelligent or "intellectual" (or that would make Herr Hitler and his friends feel small); but it must be full of character. The landed society of England, about a hundred years ago, might have filled the ticket--only much more virtuous, and not quite so heroically devoid of all brains.

The volkisch concept of the world . . . pays homage to the truth that the principle underlying all Nature's operations is the aristocratic principle, and it believes that this law holds good even down to the last individual organism.

So a nation consists of a great mass of negative half-wits, about whom no one can get very excited; and an élite, "radiantly heroic," full of civic virtues, brave, and prone to disregard their private interests. It seems to follow that such an élite will scorn the majority, at whose expense they shine, and will scarcely feel very volkischly drawn towards them.

Is one nation more apt than another to give birth to an élite? Yes; we may I think without hesitation affirm that the German nation has been lucky in its élites--and is living up to its reputation, would be Herr Hitler's answer.

But it is the élite that interests Herr Hitler, and not the generality. That is the real issue. If an élite has eighty million people behind it, that is better than only having half that number. Happy is the élite that has a big Volk behind it. Nationalism, or patriotism, is merely the requisite back-cloth for the parading of a new type of man (a type not too intelligent, but packed full of character). And the "new type of man" is, in its turn, a stereotyped mode of power politics.

Nazis themselves, as I have elsewhere observed, laugh at you if you talk about "Aryans" and "Nordic Blonds." And I am sure Hitler would laugh too, in private. He would regard it as insincere of you to pretend to take all that seriously. If you retorted: "But are you not sincere then, Herr Hitler, about your Blut und Boden?" he might answer with a contemptuous laugh: "Yes--just as sincere as you are about a lot of useful little political gadgets. Things that don't bear very close inspection perhaps, Mr Englishman. But it's only an enemy who takes microscopes to things like that!"

Hitler knows quite well what is merely the trappings of sincerity; perhaps he feels that he is so sincere at bottom that any insincerity is allowed him. Ancestor-

worship with him is quite a genuine passion. Hitler, the peasant, is a German, just as the titmouse (to use his words) is a titmouse or the stork a stork.

The limitations of the political structure for which Herr Hitler is responsible are limitations of reality, rather than of sincerity (in so far as these--the "real" and the "true"--can be regarded as different things). It is obviously a great pity that Herr Hitler is not more intelligent.

X HITLER "THE MYSTIC"

LAST of all, there is Hitler the Mystic; he has to be carefully considered. The "German Joan of Arc," as he has been called, who "hears voices" and receives supernatural guidance; this "sleep-walker" who arrives at his decisions intuitively: all that side of the picture has to be looked into rather carefully. For it is what lifts him above the average politico--suggesting a status superior to Pilsudski, Metaxas, Kemal, or Mussolini. It is his capital asset.

In reading *Mein Kampf* all through recently, one of the things I particularly noticed was how Hitler was always struggling against the tendency of the National Socialist movement, in its early days, to "sink to the level of something in the nature of a . . . secret society" (p. 453). This seems to have been a constant preoccupation of his: to keep his cult public, at all costs! On page 448 you find him writing "in order to safeguard the storm detachments against any tendency towards secrecy." They were always trying to go underground; he was determined to keep them above ground.

Yet Hitler is very much the kind of man one would expect to encounter in the ranks of a secret society, if not at the head of it. As a matter of fact National Socialism may be regarded as an example of a public secret society as it were. Nuremberg is its annual rite--that is its witches' meadow, its Brocken. Plumb-line, square, and the mallet it does not indulge in; nor five-pointed star, nor Tau cross. But it has its Swastika. Its ceremonial S.A. banners, with their somewhat Tibetan appearance, their ornate hieroglyphs, are ritualistically ingenious. Like the swastika, all that is Hitler's doing. And it has its human sacrifices (only they are public and official, not transacted in secrecy). Blut und Boden, too; the mysticism of Blood and Soil is part of the machinery of a mystical sect-- only of so public a sect that in the end it has come to embrace the whole nation.

It has been said that to be a Jew is to possess all the advantages of belonging to a secret society. Yet a less secret, a less cowled and hooded, affair than Israel it would be difficult to find. So it is with Hitler's Germanism--which has an extraordinary family likeness with the privileges enjoyed by the Chosen People. Needless to say, like all imitations it is inferior. A sort of public mumbo-jumbo-- a blatantly advertised esoteric principle--this freemasonry of the blood consists

in making a great mystery of the commonplace--the blood that flows through everybody's veins--and is a religious rather than a political notion.

But one is reminded in all this that Weishaupt and "illuminism" came from the same part of the world as Herr Hitler. Indeed, Cagliostro or Rasputin come into one's mind more readily in connection with the Austrian ex-orderly corporal, than does anybody of the Condottieri type, from Bonaparte downwards.

There is no difficulty at all in imagining Hitler at the monastical settlement at Sponheim. As a twelfth-century monk he fits in perfectly well. Or even it is not too great a flight of fancy to carry one's mind from Sponheim to Rupertsberg (where Hildegard was abbess): and since Hitler always is apt to remind people of women rather than men, to imagine him as a sort of Hildegard of Bingen--that great Blake-like female visionary.

Alas for Hitler, his visions, one feels, would not be quite up to Hildegard's, much less to Blake's. But Hildegard wrote a sort of Mein Kampf: and hers is not unlike Hitler's. One can fancy Hitler telling the story of an illness in much the same words (in the twelfth century):

God punished me for a time by laying me on a bed of sickness so that the blood was dried up in my veins, the moisture in my flesh, and the marrow in my bones, as though the spirit were about to depart from my body. In this affliction I lay thirty days while my body burned as with fever, and it was thought that this sickness was laid upon me for a punishment. And my spirit also was ailing, and yet was pinned to my flesh, so that while I did not die, yet I did not altogether live. And throughout those days I watched a procession of angels innumerable who fought with Michael and against the Dragon and won the victory.

Sieg heil! All Kampf's are perhaps much the same--where they are records of how an indomitable spirit wins through, told, of course, by the indomitable spirit in question.

Adolf is unnecessarily medieval. The Jew, in his way, is medieval, too. And Herr Hitler uses him to get back into the good old atmosphere of the Mittelaltertum: he finds him an invaluable asset. I do not know what Hitler would do without the Jew! Such concreteness is given by this historical unfortunate to our hero's reactionary vision--which otherwise it would not have.

Here, for instance, is a good specimen of how handy he finds the Jew to furnish

the drab modern landscape with the desired antique, satanic, embellishments.

The black-haired Jewish youth lies in wait for hours on end, satanically glaring at and spying on the unsuspecting [Nordic] girl whom he plans to seduce, adulterating her blood and removing her from the bosom of her own people (p. 273).

That satanic emanation could find a place in the anatomical cosmogonies of Hildegard. The ritual of the Adulteration of the Blood, as it might be called, is particularly appropriate for insertion somewhere in the *Liber Divinorum Operum*.

Hitler has all the materials for an ecstatic. And if his face is rather commonplace as a man's face, as a woman's it would indicate a proneness to mystical experience, and the lack of intelligence would not matter so much. Even as things are, the staring eyes, the expression on that speaking countenance that has so often been remarked upon and which he cultivates--of astonishment (for instance, when he finds himself at Nuremberg in the midst of its immense crowds): the tendency to regard as spectres men of flesh and blood--to goggle, half alarmed, at all these hordes his claptrap has brought together, in such fabelhaften arrays: going no further than this not very promising exterior of his, and his way of taking all that happens to him, Hitler is not without a certain oddity that marks him off from the Mussolinis and Lloyd Georges of this world, and puts him in the more respectable company of the Hildegards and William Blakes. (I mean, of course, for the purposes of journalism and publicity--he has no other conceivable connection with the author of *Little Lamb Who Made Thee*.)

All Hitler's biographers seize upon this mystical angle. Heiden, for instance, speaks of "his great mysterious power"-- though it is merely his adaptability he is referring to. "It is the power which enables him to produce what are apparently the most contradictory qualities, as the situation demands. He has the talisman which makes him now great, now small, a lion or a mouse at will." You see how in discussing the mere adaptability of a clever politician, the contemporary journalist, when it is Herr Hitler he is dealing with, begins to borrow imagery from the era of spells and sorcery, of werewolves and mandrakes. Herr Hitler can turn himself into a lion or a mouse at will! How superstitious at bottom we still are.

We may venture to hope that Herr Hitler is the last kick of the Middle Ages, and that with him Germany will get it out of her blood. But Weishaupt (who flourished in the latter half of the eighteenth century) still displayed to the full the medieval temperament. And Hitler is surprisingly medieval, in somewhat the same way as Weishaupt: for like Weishaupt he is cynical and superstitious at once; both are insincere charlatans; both are mystical subverters, yet prone to kow-tow to "royal houses," to Hoheits and Excellenzies.

The spiritual ancestry of Weishaupt, the principal figure in the German Enlightenment, is as clear as day: it leads directly back to the Wissende, or Enlightened Ones, of the medieval Vehmegerichts. In the fourteenth century the Templars amalgamated with the Vehme. And in the post-War period in Germany so-called "Vehmic murders" again became a feature of everyday life, especially in the eastern provinces, and many of the Nazi leaders--Captain Röhm notably--had as close associates men belonging to these terroristic tribunals. But so also had Herr Hitler.

Most readers will at least know what the Vehmegerichts were: but for such as do not it will be sufficient to say that this was a German secret society--a sort of theological mafia--whose function it was to bump off any unsuitable people, and whose activities spread terror throughout the length and breadth of the land--which was of course full of unsuitable people, as is always the case when such high-minded organizations start operations. Like all things German, it was highly mystical: and it is suggested that the Knights Templars, when some of them came into it, made it even more mystical than it was before.

The Templars, I suppose I had better add, were one of those military-monkish orders, that came into being, like so many more, with the purpose of defending Christendom against the Infidel (meaning, of course, the Moslems). Unlike some of the others, they half went over to Mohammed on the quiet--or to Baphomet, which was even worse. They had to be suppressed-- which is the risk all secret organizations run. That is why Herr Hitler was so shy of anything "secret." To be on the right side of the law has been his constant care.

During the centuries when half of Spain was Moslem, half of it Christian, the defence of the Christian half was secured by the establishment of great military monasteries--communities that bear some resemblance to the Tibetan. They were rather garrisons than religious houses, although they were, when not fighting, celibate congregations of monks, of one order or another. At the first warning of

invasion from the Moorish side they would mass, and become armies of crusaders, carrying the Cross to battle against the Crescent.

Spain and Germany both seem to run to military conceptions of how to uphold the Cross--perhaps because both are Gothic. For the Jesuits--founded by a military man--had a "general" as leader, and were military in temperament, and of course Spanish in origin. Whereas Weishaupt was not unappreciative of Jesuit discipline--though still more enamoured of Masonic secrecy.

Hitler had himself a good deal to do, as I have said, with people who were nothing if not subterranean and mysterious. It was rather an accident than anything else--perhaps the influence of Karl Marx and his "open conspiracy" technique-- that prevented Hitler from plotting in cellars with passwords and secret hand-grips, rather than in the market-place. His backgrounds are nevertheless Vehmic, Jesuitic, mysterious, and very much nearer to the feudal world than anything to be found in the Anglo-Saxon West.

The army is what he stands for: but in Germany, as in Japan, the army is an independent organism, with codes, traditions, and mysticisms of its own.

I watched, a year or so ago, a party of Black Guards falling in, and marching off down the Wilhelmstrasse. I noted the ascetic, the monkish, appearance of their pale faces under the black casques, and the clock-like solemnity of their movements, with the violent kick of the goose-step that leads off the quick march! All that is a different dimension from the "British Tommy," or the "Jolly Militiaman." With the Germans the realities of life and death, the dramatics underlying the calling of arms, are not evaded. On the contrary, such solemn fundamentals of existence are stressed, vaunted, and paraded. With the English the military life is represented as a thrilling picnic--a country outing "under canvas"; a benevolent tourist agency which actually pays you to "see the world." Even a jolly old bomb it would be indecent to suggest had anything to do with death. A bomb is in the same class of things as a football.

This very great difference between the military psychology of the Germans and the English is, of course, a matter of great moment. The fact that our civilization is so different from theirs must be the despair of the diplomats.

Herr Hitler's monkish celibacy is significant in these connections. To the rampant homosexuality of the medieval military orders (in the charges brought

against the Templars obscene rituals, of a homosexual inspiration, were alleged) Herr Hitler does not conform. But he conforms to most of the other characteristics. The colleges he has founded of future Führers, of mystically athletic and corn-blond initiates, is a sort of Samurai caste in the making.

The folk-concept of the world is in profound accord with Nature's will! [Herr Hitler cries]. We all feel that in the distant future man may be faced with problems which can be solved only by a superior race of human beings, a race destined to become master of all the other peoples, which will have at its disposal the means and resources of the whole world.

The "future masters" are being trained in castle-barracks upon the best military principles--but being trained for a primitive age which is no longer here, and which nothing Herr Hitler can do will bring back.

But all the esoteric movements--whether it be the Illuminati or the Masonic lodges--were very subversive socially. How subversive socially is Herr Hitler?

The secret societies of the eighteenth century, in whatever part of Europe, started from a belief in the redemption of the human race. The human race had "lost" itself. There had once been a "Golden Age," a very long time ago, the very memory of which mankind had lost. The social order as it at present exists, with its oppressive framework--dynastic, nobiliary, ecclesiastical--these secret associations ultimately aimed at destroying. Weishaupt, as much as the physiocrats, regarded the principle of nationality, for instance, as an evil, and would have restored human society to a state of blessed, primeval paternalism, where the paterfamilias was at once priest and king.

But it is a small step from the good and happiness of humanity to the good and happiness of Aryan man. "Mankind" is a big, vague woolly thing. So is "Aryan Man." It is not very different running a big secret society--which is never so secret as all that--to running a nation as a "chosen people," an "elect." And for a Golden Age enjoyed by all mankind somewhere in its past, it is easy to substitute a paradise of power and plenty that the particular nation in question has almost enjoyed--has indeed missed by the skin of its teeth, owing to the intrigues of traitors! To point to the latter can be just as effective as pointing to the former: the object in both cases being to stimulate people to revolt.

Now as to the subversiveness. No really profound subversiveness is to be found

in Herr Hitler, it is my belief. He talks a great deal (since he has read Nietzsche) about "a higher type of man"--a "superior race of human beings." But a cross between a Rugged Blue and a Junker Officer is what his idea of "higher being" seems to boil down to. "We all feel that in the distant future man may be faced with problems which can be solved only by a superior race of human beings." Herr Hitler is wrong in saying that "we all feel" that. Some of us feel that it is not at all "in the distant future," but very much right now, that something a bit superior to a Nazi will have to be found, if we are not all to perish in a series of senseless wars.

Subversive enough Herr Hitler is not. But there is, to make him true to type, a good deal of quiet disrespect for reigning houses, and organized revealed religions, knocking about in his make-up. He is not so "radical" as a Bolshevik or a Templar. He does not go so far as Baphomet. He is a prim figure beside Lenin. But it must be remembered that his hero, Frederick the Great, was what we should call a Socialist; and Hitler, little as he has read, must have discovered that much. Frederick ruled Prussia from a stable, with the help of a groom, who read all his State correspondence every morning before his master was up and put before him at breakfast what he thought was worth bothering about. When reproached with his familiarity with heidduques and domestics, with whom he lived, apart from his Court, Frederick retorted: "Noah is their grandparent as much as he is mine. It is confidingness, and not familiarity, which has its drawbacks." The members of his Court, who were not Socialists, naturally, nor supermen, but average self-important snobs, it was his habit to outrage, the most "courtly" of them being his especial butt.

But it is obvious that the eighteenth-century Mason, with all that lay behind that fact--the man who subsidized d'Alembert, and was the friend of Voltaire--had as open a mind on the subject of kings as was compatible with continuing to be a very powerful one himself. Frederick the Great was a National Socialist, as well as degenerate and what we should call to-day a crook.

Finally, and it is perhaps a fact with which we should have started, Herr Hitler is an excellent clown, it appears. I mean, he has a "sense of humour." That is really a little compromising.

A story is told of how a rather humourless man, Sir Eric Phipps, was sent as ambassador to Berlin, because it was thought by His Majesty's Government, seeing how little appreciation the Germans have of fun, this would be a tactful

choice. In fact what happened--it is credibly reported--was this. No sooner had our ambassador left the room after presenting his credentials, than Herr Hitler, who is a superb mimic, began impersonating his late visitor, to such effect that his entourage were convulsed with mirth. Afterwards, it was as much as they could do, in the presence of the dignified, eye-glassed, British minister, to "keep a straight face."

To many people this will appear a hopelessly contradictory trait, after all the mystical and medieval backgrounds that I have been attempting to build up. But, after all, a Gothic cathedral is often peppered with grotesques of a consummate comic observation. Such a whole-time visionary (and Herr Hitler is not that) as the poet Blake was often extremely funny in his lampooning couplets about people whose characters he did not admire, or who had treated him scurvily. And that Herr Hitler is not only a tragic actor of parts, but an excellent comic one too, should arouse no surprise.

Does the last-moment revelation of this fact alter, or colour, some or all of the things I have been saying? It may do so for some people. Herr Hitler does wear his heart on his sleeve: and he certainly may at times have his tongue in his cheek. When he gets alone with his gang, I am sure he makes very merry about our Prime Minister, for instance, and the rest of the "bourgeois" crowd by whom Germany is "encircled." And he doubtless makes fun of simple Germans too--for all the fools are not outside the Reich. The only practical result that I can see of so much talent for comedy, is that it may allay or temper his fanaticism somewhat.

I hope, in what now amounts to a pretty extensive analysis of this not particularly important, but exceedingly famous, figure, that I have not been too uncivil. I quite genuinely do not regard him as of any significance, except in the ratio of the harm he can do. He is as boring to me as a stock-broker talking, dreamy-eyed, about the beauties of Venice, or the Taj Mahal by moonlight. And the fact that the same gent is good at telling a smoking-room yarn or the latest limerick makes no difference.

As to the Vehmegerichte, the Teutonic Knights, the German Enlightenment, or Sans Souci, all that is the background for this particular Waldviertel peasant. Take some English political type, and you will see what I mean. I defy anybody to explain to a foreigner Mr Garvin, say, or Mr Spender, A. G. Gardiner, or the Duchess of Atholl, without mentioning, at all events, Hampden and Pym, John

Bright and Charles Godwin, the Puritans who made the revolution of 1640, the new Whig nobility that "bitted and bridled the King" at the "Glorious Revolution" of 1668, and a few other things of that sort.

I must now bid adieu to the German Chancellor, with a parting injunction to the English reader. It is this: Keep hissing! Herr Hitler is a "villain" who, if he is not sufficiently hissed, becomes really dangerous. The poor fellow thinks, if there are not cat-calls and hisses, that he must be losing his grip. He is capable of almost any violence if the volleys of hissing to which he has become accustomed as he stalks about the European stage should die down. So hiss! as you value your life.

PART III: THE PROMISED LAND OF TOM, DICK, AND HARRY

I MANCHUKUO, ABYSSINIA, AUSTRIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND SPAIN

IN the last ten chapters I have placed before you, in as pictorial a way as possible, that individual who incarnates those principles of Change, which would spell the destruction of imperial England, were he to succeed. The changes Herr Hitler desires seem to me to be dull changes--a mere shift in the balance of power, so that Germany took the place of England as the political boss of Europe. As I have indicated, I could not myself take an interest in such a meaningless change--round as that--quite apart from the fact that as an Englishman I should not relish it, and that it would be a change for the worse.

Most Englishmen to-day are in the same mood as myself. These meaningless machtpolitischen changes affront and bore them. They demand from their own Government a more serious and fundamental outlook than that; and in so far as a foreign statesman, Herr Hitler or another, would impose his will upon the Government of England, they resent his attempting to do so all the more if they recognize in him a man of the same old stamp that has been responsible for bringing about the present idiotic situation.

Hitler, who is a sort of Marxist Cecil Rhodes, was born fifty or a hundred years too late. There is no longer any room for such a buccaneer in the over-populated landscape of to-day. Eastern Europe is not the Rhodesia of the eighties. Poles--however great your contempt may be for mere Slavs--are not Matabeles or Mashonas. But all those problems I am proposing to explore at considerable length in Part IV of this book, and so will not pursue the question any further now.

In the ensuing chapters my plan is this: Having started at the centre or focal point, Herr Hitler, I now propose to radiate outwards, and describe all the cumulative difficulties that beset England to-day, as the result of the existence of her Enemy No. 1 in Berchtesgaden. For if you removed Hitler from the picture, no British statesman would pass a sleepless night on account of Se*or Serrano Su*er--Spain is only a problem because of Hitler; nor on account of I.R.A. terrorists--they are only a first-class problem because of the probability of a general war provoked by Herr Hitler, and are in all likelihood subsidized by

Hitler; nor on account of the arrogance of Tokio --for the Japanese blackmail is based upon the dangerous situation of Great Britain in the West, which paralyses her action in the East; and that danger which she now combats in war, is summed up in the one word "Hitler."

But I will proceed immediately to a discussion of all these interweaving difficulties, none of which can be considered in isolation; and all of which, if you follow the thread far enough, end up in Berchtesgaden, in the sun-parlour of that exasperating little Austrian ex-orderly corporal. What a lot of trouble poor old England has with corporals! One corporal, "le petit Caporal," she at last laid by the heels at the Battle of Waterloo. And now here is another one.

When the sort of people I am apt to meet are talking about the events of the last six years, as a rule they blame British policy for its inertia and cowardice. They say that Manchukuo should have been made a casus belli by Great Britain. The mere threat of war would have stopped Japan. Abyssinia, Austria, Spain, Czechoslovakia: all are great diplomatic defeats for England. Rather than suffer them England should have engaged in war.

There are three possible standpoints as regards these unfortunate events. First, there is what I have described as the generally accepted opinion in "intellectual" circles: namely, that at the beginning of this political landslide England should have acted, by challenging the "aggressor." In that instance it was Japan. The second possible position is that England should have compacted with the "aggressor." Recognizing that the "aggressor's" interests were her interests, England should have gone in with Japan, Italy, or Germany. That is the standpoint of the Fascist. That is "Fifth Column" opinion. Thirdly, it would be possible to hold the view that England should have done neither of these things, but have remained strictly neutral. That is the position of the "isolationist."

What in fact England did was not in conformity with any of these three positions, so I suppose there must be a fourth position. A dubious mixture of all three policies was indulged in. The Tory, or so-called "National," Government of Great Britain offered the world the spectacle of an anything but masterly inactivity: an inactivity which cloaked a great deal of mild and half-hearted interference: a "non-intervention" which went from bad to worse until Munich, when it came to a dead stop. Then it slowly and reluctantly changed into a belated bellicosity.

How to describe this policy is extremely difficult--unless one is to be entirely partisan. The Communist would say it is self-evident that the Tory Government of Great Britain, brim-full of rabid class-prejudice, connived at Franco's victory in Spain, at the murder of Dollfuss, at the rape of Czechoslovakia, and so forth. Also that all along it has desired the defeat of Chiang Kai-Shek.

There is some truth in some of that, of course: for it is impossible to suppose that a Britain and France bent upon Franco not winning could not have found means to give effect to that policy. And so with most of the other diplomatic "defeats."

Yet that they were defeats is certain enough. And that is the difficulty. For it has not been in the Tory clubman's interest to be incessantly bested and humiliated in external politics. And his supposed pals, Franco, Goebbels, and Arita, are not over-polite to him, to say the least of it.

Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that the British Government have not tried as hard as they might to put a spoke in the wheel of the Axis. Only as regards China I am a little doubtful. I do not somehow feel that the British Government has been busy making Japan a present of China. It has run the Chiang Kai-Shek dollar against the Japanese-sponsored one: it is supplying Chiang Kai-Shek, through Burma, with the wherewithals of war. And it is difficult to believe that the Britons of Tientsin plotted with the Japanese military to have their trousers publicly removed, in order to throw dust in the eyes of the Labour Opposition, and steal a march on the Communists. There must be some other explanation. Some friction must exist between these two imperialists, the Tokio war-lords and the gentlemen responsible for British foreign policy.

It is rather disgusting of me, but I am trying not to take sides. I know life is a matter of the "survival of the fittest," and is a jungle-war all through. All men are enemies. All the same, if you are desirous of arriving at the truth, you must leave your old school tie at home, or your red tie, as the case may be. I propose to banish both from these pages, and having apologized to both sides for the omission, I shall go ahead, in my unsporting way. To me, it is far more interesting to unravel these confused issues than to accept the parrot-cry of a party, and look at everything conventionally. But in trying to be unconventional, I must confess that my sympathy lies with the parties of the Left, and their criticisms seem to me on the whole well-founded. But like many other people, I am torn between what I regard as the specific interests of the country to which I belong, and those abstract, non-national interests-- those of absolute justice--

which the Left parties represent. As a historian, and in order correctly to limn the muddled face of Truth, my private feelings about the egregious clubman-diplomat must be suppressed.

A class-government in England allowed the Japanese to take what is now Manchukuo. The Japanese militarist does not appeal to my libertarian heart. But it is difficult to see how Great Britain, without the co-operation of the United States, could take on the Japanese Fleet in Japanese waters (where it is said to be much more dangerous than outside them, much as the Italian Fleet has been built for the Mediterranean, not for oceanic service). The British Fleet might have been reduced by fifty per cent in Far Eastern waters, and no decision reached into the bargain.

To come to the other four major diplomatic catastrophes, which have so greatly diminished the prestige of England, it is quite obvious that those events were defeats for England only because England first resisted what the Totalitarians call "the logic of events," and afterwards gave way, and submitted to that inimical logic. All along the line we have obstructed. Sometimes we have obstructed violently for a time, but always ineffectively, because not violently enough. That was inexcusable.

When we come to the other four major diplomatic catastrophes, I diverge still further from the accepted view. All those events are only defeats for England because England resisted, and then gave way. All along the line we have obstructed violently, but ineffectively. That was inexcusable.

As regards the really capital mistake of British policy: that, as Mr Theodore Wolf has observed, was Sanctions. Even to-day, most Englishmen do not admit that. Yet the outcome of Sanctions stares them in the face. Sanctions = Axis. It is as simple as that. And the Axis is no joke at all.

It was the Baldwin-Eden "Sanctions" policy which enraged and frightened Mussolini so thoroughly that he swallowed a German hegemony of Europe, made of the Brenner a public highway--or rather a private road, for Axis use only, instead of a dam against the Teutonic flood: it caused him to accept a subordinate role in the Fascist concert. The Axis became a military alliance, thanks, ultimately, to the Baldwin-Eden policy; just as Herr Hitler's diplomatic blunders often serve to cement more closely the members of the hostile bloc and their satellites.

It is the business of a statesman or diplomat to see a few moves ahead. And it should from the start have been plain that if Mussolini did not submit to Sanctions but fought them to a finish (as he did) there were only two alternatives; war, or a great diplomatic defeat. If the British Government was not prepared to make war, it should not have started Sanctions.

Thinking in terms of Nationalist politics, Italy was (always excepting Portugal, who is almost a freak in that respect) Britain's oldest political pal. Not a cross word had ever passed between them. Not a cloud had ever obscured their long day of sunny peace. For the beaux yeux of Britannia the Italians ratted on Germany in 1915. Nothing would ever have persuaded Mussolini to depart so radically from Italian tradition as to be in the opposite camp to the Great Mistress of the Seas. It took Sanctions to effect that great reversal of Italian policy.

But, thinking in terms of Socialist politics (or of half-Socialist politics), Italy was tarred with the same brush as Germany. Italy was Fascist. And Mr Eden, prompted by Mr Baldwin, was always thinking in bogus-Socialist terms, not in Nationalist terms. So what did this half-left, half-right politician do but get into his head that as a first step towards downing Fascism, it would be a capital idea to take on the weaker of the two Fascist States--namely Italy--raise the outside world against it at Geneva, humble and shame Mussolini, and bring him tumbling down. Then Germany could be polished off. That was the big idea of this shortsighted man. And the gain to Herr Hitler has been incalculable.

Our Foreign Secretary went about Europe (it was reported at the time) saying that he would have Mussolini's skin. Well, so far that irate personage's dusky skin is intact, unfortunately, for he is no friend of England's now. But as his mouthpiece, Signor Gayda, remarked the other day, it is futile to think that the Axis Powers can be parted either by bribery or by threats; if for no other reason, because their only chance of survival is together. Divide et impera is, after all, a Roman maxim. As Italians they understand it at least as well as we do.

It is permissible to hope that Signor Gayda is wrong: that even now Mussolini may betray his German ally. But whenever one thinks about it, the evil shadow of Sanctions rises up, to warn one against a facile optimism.

I am not suggesting here that the Baldwin Government should have approached the problem of Abyssinia as Nationalists. A crude Nationalist would be

impossible in England to-day. What I am suggesting is that that Government should not have mixed up Socialist and Nationalist politics so inextricably as to cancel out both one and the other, and to alienate for ever Nationalist England's trusty friend, Italy. Sanctions was to no purpose, from the purely Socialist angle, for the sanctionist policy was not carried through to the bitter end. From the Nationalist angle it was fatal. But nothing is carried through to the bitter end, because the Conservative clubman-faction always rises up and agitates for a truce and a "gentleman's agreement." All our policies of late years have begun as Socialist policies, and ended as Blimp policies--in ignominious failure, of course; for you cannot mix Page Croft and Lenin, they remain water and oil.

If this parliamentary democracy ever fell between two stools --the Left stool and the Right stool--it was over the Negus-- that melancholy, outcast, top-hatted African potentate, who must still haunt Mr Eden's dreams: an old tyrant, it may be, but disgracefully let down by practically everybody.

Great Britain lost a great deal in that bitter diplomatic duel with Fascist Italy. She (to use the Nationalist "she") came out of it weakened. The entire business was a classical instance, apart from anything else, of the drawbacks of class-government. The cynicism of the English "ruling class" married politically to the almost maudlin sentimentality of the "lower classes" (or just the "public"), produces a brand of buffoonish insincerity which has earned for Albion in the past the epithet of "perfidious."

That unfortunate segregation of the majority of Englishmen in an unreal world in which it would not be "in the public interest" that anything should be known that really matters; that fearful class-tutelage, a system under which ninety per cent of the population are treated as if they were "natives," not politically experienced enough to govern themselves: all this fills with a bland and cynical conceit those who belong to the master-class, which gives them an Olympian arrogance not possessed by most continental governing circles. Yet, in spite of this the "possessing class" live under perpetual blackmail from elements technically in Opposition, who are yet anything but Socialist--a bogus "Left Wing," just as arrogant and just as detached from the majority as is Conservative office.

It is towards this bogus "Left Wing" that such politicians as Baldwin or Eden inclined. Add to this the elaborate pretence of "popular government," and you get what we all see. A true Right Wing, on the pattern of the old Whig oligarchs, might be the most blindly egotistic régime in Europe, but it would not produce

diplomatic absurdities like Sanctions--the estranging of Italy, the betrayal of the Negus. It would at least, in its awful way, be efficient. A true Left Wing would not produce such absurdities as that either. If you got Sanctions you would not get the betrayal, too, that followed them. Unlike the present "Left Wing," a true Left would be efficient.

Where, however, this duality was seen at its worst was in connection with the civil war in Spain. Again, England fell between two stools--between a rather bogus Right and a bogus Left. "Non-intervention" was an international joke of the most side-splitting sort. I have seen German diplomats weak with laughter at the mere mention of that. It was an exquisite piece of nonsensicality of which only the English (brought up on Alice in Wonderland) would be capable! And what has been the upshot of it all? Great Britain has made an enemy of Franco--and enabled Franco to win!

I need not go through the interminable list of British humiliations, culminating in Munich--when a British Prime Minister flew backwards and forwards to Germany, a supplicant for peace. That was not perhaps Mr Chamberlain's fault. But it was unedifying. However, it is not the personalities involved that I am concerned with here, but the system that they work-- or do not work. Because there is no man who could work that system as it stands.

II IS ENGLAND IN A SPOT?

IN the last chapter I have summarily stated what I regard as the mistakes of British policy, during the last few years, and given my explanation of how they came about. I have endeavoured to show how, under the present system, they must infallibly recur. But as a result of these major diplomatic defeats England has lost very greatly in influence, as was only to be expected, both in Europe and the East.

In this chapter I am setting out to ask and answer an ugly question. Colloquially stated, it is this: Is Great Britain in a spot? It is my duty to answer that truthfully, and without seeking to paint a pretty and flattering picture. I shall not be able to provide a complete answer in this chapter or two, but can at least indicate the proper approach.

What then, roughly, is our position? If we pick up and scan the rapidly changing map of Europe, what do we see? Nothing of great comfort to us as Englishmen, I fear.

Thanks to the defective sense of the real, which is such a feature of the political mind of our present rulers, we, the English people, are in a position which, from the purely Nationalist angle, is unsatisfactory in the extreme. From any angle the situation in which we find ourselves is dangerous. For whether you are an internationalist Socialist, or a diehard "clubbable" clubman, with a "stake in the country," and an old school tie as big as a house, it is not an attractive prospect.

Often, in conversation with a friend, I discover him averse from allowing that Great Britain is really in a spot. He would prefer a picture of triumphant and unchallengeable power. When he hears cold-bloodedly enumerated (as he does from me) the dangers that beset this imperial archipelago, and especially this little island state, separated from the continent of Europe by so narrow a ditch, my friend will frown, and object impatiently that the world is absolutely swarming with public-spirited nations and individuals, prepared to lay down their lives in "resisting aggression." This does not seem to tally with the facts, even as reported in the newspapers. And the latter are highly unreliable, tending to confine themselves to news of a comforting type.

Deploring as I do the class-character of the British Empire, I note that Great Britain has talked a lot about keeping subject nations, like the Indian, in tutelage, until such time as they should have sufficiently matured, and were able to govern their own countries without British help; but it has never occurred to British Governments that they also have a good deal of maturing to do themselves. Had they done so they would have changed the character of our empire from top to bottom, so that it was no longer the economic playground of a small and selfish class.

Thinking after this manner, it is a little difficult to respond uncomplexly to these present threats. All the same, if a new society is to emerge from the next Nationalist convulsion, I would prefer to see the Englishman still a figure of importance in the world, having a big say, at least, in the conduct of the empire which he has (on paper, and on the map) possessed for so long.

Having, I trust, sufficiently shown that unenlightened patriotism should not, more than mere bloodthirstiness, be attributed to me, I can proceed. England started by conferring "guarantees" upon Poland, Greece, and Rumania--in the two latter cases, unasked-for guarantees. That, as Mr Boothby remarked at the time, was "reckless, even desperate." For if we had gone to the assistance of those countries if attacked at that time, we could not have helped them, except indirectly, without Russian assistance. So far as Poland is concerned, we have not had that assistance, and we now see that it was putting the cart before the horse to "guarantee" first, and to arrange that the guarantees should be of some value to the guaranteed afterwards. All's well that ends well. But at the time these "provative" guarantees were issued England, too, was herself singularly unprepared for war.

The natural alignment is England, France, and Russia--with the United States hovering bellicosely in the background, and backing the Western bloc, if not with men, with material of war. America could be depended on, also, to behave very threateningly to Japan (the U.S. Government has denounced its 1911 agreement with Japan), and so hold down the Eastern ally of the Axis.

It is true that the spring and early summer of 1939 saw President Roosevelt repeatedly denied new powers by the Congress and Senate of the United States. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee (but only by a majority of one) turned down his proposal to alter the Neutrality Act, in such a way as to enable America to supply the Democratic bloc with arms in case of war. But the change of public

opinion in America since the outbreak of war has resulted in a new Neutrality Bill minus the arms embargo. Whether the U.S.A. will do more than supply arms is another matter.

Russia is in everything the deciding factor. And Russia has shown herself the reverse of anxious to engage herself to the Western capitalist countries. Whatever subsequently may happen (and, as I say, it is to be hoped that some kind of agreement will at last ensue) this is not an encouraging sign. It will be well not to forget how very little enthusiasm the Russians have always shown to throw in their lot with Western capitalism. But even so, and even in present conditions, Russia may be more useful to frighten Germany.

Stalin, in his speech before the All-Soviet Congress at the beginning of the year, was not in a very engaging mood. He asserted that the Western Powers had made Hitler a present of Czechoslovakia because they thought by so doing they would divert his attentions eastwards. Hitler would go bald-headed for the Ukraine--that was, according to Stalin, the big idea. Russia and Germany, those two obnoxious revolutionary giants, would fall upon each other, wear each other out; and then, of course, the Western Powers would step in, impose their will upon both, and everything would fall beautifully into place, in conformity with the selfish desires of Western capitalism. But Stalin added that Russia and Germany knew a trick worth two of that. Neither was going to be so stupid as to fall foul of the other in this convenient fashion. Hitler, instead of turning East, was apparently turning West, greatly to the annoyance of the "Munich" conspirators, Chamberlain and Daladier. Such is still the official Moscow view of those events. That Mr Chamberlain's new foreign policy is regarded with scepticism, has since been proved by Russia's volte-face.

To go back to April, when the Russians were speaking their minds as they--after a lull--are doing to-day, here is a typical report upon Russian opinion, from the Warsaw correspondent of The Times (9th April 1939). The headlines provided for it are "Russia and Capitalist Governments. No Need for Alliances."

Speeches by prominent Soviet leaders and reports broadcast from Moscow and provincial stations suggest that an anti-capitalist war is immediately ahead, in which the Soviet Union will not be fighting in alliance with any of the "capitalist" Governments.

This view was reflected to some extent in the speech made a few days ago to the

active Communist organization of the Red Army in the Kieff military district by Commissar Mekhlin, political chief of the Red Army. The most striking passage in his speech was: "We have no need to seek allies and carry out a mobilization in conditions of panic as others are doing!"

One thing especially noticeable in the speech by Stalin to which I have referred was that he did not display so much rancour against Hitler as against London and Paris. Did some kind of limited understanding exist between Russia and Germany? We now know.

It is often asserted that Russia is no longer Communist, but rather National Socialist. And Germany, of course, has grown more, and not less, Socialist. The Germans said in the spring that they had so many good friends in Moscow that whatever pacts were officially concluded between Britain and Russia their effectiveness would be qualified by that fact. The Germans were probably boasting.

Ideological questions aside, if Stalin consulted the interests of the Soviets, he always must throw in his lot with the Democratic bloc rather than with Hitler. His personal rule might suffer as a result of the victory of either. But after a war, the "capitalist" governments--or rather the peoples of the capitalist nations--would have evolved in the directions of State Socialism almost certainly. Whereas Stalin has nothing to hope from a German mastery in Europe. A Fascist victory, whatever complaisances Stalin might have had for the Fascist bloc in a great war, would give him very short shrift.

Russia has been brought back into Western politics, but, in view of Stalin's apparent policy, what has to be watched with caution is a promise by him to act, which, when it came to the sticking-point, would not be kept, or so sluggishly effected as to make it next to worthless. It must always be remembered that ultimately it is in Russia's interest to sit on the fence. To allow both her Capitalist and Fascist enemies to destroy each other is her best bet. Further, with an Eastern frontier marching with Japan, it will always be very dangerous for Russia to get too deeply engaged in war in Europe, and it is unlikely that she will do so.

III THE DANGERS OF A "GREY WAR"

LEAVING the question of Russia and of the east of Europe altogether in abeyance for the present, let us return to England and France, the two principal partners in the Democratic Axis. What scope is there for pessimism in the West? Surely there we shall be safe from harrowing uncertainties.

Supposing that western Europe, from Gibraltar to the Vistula, from John of Groats to the heel of Italy, existed in a void--if there were nothing beyond the eastern frontiers of Grossdeutschland--the issue would be, as things stand, easy to predict. The land forces of the Totalitarian allies--of Germany and Italy--are two or three times as numerous as those of the land forces of the Western Democracies; and though the French inherit a great military tradition, in a war with Germany alone, the French--as they are always quite ready to admit--would stand no chance.

For the continental policies that our Government are at present pursuing, they should possess a large conscript army, not a mere militia, scarcely enough to man the defensive A.A. system that our exposed position demands. At the time of Sanctions--at the time when Italy was alienated probably for good--conscription should have been introduced in Great Britain.

On the outbreak of war--apart from our military commitments elsewhere, in the Near East, in India, in Africa-- there should have been an expeditionary force of at least a million men to go to the help of the French. Establishments should have been quartered there earlier. Nothing should have been left to chance, if we meant business. A Channel Tunnel would have been worth many army corps. And so on.

As it is, the French, a nation of forty million, had to begin alone, in face of Greater Germany, with a population of eighty million. As a result of our divided policy, our blowing hot and cold--our hobbling along first on our Left crutch, then on our Right crutch--our hesitations and half-measures, the side has won in the Spanish civil war which has come to regard us (England and France) as its enemies. In consequence, France is surrounded. All its land frontiers (except for Switzerland) are potentially hostile frontiers. No wonder the French are a little

reserved and tend to be on the quiet side just now, while we forge vigorously ahead with our challenging "pacts." To quote from the Sunday Times (9th April): FRENCH ANXIETY

But in all French comments to-day there is an undercurrent of anxiety, which, put into plain words, means: After all, apart from Poland, and in certain circumstances Belgium or Switzerland, the London-Paris "Axis" has little more on land than the French Army to rely upon; that is, one soldier to two and a half or three of the Axis Powers. The defences are good, but still . . . In short, the most ardent desire of the French is to see Britain introduce conscription without delay, or something not unlike it, which could provide, in an emergency, half a million to a million trained men.

That is it. "The London-Paris `Axis' has little more on land than the French Army to rely upon." And the poor little French reservist has felt daily for a long time that this is doing him too much honour.

At the same time the German press had been significantly reserved, or even kind, as regards her western continental neighbour. One somehow felt that, should a war occur, things would not be so bad for the French as for us. The French attitude to war suggests that certainly: and it may be an attitude that is founded upon something more tangible than we know of.

It would not be a question of the French betraying us; but merely that, should the Germans continue to refrain from making major attacks in the west, confining themselves to occupying their Siegfried Line--with the French across the Rhine comfortably manning their Maginot Line--a considerable measure of mutual indulgence may be observed on one side and the other.

A "limited war" (as the Germans call it) may be waged with the French. An unlimited war may be waged against the English. That is not so extremely impossible. And it is naturally a situation that might have highly disagreeable results for us.

When I went to the Vimy Ridge in 1917 (to the sector held by the Canadian Army) I discovered a state of affairs which surprised me very much indeed, coming as I did from the Ypres Salient. I found I had passed from an area of unlimited war, so to speak, to one of limited war. There were no infantry attacks. There were no bombardments: there were no air battles. Nor had there been any

activity, I was informed, for many months. In this sector both the Germans and the British, it appeared, were satisfied that nothing was to be gained by attacks. Only a waste of men and material could result. Consequently, by tacit agreement, a sort of truce reigned. Each side sat in its trenches and redoubts and read the newspapers or played cards.

Now it is not unreasonable to suppose that in the present war conditions of that sort may obtain on several fronts. Just as no one was anxious to-day to go to war--either Totalitarian or Democrat--as is proved by their furious bickering and violent verbal exchanges, which would have precipitated a war long ago at any other time; so, now a war has started, no one will be anxious to do more than is strictly necessary in the way of fighting--since everybody knows perfectly well (after our recent 1914-18 experience) that there is nothing whatever to be gained.

To put this in another way, the so-called "white war" that raged until 3rd September, now it has technically passed over into full war, with guns roaring, and banging away, instead of the statesmen and journalists spitting and howling at each other, may still be pretty white in places. And one of the obvious places for it to remain fairly bloodless and pretty peaceable is the Rhine.

The dangers of a "grey war," as it might be called, for us, are obvious. "Peace is indivisible" is very sound doctrine in centralizing politics. And war should be indivisible, too. But a "grey war," or a half-war, would imply discrimination: harder blows in one quarter than another: no equality in sacrifice: the possibility of a war within a war, or of wars within a war, of differing intensities.

In all wars where allied nations are engaged, side by side, there is recrimination. Usually there is as much ill-feeling entre alliés as there is animosity towards the enemy. No coalition works perfectly. During the last War it was the dour and pig-headed "Nordics," the Britons and Germans, who kept the thing going, and drove it forwards to the bitter end. It was the Italians above all, in that case, who did not play their part. The Italian Army took things so easily, in fact, as to constitute a liability rather than an asset; and for "slacking" and lying down on the job Italy was, when it came to the division of the spoils, practically cut out. Hence Mussolini's denunciations of France.

But these are the routine difficulties attendant upon making nations fight in harness. One lot always says the other is not "pulling its weight." There is always bad blood. But when there is so much bad blood beforehand, as can at

present be observed, additional watchfulness is necessary.

In the present war things might be immeasurably more complicated. Everybody might slack; except for the two protagonists. And if England, as the leader of the democratic coalition, were to be asked for once to do more than its fair share of the fighting, or fight practically on its own, no one would to-day care to predict the outcome.

I should be very sorry to think that these lugubrious but necessary speculations of mine reflected in any way upon the honour of the French. The gallantry of the French has always been a by-word, and they are no more likely to let us down than we are to behave disloyally to them. But human nature being what it is, if left more or less alone our French allies would hardly go looking for trouble. They will in the war do their best to defend their own soil, though they have no appetite for imperial conquest. And they will naturally stop on their own soil in order to do that. If there is not much war going on there, well, tant mieux! That will be no fault of theirs. And where the war might mainly be going on will be here.

As a result of British "encirclement," as they see it, the Germans, in the course of their "legitimate" expansion, have gone to war. It is Britain, not France, whom they want to punish.

But the French, in any coalition that Great Britain may assemble and direct against the Totalitarian States, will be much the most "honourable" of our allies. One difference between 1939 and 1914 is that to-day it is impossible any longer to make "gentleman's agreements" because there are no gentlemen left--except of course us and the French. Even Spain has gone "Bohemian" and slightly "gangster."

This sad deterioration in the social standards and snobbish codes, as in the social status, of the heads of the European States--the fact that half the crowned heads are in exile, and their places taken by "gangster" oligarchies, in most cases public exponents of the art of high-handed homicide, and with about as much respect for a signed contract as a cat-burglar or coiner--does complicate matters for an ancient monarchy, on the look-out for trusty confederates.

The "white war" in the midst of which we found ourselves wallowing and sweating until last September was probably the major political invention of the

twentieth century. It turned out not too successfully for us. But there may be an even more formidable invention in store for us--namely the grey war, which I have just been attempting to adumbrate.

Worsted as we have been in this new game of bloodless bluff, we might find that we were even less masters of that still more deadly novelty--the grey war.

The Totalitarians, it is true, assert that it is us, the capitalist democracies, who are responsible for the "white war," which started so merrily with "Sanctions." And in a sense we are. For instead of declaring war on Italy at the time of the invasion of Abyssinia, we took the milder, more lawyer-like and genteel, step of instituting a political boycott, or peaceful blockade, of the rascally Wop offender. As it would have been perfectly easy to blow Italy out of the Mediterranean and bring Mussolini's head on a pike to London, it is hardly sensible of that gentleman to make of this human restraint a subject of reproach. He should rather praise us for refraining from war, than accuse us of beginning a bloodless (or "white") diplomatic campaign.

But whatever it was that initiated it, this "white war" has distinctly been lost by us. We have been beaten in ("white") battle after battle.

Here, then, is my point. A war with Italy--a full red-blooded naval and military war--at the time of the invasion of Abyssinia, would naturally have resulted in a lightning victory for Great Britain. Seeing how fearful the odds were against the Italians, it could have had no other issue. But the "white war" has been lost, and ignominiously lost. Now is it not possible that, a general war having broken out--ostensibly an ordinary, full-blooded war, but in fact, as a war, just as unorthodox an affair as the recent pestilential peace--the same unexpected outcome is to be feared?

In a full-blooded, all-in war, after the pattern of the last one, Great Britain should be victorious. (The price would be so colossal that it would be a Pyrrhic victory: but let that pass.) In a "grey war," or a half-war, on the other hand, such as I have been outlining, Great Britain might be signally unsuccessful-- might even, under certain circumstances, lose everything.

The analogy between that very unorthodox Peace, and this equally unorthodox War, might be proved fairly exact. For after all the "grey war" would grow out of the "white war." For some years terrible local wars have even been in progress in

which Great Britain has played her part, as a "white" participant. With Great Britain herself openly at war, in some places, if it were a "grey war," "white" conditions, as a matter of fact, would still persist. In other places it will be a fast and furious full-blooded massacre. The war will be patchy--with England possibly as the hottest patch. It will be frenzied in one sector, no quarter given and no quarter asked: lackadaisical and half-hearted in another. Anyway it will be so big and rambling that there will be plenty of room in it for every degree and variety of antagonism from a mere demonstration to the whole-hogging operations of the suicide-squad type.

That the war will not be a conventional war--not so true to type and so "military" as the last--most people are agreed. But it is very much in our interest--from the purely nationalist, or patriotic, standpoint--that it should be as bona fide a war as possible.

IV 1939 COMPARED WITH 1914

WHEN just now I used the word "pessimistic" to describe this survey of the European scene, I did not mean that I thought England had "had her day," and was about to be liquidated by the dynamic Totalitarians, or anything of that sort. Rather, I think, England will adapt and absorb into herself that new dynamism. Nor am I so impressed as some people are by the cheap dynamism of Rome and Berlin. Even I have been at pains to prove that Hitler is not an Alexander of Macedon, nor a Frederick the Great, but just a smart politician like Lloyd George, with a big machine behind him--but a brittle machine, as it seems to me; psychologically gimcrack.

Pessimist, however, in the sense of deliberately eschewing the rosy and comforting picture, I must continue to be. No general wins a battle who does not take count beforehand of every unfavourable factor in his own situation. It is not by overestimating the valour or loyalty of mercenary troops that he is likely to come out on top.

It will take Great Britain some time to get her little flock of satellite powers together. In the aggregate they may amount to quite a sizable land force, valuably placed from the strategic standpoint.

Turkey has thrown in her lot with us, and Turkey is a key state. The others will follow in due time. Yugoslavia is already purging itself of its pro-Axis elements: Bulgaria must be as afraid, at least, of her new Balkan neighbour, Mussolini, as of any of the others.

British supremacy at sea, our great economic resources, count for a great deal, especially in the Mediterranean. And-- though this may seem to introduce an unreal element of partnership--the French and English, other things being equal, are so very much more attractive socially than are the harsh gentlemen of the Axis, that this undeniable advantage must be reckoned in.

Finally, as to the political principles we represent, at least there is this in our favour (and ballyhoo apart): we are not either desirous of marching into the small countries involved (nor able to do so even if we so desired) either as

conquerors, or as "protectors."

Last of all, let us count in this not unuseful psychological factor. We are farther away from many of the small states in question than are our potential enemies. Distance lends enchantment. If I were a Pole, or a Yugoslav, I should know a lot more about Teutons than I do, and I expect I should not care much for them. No one in eastern Europe likes the German, though there are some who have a sneaking admiration for them. On the other hand, if I were an eastern European, I should look upon the English as a set of harmless lunatics, who had plenty of dough, and "paid their way." I should prefer the English. As to the French, a man would be a blackguard or a mental case who preferred the Germans to the French. I do not believe such a person exists.

That these advantages possessed by our Axis over the other Axis--advantages derived from our superior social charm and gentlemanliness--are impalpable and difficult to evaluate, is true. Even in our empire, such relatively good order as reigns is due, I am persuaded, to the fact that we are regarded as rather soft. A weak or backward people knows it has to be ruled by somebody, and would rather have an easy-going Anglo-Saxon to boss it than a Jap or a German.

Rich and attractive we are. But nevertheless 1939 in comparison with 1914 is a much less favourable year to start a world war for Great Britain. We must come back to that. The position is nothing like so good. The new air arm has qualified the invincibility of sea power--how far has not yet been ascertained: but that very unpredictability is a danger signal for the statesman.

From motives of mere patriotism, I have made this attack upon wishful thinking: deliberately I am emphasizing the great deterioration in our military position, as compared with what it was at the beginning of the last war. Most of our newspapers --also from patriotic motives, I am sure, but mistaken patriotism, as it seems to me--have consistently disguised from their readers these alarming symptoms.

But the picture would not be complete, if we consider the Dominions, without allowing for the effect of war itself: I mean that Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and in a lesser degree, South Africa, have rallied to England now the "Old Country" is attacked.

Canada, of course, is no longer so British in blood as it was. England is not, in

fact, the "Old Country" for many Canadians. And in the large French minority-province of Quebec separatism is rampant. For three out of four South Africans Holland is the "Old Country," not England. All the same, the English language counts for a lot: and in all the English-speaking dominions English institutions and ways of thought have made these large countries with small populations what they are.

The above is a very rough and very short report, of course. If one weighs it all up--taking into account the negative and unsatisfactory nature of the last War, in spite of the enormous sacrifices it entailed; and that has to be counted in when you are assessing the attitude of the English and French people themselves--the help that we can anticipate from the British overseas is very much less than twenty years ago. As I have remarked, the Australians have their own defence to consider this time, the destinies of Canada are in the Western Hemisphere, the Canadians recognize this more to-day than twenty years ago, and they share to a large extent the isolationist sentiment which is strong in the United States.

France is our land army--our only absolutely certain land army, up to the present--as we are France's fleet. If France were overwhelmed--and there is always a possibility of that-- and if the French were compelled to sue for peace, we should be left up in the air--or out in the middle of the sea. There would be a good chance of our being starved into submission. I do not see such a thing happening. I mention it only in this hard-boiled review of how we stand. The United States would hardly allow it to happen, even with a republican President. As France is our "first line of defence," so Great Britain is America's. If the Rhine is our frontier, as Lord Baldwin affirmed, then the white cliffs of Old England are the frontiers of the New World. And if the Western Democracies were defeated in Europe, I would not give the U.S.A. above a year or two to continue to enjoy their old immunity.

But the deciding factor in all these rough calculations must be the attitude of those two great outside States--the Soviet Union and the United States of America. Should the former give strong support to Germany, and the latter stand aside, the Western Democracies run a very good chance of defeat. Why should we blind ourselves to that fact? So every effort should be made to secure the support of America and the neutrality of Russia, on whatever terms we can.

V THE PROMISED LAND OF TOM, DICK, AND HARRY

WHY Russia and the United States have up to the present been disinclined to throw in their lot with Great Britain is, I am sorry to have to point out, for the same reason that England is averse from throwing in her lot with Nazi Germany. Great Britain seems old-fashioned to them, just as Germany does to us.

Recent Governments in this country have acted with too little understanding of the changed conditions of the world; have stood too much on their Imperial dignity, and been too inclined to paddle their own canoe--especially their own war-canoe. A bit of honest reciprocity and mateyness is wanted in the present state of the planet.

You only have to picture to yourself Joseph Stalin and his old revolutionary cronies, installed within the walls of the Kremlin in shirt-sleeves and slippers, in comradely conclave, and it is not difficult to imagine what they must think of the clubmen-politicians of Whitehall. The British Cabinet of Tory nobodies seems to them just as much an anachronism as the medievalism of the Nuremberg rally seems to an English statesman.

The British Government behaves very grandly, as if it had something to give. Whereas it has nothing to give such a country as Russia. And it has not yet learnt how to ask.

Guffaws came from within the trebly-guarded walls of the Soviet citadel as a result. There the enthroned workman and peasant of Russia was not dazzled by the Savile Row cut or the bombastic B.B.C. accent of British plenipotentiaries, as our own subservient Hodge would be. The traditional determination to get something for nothing of the English ruling class merely annoys or bores them. It has always tickled to death our own people, who have from time immemorial recounted to each other, with great glee, how such and such a royal personage blackmailed a tradesman into giving something away instead of selling it; or with what infinite grace such and such a great lady or noble lord begged or cadged, persuading some poor person to part with something of value in exchange for a condescending smile or the gracious offer of a cigarette. It is

terribly difficult for Englishmen to realize that these "taking ways" are out of date. At all events, they are no use whatever in dealing with a state more powerful and more secure than oneself.

I am not suggesting that Mr Chamberlain should get himself up in a cloth cap and a choker--though personally I should be very impressed if he did. I should feel there was an outside chance of our distressed areas and misery spots receiving a little sympathetic attention.

What does strike me is that even without that realistic neckwear or a disarming coster-cap much might be done with a little humility of heart. Finger-nails may not be so clean in the Russian capital, but Russia is many times the size of England, and will be there after our empire is only a memory. And the "Russian Steam-roller" should obviously be approached hat in hand, or with the circumspection of a Pekinese encountering a St Bernard. Again, they may have bumped off their reigning house, but Mr Baldwin (as he was before that achievement) did much the same thing. If Stalin has not given himself the Order of the Garter, that is only out of a lurking bourgeois good taste and a certain sense of congruity.

Next, the United States. That is almost more difficult than Russia. More difficult for our statesmen to know how to go about making a true social contract there--as opposed to a power-political old-time "alliance" of the stand-offish type: more difficult for the Americans to believe in our bona fides. Yet the U.S.A. is, if anything, more important to us than the U.S.S.R.

Great Britain is certainly suspect to Americans. They cannot make head or tail of her. She is a stuck-up old girl who owes a lot of money--an odd thing for such a highly respectable old lady to do. She is rather flighty, which is alarming in one so old--she never seems quite serious, that is--goes into giggles all of a sudden, or smiles enigmatically, if politely. She seems to the average American slightly phoney. Let us face up to that. She has many habits which baffle and put one on one's guard-- the curious way she has of speaking English with a foreign accent, for instance. Then she must be the most quarrelsome old dame who ever stepped: always--umbrella in hand--getting into scraps with her neighbours, and spitting at them over the garden wall. As a matter of fact, if it wasn't for Hitler it is doubtful if any American would have anything more to do with her. But Hitler has turned the scales. She's right about Hitler anyhow, who is even crazier than she is. She seems quite normal in comparison. Hitler is one up to her.

President Roosevelt is different, he dotes on Great Britain. If it rested with him he would have signed up with England, in full military alliance, months ago. For he understands. But most of his countrymen don't. And unluckily he has a quarrel on with half of them just now: the richer half, too. It's all about his New Deal--an attempt to legislate unselfishness. His sticking up for Great Britain makes England seem even more phoney than usual to those Americans who hate Roosevelt. The others don't give a damn, one way or the other. But no Americans like Hitler. That is our long suit.

To make you see the kind of difficulties involved where Anglo-American cooperation is concerned, I can't do better than describe the American capital, from personal experience, and show how things are done there--so very different from the way they are done here. I'll take the State Department.

When I was in Washington, D.C., some years ago I went round the State Department in the morning with my namesake Sir Wilmot Lewis. He is The Times correspondent in Washington, and one of the most intelligent fellows it has been my lot to meet. One wonders why so gifted a man is wasted on a job that, however important, does not offer much scope for such really unusual talents as his. However, why I am referring to Sir Wilmot Lewis here is that my tour in his company of the offices of the State Department, next door to the White House-- where he had to go every morning to find out the latest news-- was an object-lesson in democratic technique.

The doorkeeper, when he saw him, looked up and drawled: "Hallo, Bill!" to which Sir Wilmot responded, rolling his head a little to one side: "Hallo, Fred!" Inside the State building, as we passed along its rather dirty stone passages, scrubby-looking figures met with would give him nod for nod, or head-roll for head-roll, with a "Mornin', Bill!" chiming with a "How goes it, Teddie!" from the lips of Sir Wilmot. And so we Tommed and Dicked and Harryed ourselves in and out of several bureaus, where news of the latest doings of Japan, or of Mexico, were casually discussed, in a sort of "Well, what's she up to now!" sort of spirit.

One hears a lot about "democracy" in England, but I doubt me if the Englishman will ever be as good a democrat as the American. Whitehall will never catch up on Washington. They are many light-years apart. It is not miles that separate them, but aeons. It must be fearfully difficult for a home-keeping American to understand the behaviour of a British Cabinet confronted with an aggressor.

There is always the lingering suspicion, in the mind of the American, that the British lot are really aggressors, too. They have a phoney look, to him.

It has always seemed to me that language is the great obstacle to international understanding, perhaps the only major obstacle. The Germans, the English, and the French, unless they decided upon a common tongue, must always hug the "sovereign state" notion, and a man who said "Yes" look at a man who said "Oui" or "Ja" a little askance. England and America, on the other hand, owing to the common tongue, could very easily forget their sovereign-nationhood and federalize as an Anglo-Saxon Union, along with the British Dominions, one would have thought.

But the great barrier in such a transaction would be class, not language. The British body-politic would have to undergo a major operation (of class-debunkage) before it could really merge itself with the North American soul. Nevertheless, a start might be made, in a small way. Picked bodies of Britishers, with voices as far removed as possible from the classy boom of the B.B.C. announcer; with the minimum of inverted servility; real "mixers"--ready for any human cocktail they were popped into--should be sent over to the States as specimens of what we could do in the way of democrats: advance copies. And picked bodies of Chicagoans or "Southern Gentlemen" should be shipped over here, to be the pioneers of a new anti-national world-order.

Meanwhile--and it is meanwhile that we have to think about-- no step should be neglected to educate our Government in how to approach a truly democratic foreign Government, with a view to reaching a real understanding.

Then someone has to be let freely into the British Empire, or people will break in. Why not stock it with one hundred per cent Americans (there are fifteen million of them out of work-- their system would first have to be put right, just like ours, prior to amalgamation), and exploit the fact of the common language to initiate a vast experiment in federal rule, in five continents? But such a proposal has to be made without *arrière-pensée*. Were Mr Chamberlain to go to Washington to discuss this, he could take his umbrella with him but he would have to leave behind his old school tie. He would have to face up to the fading of Britain, for its own good, into a vaster organism, an organism in which his surname would be lost, and he would become "Nev" in a world of Toms and Dicks and Harrys. But what's the odds, if there are two or three hundred million Toms and Dicks and Harrys there, shoulder to shoulder, at a pinch, to really keep

the world safe for democracy (and I have split an infinitive to show I am in earnest!), not in the Lloyd George sense, in which half the population are either under-nourished or out of work, to reward them for loving Democracy not wisely but too well?

The upshot of all this is--and I will ring down the curtain now on this part of my book--that England's position in the world has changed so radically that she has to take in partners; she can no longer carry on in isolation. She has to give up something to somebody, and it is better to give it to an American than to Herr Hitler.

There are a certain number of people in England--perhaps twenty thousand out of forty millions--who would rather make a present to Hitler, if one had to be made, than to a ruffianly Bolshevik or a beastly American. They can be disregarded. There are many more, probably a majority, who think it is possible to keep what they've got for ever and ever--that God thinks first of His Englishmen, and always will. It is these latter who have to be converted. It is because of them that Russia and America are sitting on the fence. After a war in which Hitlerite Germany and class-conscious and purse-proud England had destroyed each other, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. will pick up the fragments, the centre of civilization will shift westwards, from London and Paris to New York: and presumably some such world-order, on a federal basis, as I have here been adumbrating, and in which it would be more sensible for England to enter now--and so avoid the crash--will be established.

But it is impossible for us to go on discussing these things any further on the present lines. We have reached the frontier, not so much of party politics, as of a region where the great political principles of nationalism or internationalism, of imperialism or anti-imperialism, invite us to declare ourselves. And of course for a final verdict upon Hitlerism you have to pass over into that controversial region too.

I shall be as little controversial as possible. Strong political bias is as irrelevant in a book written for a popular audience as it would be in dentistry or engineering. A dentist treats Conservative teeth in just the same way as Labour teeth: an engineer does not inquire, in building a bridge, if the waters it is to span have their source among seditious or loyalist-- Catholic or Mohammedan--rocks. But I have to speak a little plainly about the British Empire, for one has to be clear in one's mind about the British Empire, the French and Russian Empires,

the Dritte Reich, and empires generally. We just have to get our minds straight about empires. My next part will be all about that.

PART IV: THE CONFESSIONS OF AN EMPIRE-BUILDER

I TRADE FOLLOWS THE FLAG

WITH an empire people, empire cannot but be a rather delicate subject. Yet in the last chapter we have agreed that it is impossible to go on discussing whether the British Empire is in danger, or what is the best way of securing it, without asking ourselves exactly what it is, and exactly why it is.

Are you an imperialist? If you had to reply "yes" or "no" to that question I am sure you would rather say "no" than "yes." There are very few Englishmen to-day who would stand up and say: "I am an imperialist." Yet we are, as Englishmen, the arch-imperialists of the earth.

I will put my cards on the table if you will put yours. Are you to-day an imperialist? Were you at some former time an imperialist? But I see you hesitate still to commit yourself to such a downright statement. So I will set you an example, and admit that I am not an imperialist. I agree, on the other hand, that I was once an imperialist. I no more thought of questioning the British Empire than of doubting the propriety of my toe-nails or the hair on my head at ten years old.

I was born an empire-builder, and was destined to be a pukka sahib. My parents willed it so--they saw me at one of the outposts of empire, shading my eyes against the tropical sun, and stopping a rush of Afridis revolver in hand. I had no objection. I picked the cavalry--although I had never mounted a horse. My father was a great horse-master, however, and I was sure I could ride if I got on a horse. When, much later, as a war soldier, I entered the Field Artillery Cadet School at Exeter I was rapidly disillusioned. I found no horse would suffer me to remain on its back for more than a few seconds at a time.

Two determined attempts to transfer to the army class at the public school where I went were sharply repulsed. At the third attempt I was turned out of the school--for my ambitions to enter that learned profession resulted, as might have been expected, in the attentions of the school authorities being drawn to the fact that for four successive terms I had not changed my form. I was ignominiously prevented from empire-building, and though still of empire-building age, and smarting somewhat from the tactless behaviour of my housemaster, I found

myself directed towards the slopes of Parnassus, instead of clanking up the path of glory.

That I followed my bent is certain. I was never meant by fate to stop a rush of imperfectly armed tribesmen (owing to the possession of a service revolver invented by a cleverer man than myself), or to chase Bedouin bands in the hills of Judaea. I was meant to do the sort of things I'm doing now. Still, there was a time, say at ten years old, when I was placidly building an empire, in martial day-dreams, like any other small boy born in the Victorian sunset. Then it seemed the most natural thing in the world to pepper a lot of misguided "natives," who had flown to arms beneath the frowning eye of the British Raj, the nasty rebels. Now I am not so sure, of course. I have lost that sense for building empires with which I was born.

I put all this on record to capture your attention for what I am about to say, which will deal with the problem of having and holding an empire. I might have been sitting--if fate had not willed it otherwise--like a Conrad figure, upon a veranda in a compound, a stingah at my elbow, as strong and silent as at present I am polemical and anything but fire-eating. A shot would have rung out in the stillness of the tropical night--it is not impossible to suppose. I should have risen, and then slumped at the side of my stingah. As a symbol of empire, I should have got the bullet that pays the score of the racial underdog. I should have received a soldier's funeral, with a Union Jack and a Last Post. I should have died in the service, more or less, of some holding company or insurance racket, which was after the oil of the "natives" it was my profession to kill--though these, full of notions about Blut und Erde, insisted that the oil was their oil, because it was on their land, if you please. At all events, my end would have been a fitting one, and instinct with "honour."

Thoughtful peoples, like the Chinese, rank the professional fighting man very low: their natural aversion and contempt for him makes things difficult for the authentic patriot, like Chiang Kai-Shek. On the other hand, ourselves and the Germans honour the professional soldier above all men--though the main cause of dispute of the English people with the German people is that the latter idolize the military man so out of all reason that even to us they seem to go a bit too far. I say this, by the way, lest my remark about my funeral with military honours should have lent itself to misunderstanding.

An empire, however, to return to that, must be a military empire. There is no

other sort of imperium. However politically disunited and uninterested in military matters a nation may be, it sort of resents the foreigner setting up a government there. Troops are necessary to dissuade it from tactless displays of patriotism or "lawlessness." That is the A.B.C. of empire. You have to hold the beggars down, if you want to sit on top of them.

But you are not such a fool as to employ a lot of expensive professionals to hold a country down, without some specific object. It is not just for the sake of sitting on a prostrate nation. "Trade follows the flag:" trade is the object of the flag. It is what the flag is all about.

"When I was a little boy," as Mr Chamberlain would put it, I thought only of the flag. I was prepared to wag it, for a solde. But I did not think of the solde, either, enjoyed by the soldier. That was to me a bagatelle. I thought only of the Union Jack. (I was undoubtedly the stuff of which empire-makers are built.)

It is a well-known fact that the typical member of the officer class has always despised trade. That is odd--seeing that without trade there would be no flag, and therefore no military man. But it really was a fact, in the true empire-building days trade was just a bad smell for the gallant gentleman who made the world safe for trade, by his military prowess: and the person engaged in trade was regarded by his military coadjutor as a repulsive "bounder," with whom the less one had to do the better. You black-balled him if he tried to get into your club, cut him in the street, and refused him the suffix Esquire if compelled to correspond with him.

This, it has always seemed to me, was one of the weirdest of paradoxes. It is on a par with the attitude in the senior service towards the medical man. Yet the pill-wallah is an important factor in a battleship--though nothing like so important as the finance-wallah in an empire, on whose behalf the empire is built.

This is a very painful subject, but having started this argument we have to see it through, like pukka Britons. Let me confess then that from my empire-building days, I retain more than a trace of contempt for trade. I have no respect for a stockbroker even to this day. And for me a canned-goods king is a joke. Only last year I got into extraordinary hot water for making a joke about a Fifty-Shilling Tailor. I can't get this feeling about the inferiority of the tradesman out of my blood.

As this is a confession (is it not headed "Confessions of an Empire-builder"?) I had better go the whole way and admit that, in spite of the fact that I did a bit of growing up around the age of twenty-one, none the less I feel a certain solidarity with the soldier--I mean, of course, with the British soldier, who is the best of all soldiers. Empire-building has been, for him, a sport--not a trade. He is so unphilosophic (unlike his opposite number in Prussia, who is apt to do what he does with his eyes open) that he really is not aware of the unlovely underside of his function. He is like a man who has never looked at the back of his head, where there is, however, an unsightly bald patch: or a Victorian woman who had never realized that she went to the water-closet.

The French military man is much more intelligent--and all Frenchmen have known from birth that they cannot dispense with the cloaca. But they are good guys--to continue my confession. I have met French officers who struck me as very sound human propositions--as different as chalk from cheese to the merchant class, or the shop-keepers. Almost as good as the workman.

I have mentioned the workman. We have come round to him. But does not he--the simple, ill-paid man, who does the hard work of the world--occupy a little the same role, over against "trade," as does the soldier? The money-principle is behind him, just as "trade" is behind the "flag." The resemblance is really most striking. He hates money--seeing how greatly he suffers at its hands--even more than the member of the officer-class has ever hated it, in that class's hey-day. Although he serves it, he is detached from it--is uncontaminated by it--just as is the case with the soldier. And here at last, perhaps, we arrive at an important principle. The "Soldiers' and Workers' Republic" that was set up in the north of Europe at the end of the War recognized that principle, in the earliest title selected for their new society.

Merely by living we contaminate ourselves. (What man can say that any day of his life has been spent without some collateral dishonesty, or some remote spoliation?) And the workman sent to us by a public utility company to repair a defective fixture is a man like ourselves. He works (since he must, to live) for a crooked company: but he is not a criminal. It is not he who wills, that is to say, the constant dishonest increase in charges which makes of the modern householder's life a nightmare. He and his kind do all the work, as the soldier does all the fighting: and somebody else, of a much less desirable stamp, gathers in the spoils of war, or the spoils of work.

But you see how deeply the prejudices of my (frustrated) empire-building have sunk in: the distrust of, the distaste for, the commercial exploiter--of the man who pays the piper, but only possesses the money with which to effect this disbursement owing to the rake-off he has got (surreptitiously) from the piper's talented display?

All I have retained of the empire-building habits of mind with which I began is (1) a feeling that if there had to be empires they ought to be British empires; and (2) a conviction that the company-promoting mind, which ultimately is responsible for empires, is despicable. What a confused inheritance!

For the rest, our esteemed contemporaries Mr Winston Churchill and Mr Hilaire Belloc (who are very much nearer together than is generally understood) represent one type of empire-builder, he of the incorrigibly military mind. Another type of imperialist is Mr Ernest Bevin, who this year at the Socialist Party Conference at Southport said: "In the empire we should be willing to limit our sovereignty more and more, and build up a great commonwealth of which the United States could be a partner. . . . We must return to the position of trustees for our colonial territory": or Mr W. Mellor, at the same conference, who said: "We are becoming entangled in a mass of capitalist intrigue, as we were in 1914, fighting not as we believed for democracy, liberty, and freedom, but for Egypt, Iraq, and oil."

These latter gentlemen would not hand back Egypt, Iraq, or India to their respective capitalist or princely ruling classes, but imperialistically hold them in trust for the advantage of humanity at large. That seems to me a capital idea, and much better than the orthodox imperialism of the other people. Is it--like most good things--irrealizable? Who can say! Yet another war you would think must result in a little common sense creeping into the conduct of government. Even the threat of it should do something. But to hand colonies to Hitler lock, stock, and barrel, is definitely not a good idea. It would be perpetuating the old bad system of trade-and-flag. For Herr Hitler is a stupid militarist. A believer in la bonne guerre! I take my stand with those who believe that war cannot be good. And I would never hand over a colony to people who asserted that Negroes are animals.

II PROPER ACTION OFF THE COAST OF SPAIN

RESPONSE to stimulus, from without, is the secret of much that happens in Hitler's Reich. We are the outside. We, the English, are one of the main stimuli. We excite Hitler a great deal. That is because we are so big an empire.

Now it has always been said that we were left in peaceful possession of our empire only because we left it open, and did not lock it up. Any one could become a British citizen for ten pounds. We put up no tariff walls, either.

To-day we have put up tariff walls around our empire. We refuse the "have-nots," or the poor nations, not possessed of colonies, access to that empire. We are "unjust." Such is the nature of the stimulus, as explained by the Nazi. But is this true? Are we so unjust? Are we a decadent old lion, squatting upon a food-hoard he has not the stomach for himself? Or are we (as we prefer to think) in some vague way the guardians of human liberty?

Do Messrs Chamberlain, Churchill, Bevin, Stafford Cripps, Eden, and Pollitt represent a higher ethical and human value than the Herren Hitler, Goebbels, Streicher, Goering, and Himmler? That is what we should ask ourselves first. And I believe that in our muddled, half-hearted, rather absurd fashion the first of these two groups is preferable to the second. Especially some of them (for whereas the Nazi lot are all of a piece, our lot differ among themselves).

I suggest that we should be very outspoken about our shortcomings, in the course of these arguments, just as we have been about our strategical position. We can dispense with political uplift and patriotic exhibitionism. We must do so, in fact, if we are to attain our object: namely, a clear view of the German mind, of which we are the principle irritant, and of all the problems attendant upon the particular character of that mind. The Hitler cult is almost a satire upon us. What, then, are we--the satirized? Or, if you prefer to put it that way, have we deserved Hitler--or is Hitler an unreasonable caricature of our enormities, which are neither better nor worse than other peoples'? I may say that I incline to the view that, unethical as we may be, we are no worse than others. I shall indicate several particulars in which we are better. And I am perfectly certain of one thing, that the English nation--taking it all through--has more regard for abstract

justice than has the German.

"We are moving towards the New Middle Ages," M. Tardieu has said. That the so-called Dark Ages--the forerunner of the Middle Ages--caused by the collapse of Rome, will be repeated, that a new Dark Age is upon us, is a commonplace of speculative foreboding to-day. That reading of our historical position has my assent; but I believe that M. Tardieu's "Middle Ages" will be there too--are already here: and that our Dark Ages will be most disagreeably combined with what is medieval.

Let us begin as if we were children with the most simple questions of all. Although these are childish questions, there are not many educated adults who are able to answer them.

Here is a batch, selected at random. Why should we be again at war, so soon after the last one? As there must be a war, why should it result in a Dark Age? War is quite a usual thing, and all wars do not end in Dark Ages. Why, when the world is full of an abundance of the things both necessary and desirable for human life--and when man has equipped himself so wonderfully to bring all these resources within his reach--should men still be killing each other (as they did in the old primitive days of want) to possess themselves of things, as if there were not enough to go round?

The same answer can be employed for all such questions (except that regarding the Dark Age): namely, that men are not rational beings. We are half animal.

Our emotions are as ineradicably primitive as is our digestive and generative apparatus. We each possess a sort of bogus "freewill": each of us acts (instinctively) as if he were the only person in the world. We never behave rationally, for that would be alien to our muddled, emotional, semi-animal nature.

But we have glimpses--or a perpetual half understanding would be a more exact description--of the rational and the sensible, and of the proper response to that upon the plane of social behaviour. Consequently we suffer at seeing ourselves invariably behave against our best interests, looked at from the unemotional, or common-sense, standpoint. All our sufferings are due to this complex nature: all can be traced to this perpetual half understanding, as I have described it.

To be half kind, half humane, half charitable, half self-sacrificing; such is our handicap. The Sermon on the Mount, all the teaching of the founder of our religion, was a denial of this betwixt-and-between character of human beings. Christ treated men as if they were not dual natures--not animals at all: or else as if they were in fact capable of banishing the animal. This led to a great deal of suffering. For no one, except the saints, was able to be anything but half-Christian: that is to say, half-good. And that made many people, during many centuries, very miserable indeed.

To leave the Sermon on the Mount, and the origins of the puritan conscience, and to come down to the present-day: the evangelical fallacy and the redoubtable confusions to which it must lead (to people behaving as if they were Christian gentlemen one minute, and gangsters the next), was recognized by a great anthropologist, Charles Darwin. And all that is happening at the present time can be traced to the immense vogue of Darwin's theories, and the great changes effected thereby in European thought. Darwin is father of modern Prussia, or Grossdeutschland.

An expression you often hear is "the law of the jungle." Leader-writers in newspapers are very fond of it. They say "If this sort of thing goes on unchecked" (i.e. the disregard for treaties, and solemn international undertakings) "we shall be back at the law of the jungle once more." In other words, we should be back where the tigers, snakes, and the polecats are, at the naked struggle for existence stage of evolution. The survival of the fittest would be our only law.

But it was Darwin who revealed and popularized those laws of the jungle--which he defined in such well-known expressions as "the struggle for existence," and "the survival of the fittest." So the newspapers of the Western Democracies are invoking against their Totalitarian antagonists the jargon of Darwinism. But they forget the essence of the Darwinian teaching, which was nothing but the doctrine of force, against which they inveigh.

If they forget it, Signor Mussolini does not. And when that very able if theatrical person leaps upon a cannon, in full war-paint, inflates his chest, and delivers himself of what is called in America a "fight-talk," he is proving himself a child of Darwin. In what was intended to be a rather pacific utterance not long ago (a sop to the "morality sisters," as Britannia and Marianne are called by the jokers of the Axis press), he felt obliged to qualify his remarks by the statement that

"Fascists had no truck with dreams of a Saturnian age--they would regard perpetual peace as a disaster for mankind." Obviously that spoilt the effect of the speech entirely.

The name that more than any other is associated with this type of thinking is that of Friedrich Nietzsche (from whom I have already quoted). Nietzsche clothed in militant philosophical rhetoric the survival of the fittest--the "red in tooth and claw"--notions of Darwin: and he was, as is now generally recognized, the intellectual offspring of Charles Darwin. In his turn, Mussolini is the legitimate political offspring of Nietzsche. Mussolini has at all times expressed the deepest admiration for Nietzsche; and it is the influence of that highly sensational German philosopher that turned him from Communism to Fascism. It is that that gives him his intellectual sanction for all the flamboyant political acts which we know.

So far so good. But, as I see the matter, it is to be infinitely regretted that this hysterical mechanical doctrine of "la bonne guerre," of the fatality of senseless mortal combat, should ever have acquired an ascendancy over the mind of the European, just at the moment when Europe was ripe to become a new co-operative commonwealth, instead of a mock-hysterical ape-house à la Charles Darwin, in which each ape retired, baring its teeth, into a corner--indoctrined by latter-day Darwinians into the holiness and beauty of war-to-the-knife; one ape robing itself in the regalia of Charlemagne, another affecting the sceptre of Augustus, and a third adjusting to a blind eye an antediluvian nautical spyglass. For we in England have our full share of puerile mountebanks as well, spoiling for a fight.

Reverting to the batch of questions with which we began; the mistake our statesmen and journalists make is to forget Darwin and to pretend that they are Christians. They have attempted to establish politics upon an impossible basis of good and of bad. In that unreal system we are always the good, and the other fellow a very bad hat indeed. This is a mistake. But it is scarcely to be avoided, seeing that that is the tradition which the British statesman inherits.

Such great Christian gentlemen as were the oligarchical masters of England a century ago of necessity could do no wrong in the eyes of the British public. And that public has not perceived that its masters are no longer dazzling feudal nabobs. As to the German public, they, on their side, have been as little amenable to change as ours. They still react as if a Hohenzollern were there,

instead of a house-painter. When the homely figure of Herr Adolf Hitler--not even a military leader, much less a Napoleon--makes its appearance upon a balcony, they acclaim him, unconscious of the change. "For the Russian masses Lenin is an orthodox saint, to whose shrine they repair as if he were a martyred Pope"--he who described religion as the "opium of the people." In death he becomes himself an opiate. So difficult is it for nations to adapt themselves to changed circumstances.

Our statesmen have made the mistake of invoking Christ on behalf of actions that belong to the primeval world of Charles Darwin. But it was doubly a mistake to do this in dealing with a militant Darwinian such as Mussolini or Hitler. The moral note should have been avoided.

With these military mystics such an attitude could only drive them into a frenzy of derisive opposition. They foam at the mouth at the mention of the Sermon on the Mount, as if it were a blasphemy.

Instead of speaking slightly of Mars, had we from the start humoured their particular delusion, all would have been well. All we need have done when, for instance, they challenged us at sea, and sent their warships to the coasts of Spain, was to sink the lot with the curt remark that "we did not wish to have them in those waters so sent them to the bottom," or something strong and silent on those lines.

It was revealed in the Axis press, just after the termination of the Civil War, that Axis naval help for Franco was forthcoming to the extent of a couple of submarines, which were probably torpedoing British ships with a delicious impunity.

It really does look as if our Government conspired with Franco to "dish the Reds," and told him not to stand on ceremony with our ships, but to sink as many as he liked. Was it the same with the French and the Russians? No, Blum and Stalin must have wanted Negrin to win. Why were no French or Russian submarines sent to sink the Canarias? Russia is supposed to have hundreds of submarines. One or two at Valencia might have turned the scales. Miaja might have held a Victory Parade in Madrid instead of Franco.

In a parliamentary democracy like England no policy is clear-cut--the Left trips up the Right, and the Right trips up the Left, just as a step is about to be taken in

any direction by anybody. It is impossible to say that the British Government did anything so definite as conspiring with Franco to win, therefore.

But let us all the same suppose that Great Britain had acted rationally, and with proper vigour, and sunk all the pocket-battleships, and "barred" Spanish waters to Axis shipping for the duration of the Spanish Civil War. We should have all become the best of friends. Both the Germans and Italians would have understood that perfectly.

To have allowed the guns to speak was our obvious cue--a language that any disciple of Darwin would understand. Instead we have employed the debased language of evangelical commonplace, which has only earned us their anger and contempt. At the time of which I speak we enjoyed a great superiority in Force. It was most disastrously inconsistent not to use it. For either we eschew Force altogether, or else we are not ashamed to employ it. Instead of wringing our hands over the bombing of "defenceless civilians," we should have remembered that we had bombs as well, and for the same purpose. Then we should have been respected, and actually have been better liked.

Last of all, think of the difference between the loss of life that would have been entailed at any time up to a couple of years ago, and what now it must mean, if tardily we bethink ourselves of the efficacy of blood and iron as an argument.

So we come back to our list of questions: to the subject of the Dark Age, and why such a war as we now are faced with cannot end at the technical "peace" that concludes it, but must go on until the whole of society has been demolished and rebuilt. For the eclipse of what we call "civilization," as a corollary of so much abandonment to force, has something to do with this matter of power unexercised, and yet invoked: of attempts to exercise pressure without the use of force.

Had we made ourselves into one thing sooner, and recognized the pitfalls, in politics, attending upon that caveman-cum-Christian duality I began by describing, it would have been better for all concerned. Herr Hitler would probably have shot himself by now, and Mussolini opened his veins into a bath, as our battle fleet cast anchor in the Bay of Naples. But singlemindedness no man can say we have displayed.

In the matter of Spain the only sane alternative to the above programme of

calculated and timely violence, was to betray no sympathy (whatever our private feelings might be) for either side in the Spanish Civil War: to refrain from all action, and to offer our services at its conclusion to whoever happened to have come out on top.

Spain is of immense strategic importance to us. We bungled that business in the most absolute way, because of divided counsels. Then, if abhorrence of force was our justification for old-womanly interference, why, surely (as no one can fail to see), the Communists are just as much believers in force as are their Fascist opponents, although their ends are different, and nearer, in the abstract at least, to those Christian principles upon which all detestation of force must repose.

In this chapter I hope I may have succeeded in throwing into relief a little bit the principles at work in what looks like becoming a life-and-death struggle of nations (where it need only have been an affair of professionals, potting each other from the turrets of their ironclads). We are--the Anglo-Saxon nations--upon the Christian side of this encounter. But because of the social injustice in which we wallow at home, much too vaguely of that side really to be satisfactory. We are too imperfectly Christian for us to be able to derive all the support we should from that fact.

Now we are at war, every soldier should go into battle with a charter of new liberties in his pocket. A solemn promise from his rulers of a new deal for him and his children. They should be handed to every conscript, as he is called up. Then, indeed, we should be on the side of the light.

The present enemies of our nation are philosophically the disciples of nineteenth-century scientific thought, and their stupid doctrine of force is respectable, if you consider Darwin respectable. We shall from now on be compelled to behave as if we, too, believed in force; for only force can save us from material annihilation. But it would be a sad thing if we slipped into the habits of thought of the militarist states, because we had to militarize ourselves to meet their challenge.

Such a charter of liberties as I suggest could have been secured if the Trade Unions and Labour Party had drawn up such a document, and refused to assent to conscription and the intensive preparation for war until it was agreed that such a solemn document, with the Government seal upon it, should be handed to

every militiaman as he was called up, and every man engaged in war-work of any kind. It should have been made plain for what object this war was to be fought--if to retain the empire, what share in that empire the common man was to have: if to punish a foreign criminal, that such criminal practices should no more be indulged in by us ourselves: if for some unavowable reason, and the rank and file were to be mercenaries merely, that their blood-money at least should be adequate.

But it is the measure of the futility of such organizations, that, although they orate a little bit at their conferences, they have not lifted a finger to secure that another war should be fought under any fairer conditions (for the cannon-fodder) than the last one.

III EMPIRE-BUILDING IN 1939

IF our empire-building was casual, and indulged in without purpose or reflection, empire-building to-day is self-conscious to a degree. Race is a pretext: the notion of a "racial inferior" has taken the place of "the heathen." The hallucination of the German people with regard to Race is a very deliberate hallucination. They are mesmerized by Hitler into the belief that they are a "superior race": but they submit themselves to hypnosis with the utmost alacrity.

Thus it comes about that many Germans who are undersized brunettes apparently believe themselves to be stately blonds. Palpable "alpine" roundheads believe themselves to be dolichocephalic. Such as are dull-witted, tow-haired Hodges tramp about under the delusion that they belong to a master-race, though they probably belong to no identifiable race at all.

I have yet to meet an Englishman who thinks, at this time of day, after the manner of Rudyard Kipling or of Cecil Rhodes, though there are still plenty who take being a "Sahib" seriously. Few Americans of the Franklin Roosevelt era would make good dollar-diplomats of the Teddy Roosevelt era. This is, for the modern American, a handicap at Lima, in a "pan-American" political corroboree. For there the will to dominate is still present, but the disgust that is experienced for the methods by which domination is most readily secured (especially in Latin America) spoils the whole thing.

As reformed empire-builders the English are ineffective too. The pale cast of thought is there. But no such scruples disturb the German empire-builder, on the Hitler pattern. Those dynamic politicians of the Dritte Reich would have far more in common with Kipling than with Eliot or Auden.

Nations have sex. There are female nations, male nations; and there are neuter ones, of course. Also nations change their sex in the course of their mortal career. Certainly Imperialist nations are henations all right. And all "sovereign states" would be Imperialist if they dared, or if they had the money.

Now the Latin countries of South America--half Indian and half Spanish--over against the United States occupy the feminine role. They are clients. They are,

politically and economically, the weaker vessels. They do not understand being treated as "equals"--they know they are not that. They are mature and none too credulous. They prefer the mailed fist to the sticky palm. There is no such word as equal in their vocabulary: one is either a top-dog or an under-dog, and if you are richer and bigger you are on top.

If, therefore, in place of Dollar Diplomacy and United States marines, you come to the Latin American arrayed in the altruist robes of peace and hemispherical brotherhood, their crude Indian nature reacts unworthily. They blandly supply your delegates with most unsuitable Fascist chauffeurs, they smoke your cigars, squint appreciatively at the big German car driven by the big German agent who hovers upon the fringes of the Conference; and they curl their creole lip at you behind your back. If, at the very moment that you go all brotherly and mushy another guy turns up--a young roughneck from Hamburg, who speaks in terms of guns, not butter, and who has a barter-deed in his pocket, promising instead of mere "golden bullets" real lead ones--well, he talks a language you understand. And it is no use whispering to this dago statesman that the man from Hamburg wants to "penetrate" you. Of course he wants to "penetrate" you if he is a proper man, and grab what he can get. For in the jungles of Latin America they are all Darwinians-- just like Mussolini and Hitler. The law of the machete has not been submerged by what we call in the civilized West, "the rule of Law."

If we turn to the problems of the British, where that concerns their sixty-odd colonial possessions, it is the same thing. In the West or the East Indies, in Africa or in Asia, the humanitarian is not understood. A race that has been subjected by force, will not have you put in the place of force, loving kindness. Still less does it like those two things mixed.

My conclusions are these. The ethics of being big, for a state, consist of precepts of force. There is no other way of getting big: there is no other way of staying big. But there are different modes of acquiring bigness by force. Some are less unlovely than others: that is about all one can say.

We, the Anglo-Saxons, got big in the most natural way in the world. We were seamen, we wandered about the earth, which was then uncharted and much bigger psychologically than it is to-day. We scuffled about in strange and marvellous lands, and before we could say Jack Robinson we had an empire on which the sun never sets (see Kipling).

That was a natural--I would say to our German critics, a healthy--expansion, secured at the expense of no one except dusky beings who were as different from ourselves as if they inhabited another planet: great jabbering creatures with rings in their noses--wild, feathered "braves," with copper skins.

The first colonial war of ours that was not a nice war, according to nineteenth century standards, was the Boer War. This fact is very important, when engaged in argument with the German. There we, a very large state, wrestled with a very small state, year after year. The Boers were a people of our own stock and culture. Europe took this badly. And our taking so long about it, made it look worse.

A lot of bad feeling was flying about at the time in Europe. Our continental neighbours regarded us as a rather disgusting and not very efficient bully. It was a great mistake, many Englishmen have always believed, the South African War. And to-day the defeated have turned the tables on their "conquerors"; Afrikaans looks as if it would shortly be the tongue of South Africa, as the Stem van Sud Afrika is already its national song.

Now German imperialism, on the Hitler model, is of a quite different order from British colonial expansion--until we come to the Boer War. It will be much more like a whole lot of Boer Wars rolled into one, if it goes on as it has begun--with all the psychological objections to that ill-starred struggle--than like the schoolboy escapades of the early seamen. There will be no "Spice Islands"--no "Spanish Main"--to disinfect with their romance the stink of the slaughterhouse, in German twentieth-century imperialism, as it bombs and bludgeons its way into its neighbour's house.

You may retort that Anglo-Saxon "pioneers" did not look like jolly "schoolboys" to the Redskin. Quite possibly not--but the pioneers in question regarded themselves rather in that light, which is the important thing: and there was no one there-- except Redskins--to observe their doings. They were not theorists, of White dominion, of "Aryan" dominion, or of anything else. They were independent "pioneers" or "explorers," who stopped where they explored, and built a log cabin.

Such books as Robinson Crusoe, which commemorate those romantic Anglo-Saxon oceanic expansions, give you the best insight into the spirit in which this extraordinary phenomenon, the British Empire, came into being. It was more

adventurous than acquisitive: more the story of a few solitary men standing up against a strange immensity, under starlit skies, blunderbuss in hand. The sea-breeze blows through its ridiculous Odyssey, to give it a sweet salt "tang": the "Spice Islands" were its goal, not petrol: it was pure personal romance, before it became Big Business. Also, it belonged to another age.

In nothing the Nazis can do in the way of empire-building will there be any Robinson Crusoe to commemorate it. The aeroplane spelt the death of polar exploration. And anything the German of to-day is likely to achieve will inevitably look too much like the disordered dream of an armament manufacturer--after an evening spent at the opera, let us say *Götterdämmerung*. It is no use talking about Genghis Khan. (Glance at Herr Hitler's photographs if you doubt it.) Nor can a plausible barbaric horde be made out of conscript Saxon bank clerks or Swabian plumbers. All armies to-day are as prosaic as a factory staff. An excess of bovarystic secretion alone can account for any one in 1939 thinking it worth while to go empire-building--among the factory chimneys and air fields of twentieth-century urban civilization. Even the polar termini, North or South, are too accessible to make it worth risking frost-bite.

An artificially produced giant must be a bad giant. To grow big is one thing--like a tree (which has no propaganda bureau in its roots): to expand synthetically is another. Also there is a time for everything: and if you have missed the bus in 1770 you probably cannot catch it in 1939. It would be another bus, anyway.

Dr Ley, leader of the German Labour Front, declares that "Britain stole her empire while Germany was engaged in religious wars." Behind Germany's back, so to speak. But all empires are "stolen," if it comes to that. And Germans should not engage in religious wars--that seems to be the moral of that. For it is a sort of religious war that Germany is meditating to-day. Herr Hitler is quite obviously a Mahdi. So the moral is very much to the point.

Throughout the last two chapters I have been assuming that Herr Hitler is now committed to imperial ambitions that far exceed the mere incorporation of all German-speaking people in the new *Grossdeutschland*: in fact, that a Germanic hegemony in Europe, from Gibraltar to the Carpathians, from the Baltic to the Bosphorus, is now his aim. But was I justified in this sensational assumption? Only time will show: but in the meanwhile I must assemble a few of the kind of facts that led me to that conclusion.

IV EMPIRE: OR THE PROBLEM OF THE GIANT STATE

THE German nation, whatever the shortcomings of its present leaders, is a very large nation, as well as a diabolically industrious one. The sufferings imposed upon it--as I indicated in an earlier part of this book--on account of its sheer size, as well as indomitable spirit, seemed excessive. Now that the restraints have been removed, now that arms are in its hands again, which it brandishes fiercely at all and sundry, one begins to wonder how one could ever have felt a sympathetic twinge for such a monster as Grossdeutschland--besides, there is another giant, nearer home, who is threatened now, and whose fate might be even more unfortunate than his swastikaed counterpart across the German Ocean. I refer, of course, to Great Britain.

Some find it difficult to discover compassion at all for so great an organism. It is the "brave little Belgiums" that get all the sympathy; and this is psychologically a danger against which we have to guard, as much as Germany. Great Britain, we most of us feel, however, has been a not ungraceful monster. We can experience for her a proper devotion in spite of her great size. But latterly the bellowings of that colossus over there for Lebensraum to which we have all been listening have invited the question as to whether such unwieldy organisms should not go their way in silence--if not in peace: or at least whether in the moment of their inelegant expansions and voracious aggrandisement it would not be more decent to omit the words "justice" and "fair play" from their raucous polemical song.

This question of scale is of very great significance in politics. A great deal turns upon the mere size of a state. It is upon the fact of its size that the German nation bases its claims: also it is upon the fact of its physical extent that the British Empire founds all its "rights" and its policies.

Under these circumstances this sort of equity (it is a subject to which very little attention has been paid) should be very carefully analysed before we go any further. And it is quite obvious what a very great bearing this must have upon all the questions relating to the philosophy of Force (or alternatively, of No Force) which we have just been discussing.

If we must recognize it as an unchallengeable ethical principle that the bigger you are the more "rights" you have got--really, the bigger the more moral, for that follows, I think--then Germany's claims are pretty considerable. But since the principle has never been established or even stated, in the end the monotonous reiteration of those figures--eighty millions--of the population of Grossdeutschland, makes us begin to inquire, not without impatience, what these numbers have to do with it.

What is the German argument? The eighty million Germans have, by their industry, caused Germany to become, after the United States, the largest industrial state in the world. This happened before the last War. But this vast industrial equipment requires raw materials of all kinds to assure its continued existence: and only a fraction of the raw materials required are found within the present frontiers of the Reich.

Under the liberal economic system the pre-War German Empire was able to purchase those materials with hard cash. To-day the liberal system has given place to economic nationalism; Germany is an undischarged bankrupt; and so either Germany must get the raw materials in some other way than by means of international currency, or cease to be a great industrial nation.

"Germany must expand or die," Herr Hitler has declared. And by that he meant die industrially--lose the political, social, and economic power which its great factories and laboratories confer upon it, and sink--if that is to sink--to the status of an immense Poland, Rumania, or Turkey: a "second-class" power.

"But Germany will not die," Herr Hitler added. By this he meant that Germany would retain its position as one of the three great industrial states of the world. For of course the inhabitants of Germany, whatever happens, could not cease to live. Indeed, they stand a far better chance of being exterminated by following a Napoleonic policy than by reverting to a group of self-contained, non-Imperial, principalities. The word "die," in Herr Hitler's harangue, was used with a sentimental emphasis which the facts do not warrant.

The Germans are fond of saying that Italy cannot ever become a first-class industrial nation because it has no coal. There are other things, besides coal--such as iron, bauxite, oil, lead, copper, and cotton--which a great industrial nation should, strictly speaking, possess. They are just as necessary as coal, and in all these raw stuffs of industry Germany is peculiarly wanting.

The question then arises whether Germany ever had any right to be an industrial nation at all. It would be right and proper for Russia or the United States, with their great natural resources, great climatic range, and so forth, to be industrial nations of the first order. But the Germans, in view of their limitations in the matter of natural resources, should, as the Machine Age came into being, have played a more modest role. Geographically, they are not a great Machine Age state. They should, it could be argued, have remained a pastoral and agricultural people. Their claims as a great manufacturing nation are not in conformity with the facts of nature, the data of their soil and climate.

Why should the whole world be convulsed because, under the mistaken belief that the liberal economic system was going to last for ever, this nation proliferated into an unconscionably bulky mass of eighty million souls, and built itself a network of factories, power-houses, laboratories, and railways which rival those of the United States?

What I am attempting to show is that this is not a natural right--this German claim for Lebensraum about which we hear so much. If a man built himself a gigantic country house upon a mere acre of land; and then having done so seized the neighbouring farm-lands, on the plea that such a large house required--its honour required that it should possess--an adequate park; and began kidnapping his neighbour's servants, in order to secure an appropriately large staff, such as so very large a house demanded, what should we say in such circumstances? We should describe the house as Mr So-and-So's "Folly," and Mr So-and-So we should lock up in an asylum. Hitler is really Mr So-and-So.

If there is a right involved at all in Hitler's claim to "expand," it can only reside in the right that is might; and in its turn the might is the might of numbers only. That is why numbers are so much insisted on by the Nazi.

So one thing at least is clear, as a result of this analysis: namely that the doctrine of force is imposed upon the German (if he is an expansionist): for there is no other principle within his reach. And the mysticism of race is imposed upon him, too, in order to tone down the might-is-right doctrine; since the Germans have after all inherited like the rest of us a certain civilized squeamishness, which makes them prefer a fig-leaf, if no more, upon the Old Adam. The Race Theory is a fig-leaf, therefore--designed to render Salonfähig the Machine Age cave-man, on the prowl for raw material.

This involves a new historical outlook. The soft and pacifically-minded agriculturalists were once regarded as the natural prey of the hardy mountaineer. Most conquests formerly came from people established higher up. The rough hillman looked down upon the cultivated plainsman, and coveted the good things of life which the lowlander enjoyed. The caste-systems of the world more often than not boil down to a domination of a plainsman by a hillsman--with the desert often substituted for the hill. To-day all that is changed. Those who regard themselves now as the natural "conquerors" and predestined overlords are the people who have built themselves a lot of factories. They are supposed to be "civilized"-- superior. The more factories, the more "conquest," and overlordship seems to be indicated. It is no longer: "Woe to those who live in a plain," but "Woe to those who grow food instead of tinning it": Or "Woe to the man of the earth instead of the lathe!"

And here another Nazi fallacy is unearthed, in the course of our argument. For it is not at all as men of the soil that the Germans must be regarded. It is upon their industrial plant that they stand or fall. For Germany is a rather barren country, ugly and forbidding in the north, devoid of any very distinct characteristics, and much too small for its population.

Of course I have no desire to be offensive about the mystical soil of the Fatherland, but these things have to be argued out. All I desire to do is to stress the fact that the Germans are the last people you would expect to feel sentimental about their country. For it is not much of a country according to Latin standards. How right was Nietzsche when he said that all barbarians "aspired to the South"; always straining to reach those lands where the sun shines all day, and the soil is rich and easy to cultivate!

If a Frenchman, now, said he had to kill you because his country was so beautiful, you would understand that. Because it was so fertile, agreeable, and endearing, it made him a better man than you, and he had a right, a mystical right, to treat you as an inferior, and if necessary shoot you up. But not a Prussian! One resents it when a Prussian acts in that way. Prussia is the least appetizing country that I know. It is the only country through which I pass in the train without troubling to look out of the window, or if I do look out involuntarily I turn my head away. Why, the Landes are more amusing: even the Baltic Plain of Poland is a relief after the German landscape, and that is saying a lot.

In what I have just said I do not suppose that I have disposed of all claim on the part of eighty million people (those figures again!) to expand at the expense of eight millions, who perhaps have a territory almost as extensive as their overgrown neighbour. But I believe I have done something towards reducing to common-sense proportions the German claims on grounds of right--because the factories they have built, of their own free will, have nothing to make mass-produced goods out of--to invade the territories of any nation within reach and post machine guns at the street corners, if objection is raised to their intrusion.

Now I will turn to that other giant--our giant, the British Empire namely. He is a different proposition to the Germanic giant. But like all giants, he requires some explaining.

Let us begin where we are politically at the present time, and let us consider the Adriatic. The Adriatic is an Italian lake, more or less, which there are some grounds in equity for the Italians to claim the right to bottle up, if they want to, provided the Serbs are agreeable. And when they do that, and Great Britain says they shouldn't and that it will occupy and fortify Corfu (an island facing the "canal" of Otranto) it sounds a little high-handed. For if the Italians occupied and fortified an island in the Irish Sea, or in the Bristol Channel, we should have something to say about it.

The Times asserts:

Great Britain could not if she would disinterest herself in this part of the world. She has too much at stake in the Eastern Mediterranean, where, as in the Mediterranean in general, she seeks no exclusive position, but is resolved to maintain a position which menaces no other country, and is itself a guarantee of freedom upon a great international highway. But in such a statement The Times is clearly taking a lot for granted.

The Italian argument regarding the Adriatic would, however, have more force were Italy not so imperialistic as she is: if she did not claim "rights" in the Suez Canal, for instance, on the grounds that having bludgeoned Abyssinia into submission she had some mystical "right" in everything that lay in between the heel of Italy and Jibouti.

Similarly, Germany would have more justification in complaining about our little strained interpretation of the law of nations--by which we possess an inalienable

"right" to control the Mediterranean and dictate to all the nations situated upon its coasts because it is the "shortest route to India"--if it were not every day more evident that the Germans would be anything but averse from possessing--or regard it as beneath their deserts--India, half Africa, and whatever else might satisfy their claim as an industrial top-dog. Our top-doggishness is really not particularly oppressive, in other words, until we come up against another top-dog. We are not bad policemen until attacked by other would-be policemen.

Or let us take again the question of Scandinavian neutrality. A pre-war letter in The Times about the case of the Scandinavian countries reads, on the face of it, a little on the high-handed side. This correspondent is deprecating the Scandinavian claims to remain neutral, should a great war occur.

The fact, however, that portions of Scandinavian territory are virtually left open to occupation by any enemy of this country constitutes a dire threat to Britain strategically, because of these territories' proximity to our shores, and economically because, in the event of war, Britain would be cut off from a source of essential supplies, whose substitution would mean a serious drain on our shipping.

Britain may hence be compelled by her immediate interests to take over the unasked-for defence of one Scandinavian country or another, a most unwelcome prospect in view of our probable commitments elsewhere, but one which invites the closest consideration whenever Scandinavians broadcast their profession of unconditional neutrality.

This letter expresses a widely-held view in England, that we possess some kind of right (which it would be affirmed was not to be identified with might) immediately to occupy by military force any small country near us in time of war, lest our enemy occupied it before us. Again, with Sweden, for example, neutral in time of war, the highly important iron which Sweden would export to our enemies (the Axis Powers, that is, of course) would qualify, and indeed contradict, the "neutrality" of that unfortunately placed state. We should be justified morally in preventing Sweden from being neutral, therefore; since her neutrality must necessarily take that (to us) destructive form.

It will be seen, I think, from these few instances, taken at random, that in talking about "force" we live in a glass-house. But everybody lives in a glass-house, that is the fact of the matter, and that is a point we should never lose sight of. The

only difference with us is that we do throw a great many stones --moral brickbats. We never cease from our self-righteous fusillade. So we seem to be the only person living in a glass-house, instead of being one among many, as is the case. For most other people similarly housed refrain from these tactless ethical displays. It is entirely our own fault. Indubitably our national fault is, as has so often been declared, hypocrisy.

If you wage war there is only one axiom to bother about: that is the proverbial saying that "all is fair in love and war." And as what we call "peace" is now far more terrible than states of war were in, say, the easy-going Middle Ages, then, of course, everything is "fair" in peace as well. Certainly anything is fair in 1939.

There was a time when war was a game--the "sport of kings." To-day it is no longer that. Totalitarian war bears no resemblance to a game of football or of cricket. And if we must go into it, we should do so with the clear understanding that there is no such thing as "fair play." More than that, there is no such thing as "right" or "wrong." All war is wrong.

Of course I do not suppose there is anybody so naïf as to think that there is in politics any ethical code that will hold water. But what I am now attempting to establish is that there is really no need to say all the time that we are only doing things for other people's good; or that it is impossible for us to act in a manner that is not faultlessly ethical--and so "honourable" as to abash all less highly endowed nationalities and to put us upon an unassailable pinnacle of virtuous self-abnegation, and noble disinterestedness. Why do we have to say all that? It is highly inexpedient even. It gives us, as a nation, a sort of sanctimoniously crooked look which really we do not deserve, if you take us singly, man by man. We are not at all like that in private.

At this point we shall find we have circled back to where we started from--to the subject of that animal duality of our nature, which prevents us from being more than half-Christian. There was a French philosopher whose witty critical doctrine was embodied in a book called *Bovarysme*. The kernel of his little system is contained in the statement that Man is the only animal who regards himself as different from what he in fact is.

Madame Bovary, the heroine of Flaubert's famous book, was a provincial of the small bourgeois class, who imagined herself a great lady. It was from that anomaly our philosopher started. This little provincial lived in a dazzling dream,

which in every way was contrary to the objective reality.

Cases of advanced Bovarysme are common enough--people who dream about themselves and whom it is impossible to awaken from their dreams, little nobodies who sit down to dinner nightly in a small Bayswater flat, in full evening dress: fat people who imagine themselves thin, and thin people who look upon themselves as fat. Even, in the toils of the exotic sense, there have been, before now, White men who thought that they were Black: they wanted to be Black, so they believed that they were Black. But no animal who is white (like a polar bear) imagines himself black; nor do small animals, like mice, imagine themselves as large as lions. The consequences of such a delusion, in the animal world, would be too instantly disastrous, anyway.

Another manner, of course, of stating this philosophy would be to say: Man is the only animal who is mad. The great symbolical figure, in European literature, which expresses this truth, is that of Don Quixote. Don Quixote was mad--but not much more mad than Madame Bovary, or than most of us. For we all imagine that we are something quite different from what we are, and we all act upon that false assumption. Luckily, being men, it does not usually get us into jail, or close our career as abruptly as would happen to the mouse were it to fancy itself twice as big as the cat.

Each nation, like each individual man, has its particular dementia. Some believe that they are bigger, some brighter, some more artistic than they are. The Englishman's madness is a particularly uninteresting and tiresome one. It consists in believing that he is more moral than he is. As a consequence he gets the reputation of being much less moral than in fact he can claim to be.

For I have met the men of many different nations and lived amongst them: and I can affirm with complete sincerity--and I would like to think with some objectivity--that the Englishman is a gentler, more honest, more dependable specimen than most. Not a stern moralist; but just, on the whole, "a good guy." And that testimonial, from an Englishman, means a good deal. For the English are not prone to extol their fellow-nationals.

In her international dealings, in peace or in war, Great Britain, a giant (or giantess) of a state, is relatively speaking a gentle and rational giant: much more so than the Teutonic colossus, under similar circumstances, would prove to be, of that I am positive. But the bigger you are, the more you barge into people, that

goes without saying. Your acts must be arbitrary. It is extremely arbitrary to be so big at all.

It is natural to ask whether such giants as we are--I mean as the British Empire is--are not in fact an anachronism. Of necessity such ungainly organisms subsist upon a diet of Power: and of course, in the nature of things, they maintain themselves by force. Many Englishmen have been conscious of this, for some time now: and however ill-conceived, the League of Nations was a first step towards a progressive liquidation of these rather unreal, overgrown, organisms.

Though war has come to-day no Englishman, or very few, will go into it in a jingo spirit. It will be a principle--liberty, a more rational life, or however it may be expressed--that he will regard himself as called upon to defend: not to defend an Anglo-Saxon hegemony--as against a Teutonic hegemony: neither that redoubtable leviathan, for whom the "great international waterways" must be kept open, that it should be able to pass up and down unimpeded between its occidental and its Asiatic habitat; not even perhaps the damp and once exquisite (but now suburbanized) little island, which was the egg out of which that political monster was generated: but he will be defending, yes, something gentle, something unassuming, and as far as it is humanly possible to be, humane, that, throughout its history, has incongruously accompanied the spoliations of this great creature of the seas.

At the beginning of this chapter I remarked: "It is upon the fact of its size that the German nation bases its claims: also it is upon the fact of its physical extent that the British Empire founds all its `rights' and its policies." But to-day the defence of the small state against other monsters like itself had become almost an obsession with Great Britain.

No one can be surprised that this solicitude for the small on the part of one so indecently large should appear as a shameless piece of cynicism to most foreign observers. Yet is it wholly insincere?--for that it is not so invariably sincere we must as Englishmen, I think, admit. The answer is of course, "No." The English are sincere in their indignation at the evils that befall anything small. And here is the reason.

Until a century and a half ago, England, an island of moderate size, was a "second-class power," as it is called. Geographically a small country, England proper is to-day estranged from Ireland, and separatist leanings have appeared in

Scotland. And, odd as that may seem to the foreigner, the English, in spite of their famous empire, still feel and think as a small nation. Their "sturdiness," their "Britons-never- shall-be-slaves" attitude, is that of a small man swelling himself out. (To be a slave was not an alien notion, it is obvious, to the Briton of the jingo song.) And to the simple, average Englishman, remaining a good deal of a schoolboy, "the Bully" is the villain of his piece, just as he is of the school playground.

How genuine this feeling, for "the small nation," is to-day among Englishmen, admits of no question, to any one who has been able to observe the English at first-hand. That this sentiment does not extend to the aristocrat class--by which England is still in great part ruled--is true. But the ninety-nine per cent who are the ruled and not the rulers, feel like that.

It is a small demos experiencing a wave of sympathy for another small demos, if anything unpleasant happens to it, especially at the hands of a state twice its size. And to this must be added the fact, as I have said, that the English democracy is very simple-hearted at bottom. There are few complexities here.

So "England" is at once that great leviathan, the British Empire--in the past certainly a predatory giant, some of whose habits were wanting in amenity: and side by side with that, small if stout-hearted--a little class-conscious (its class being the featherweight class)--the people of England (south of the border) whose territory is no greater than that of Greece, Bohemia, or Ecuador.

This certainly is a great paradox. It leads to endless misunderstandings in the field of foreign affairs. The other obstacle to clarity is the absurd class-cleavage which so disfigures our political, as well as our social, life. That is never properly understood abroad. The clubman--the old school-tie executive--has to rule this sentimentalist "democratically." Playing upon the well-known moral nature of the subject-mass, he, not without malice, magnifies and caricatures the poor devil's puritan responses.

How similar the American Democracy still is to the British in many respects--how its rulers patiently wait upon its moral reactions, upon which they know depends the success of any action they may wish to take--is well shown in an article from which I will take leave to quote. It appeared in the Spectator (7th April) and is an American opinion (Edwin D. Canham is the name of the correspondent) regarding the likelihood of the U.S.A. coming into a future war,

on the Democratic side, of course. Here are a few passages.

The House vote against a \$5,000,000 appropriation to start fortifications at Guam will probably be reversed. In short, public opinion is putting on a fine surface show of isolationism, but underneath is unneutral and prepared to support strong measures of resistance. The American mental attitude, as everybody knows, is fundamentally Puritan and incapable of remaining morally detached for very long. As Walter Lippmann (who is an acute student of our thought-ways) recently pointed out, when there seems to be a moral difference between the Powers in Europe American public opinion is bound to be allied with the group that has the moral edge. . . . While pouring moral obloquy on the Nazis twenty times a day, wishful thinkers reiterate: "But what business is it of ours?" They are making it "our business" with every fibre of their emotions.

These passages reveal with an excellent clarity how the business of state is transacted. "The American mental attitude, as everybody knows, is fundamentally Puritan and incapable of remaining morally detached." And, "as everybody knows," the British mental attitude is just the same.

The position, as that regards the English, at this juncture of their history, is as follows. A nation which feels like a small nation is obliged to act like a big nation. For better or for worse, we have to act as if we were Leviathan, rather than Tom Thumb. For, however alien to us this unwieldy organism may be, it is a projection of our will. It is our blood which runs in its dragonish veins, and we cannot tamely allow it to be slain. Nor would it be very pleasant for us if another, far less agreeable, colossus, having massacred it, should take its place. Whether we are internationalists (as in the last resort I am) or flag-waggers, we would rather see our giant taken as the model for the giant-to-be (if to-morrow it is really to be la genre humain at last) than Hitler's ill-favoured hippopotamus, so rapidly putting on weight at this moment.

It is such considerations as these that compel us to go into the ethics of monsterhood. We must clear that out of the way before we can begin to talk sense. But in any event, as we sit here listening to the outraged thunder of the new voice, demanding Lebensraum for the eighty-million-ton dragon across the North Sea in process of proleptic growth, we could scarcely refrain from some interrogation of what is at the bottom of these expansionist apologies. Hitler is so obviously a glandular phenomenon.

Let us now--regardless of what the logical issue may be for us, an "empire people"--get down to it. Let us grapple with the ethics of being big. These sovereign states that become "empires" are, like the dinosaurs, rather small-headed, low-volted, monsters, which look to us a little bit as if they were stuffed with saw-dust. And they belong, it is possible, like the dinosaurs, to a geological epoch that is past.

The whole earth should be the only giant! I cannot be interested myself, I confess, in an Empire that is smaller than that. Is not a world-state--one and indivisible--on the political plane, what monotheism is on the theological? Over against a plurality of "sovereign states," is it not what a high-god is over against a multiplicity of deities? That is probably what the sincerest of those who supported the Société des Nations struggled towards. Though how vain to have done so, without first eradicating from the famous covenant clauses penalizing so intolerably the vanquished in a general war! Yet, having made that admission, do not let us forget that a German victory would have resulted in terms of peace at least as oppressive, after a war fought to a finish, as was the Diktat of Versailles.

V THE "HAVES" AND "HAVE-NOTS"

IF the question of the size of a state is important--such dimensions as entitle it to be referred to as a "great power" (of which there are seven, all told) or as an "Empire"--for all the "great powers" are empires, too--it is equally a matter of great importance that it should be a great capitalist: a rich state, not a poor one. A "great power" that is poor is like a duke or marquis without any money.

But to-day there are great powers that are poor. And it has become the habit of the newspapers to classify great states according to their economic and social importance, dividing them into two blocs, a rich one and a poor one. These two sets of states are described respectively as Haves and Have-nots. Great Britain is the second greatest Have state in the world. The U.S.A. is of course the richest and most compactly powerful nation of all--the Have par excellence.

A state is a Have not only because it is rich in money, but also because it is rich in territory not its own. And Great Britain, although economically not quite a match for the United States, possesses more territory not its own than any other nation, including Russia.

The British Empire--and above I was regarding the dominions and mandated territories as politically part and parcel of Great Britain--is a system accounting for a fourth of the population of the earth and a third of its raw materials. A great deal of this colonial empire is empty and crying out for white settlement. But white settlement is not the object of the British Empire; it does not receive settlers from the "Mother Country," because the mother in question is, most unfortunately, an extremely selfish and money-mad old woman, and she finds it more profitable to leave things as they are.

Mother Country is a misnomer, however, applied to the small class in England that benefit by the empire, or indeed have anything to do with it. That small Class takes no interest in the fact that it is an empire built by Englishmen, any more than you or I take any interest in the personality (or nationality for that matter) of the bricklayers who built the house in which we live, and which shelters us. It regards the British Empire as a milch-cow attached by Providence--as a reward for being a good boy--to the City of London.

One does not have to go far to find evidence of this. There is such a mass of it one does not know which to pick. But let us take Sir Alan Pim's report on conditions in Swaziland and Bechuanaland. That is a tale of barbarous taxation of the negro population. Again, a commission of investigation sent to Nyasaland recently (where the wage-level is fixed round the figure of nine shillings a month) describing the flight from the colony of able-bodied negroes--whose wives have still to pay the husband's poll-tax, although he has emigrated across the border into Portuguese territory--asserted: "If this flight continues, any attempt to maintain, let alone improve on the present low standard of health and happiness will be abortive. . . . Resident in other lands, the Nyasaland natives will have acquired a complete mistrust in and loathing for our administration." This information I derive from an American book that is anti-British. But in its turn it derives from official British sources. And to suppress or slur over such facts is as anti-British, it seems to me, as to promote their publication for anti-British ends.

There is no occasion for me to insist: our "slum-Empire" has been much publicized of late--and for the most patriotic motives--by the Beaverbrook press and elsewhere. Slums in the heart of London have their corollary in slums throughout the British possessions. In passing, all that is necessary to remark is that the English poor are not wanted in this Black-farm of an empire, which is the preserve of the English millionaire class, and its middle class public school personnel, and not at all of the English people as a whole, to whom such "Imperialism" is repugnant.

Apart from its goodness or badness, its efficiency or the reverse, the British Empire is an empire on purely class lines. The only mass-settlement of the average Englishman (as opposed to the gilt-edged Englishman) that has ever been countenanced was that of criminals and out-of-works.

Australia seemed an excellent place to send criminals. As a penal settlement or dumping ground for socially undesirable elements it recommended itself to the minds of the great nabobs who governed England at that time. As to South Africa, that was first settled by a great herd of English families, whose only crime was that they were destitute, having fallen out-of-work as a consequence of the French War and industrial change, and being quite unable to find fresh work. They were expelled from England--a land only fit for rich heroes to live in. They were shipped to what was at that time the deserts of South Africa. There they became empire-builders. They drove off the Kaffirs, and eventually pushed

out the Dutch. Hence the "Voortrekkers."

Now such a class-empire as we have got is not the only sort you can have. There are several sorts of empire. And Signor Mussolini, that bustling Wop gang-leader of genius, proposes to show us the way to make another sort of empire--one after his at once proletarian and Roman heart. That is what his colonial planning in Libya and Abyssinia means.

As a proletarian empire--in contradistinction to a class-empire--there is a catch in it, which I will presently do my best to explain. The new Fascist colonial villages are not quite so good as they look. Really they are too military in intention to satisfy any proletariat except a Fascist proletariat. They resemble the settlements of barbarians who had done time in the Roman legions, such as existed in Roman Britain, for instance.

Let me quote from an article in the Daily Telegraph, however, which gave a short account of how the Balbo administration (for it is mainly Balbo's idea) are promoting mass-immigration to Tripoli and Cyrenaica. Villages with school, post office, and church, and with co-operative shops, three-roomed houses, and suitable land, are created for these settlers upon a fiat from Rome. They will purchase this property by the work of their hands. It is intended to make Libya an Italian, instead of an Arab, country--just as the Zionists are proposing to make Palestine a Jewish country. But first results in Libya, this correspondent reports, are promising.

In Tripolitania [however] the work was more difficult . . . the grain which I saw them gathering at Crispi was only nine inches high, a pathetic little fur upon the sand. But there they were, working on their knees, picking it with the hand.

Suddenly something hit me: I realized that I had come to a crossroads in European history. I have been all over Africa, but I have never seen the white man, without native labour, down on his hands and knees squeezing the grain out of the soil. Did it lead to wealth or degradation, I wondered. Who could tell? Who could say more than that the people who did it seemed to be content in their beautiful if monotonous surroundings, among the automatic pill-box houses that stretched effortlessly to the horizon.

This paragraph was headed "A Social Revolution." So, of course, it is, in a world so far colonized mainly by Anglo-Saxons. But whether it is a "crossroads in

European history" is another matter. The crossroads is probably a bit farther on.

If the English were as blamelessly industrious, as modest in what they ask of life, as immune from boredom, as physically robust as the Italian peasant (who is probably the healthiest animal in Europe)--or if they had some overpowering religious incentive, as has the Jew in Palestine, then such revolutionary methods might appeal to them. As it is, I do not see the ill-fed urban proletariat of England, down on its hands, in a landscape of oppressive monotony, digging with its hands in the earth for a bare living.

The snag in that particular social revolution is this, as I see it. In the United States the "Wop," with his low standard of life, is despised. He is treated as not far removed from the Negro. And there he is in Africa, down on his hands and knees, doing things that probably the Arab will not do. In Nyasaland he might be prepared to work in competition with the Black. Even he might knock out the Black--outnigger the nigger.

To that personally I have no objection. I have long ago abandoned all idea that the "Paleface" could be kept on his pedestal much longer, and I have lost all interest in him as a "white man" long ago. (It was only D. H. Lawrence's incantations to all that was Black and mysterious that, for a moment, in horrible reaction, caused me to lift up my voice on behalf of the despised and rejected Paleface.) He is not serious about being "white," so why should anybody worry? He will be pipe-claying the Black Man's white buckskins yet for a few coppers--if of course he does not die out, or kill himself off in Nationalist wars. That is not the issue I am concerned with here.

The social revolution, in the field of white colonization, would never appeal to the German, however much it recommended itself to the Wop end of the Axis. That is the point. It is worth remembering that the German despises the Italian quite as much as does the American. Whatever fine phrases may be used at state banquets, in Rome and in Berlin, Italy is not an equal partner. She is looked upon as a colony of the Reich. And those poor Wops down on their hands and knees in Libya or Tripoli are the sort of "niggers"--faute de mieux--that the Aryan overlords in Berlin are acquiring.

Since the Prussian is undeniably a slave-driver, he is not a likely candidate for the new role of proletarian-colonist, to say the least of it. That is an Italian idea. If to-morrow we handed over Nyasaland, or Jamaica, or Rhodesia, to the Hitler

Government, double the number of Germans would go there to what England has ever sent in the way of British-born settlers. The Germans would colonize it enthusiastically. They would not, like the Boer, sit smoking a pipe on their verandas, while the Blacks sweated in the fields. They are not sluggish. But there would be no Germans down on their knees scratching a living with their fingers out of the earth. They would be distinctly ancien-régime in their approach to the problem of colonizing, "crossroads of European history" or no crossroads. They would step smartly into our empire-building shoes, bent on the joys of mastery, not of "service." And, needless to say, the race-theory of the Nazi would make that doubly certain, and make a sacrosanct duty of what is merely the nature of the beast.

To conclude: it is not an equalitarian, Have-not empire that Germany demands. Even the terms "Have" and "Have-not" were popularized in Italy. All the specifically proletarian ways of thinking are Italian, not German. The Germans acquiesce, for it has its aussenpolitischen uses. They even encourage the picture of a poor down-trodden "proletarian," denied the means of life by the plutocrat. But mastery is what the German wants, not mere equalitarian prosperity: wealth and not poverty.

Before proceeding, I should like to draw the reader's attention again to the great difference between the early histories of Mussolini and of Hitler. Mussolini, as you doubtless are aware, is a one-time Communist and associate of Lenin. And his wife is said to have remained a Communist and to disagree with Benito's Imperialist goings-on at his palace in Rome. Hitler, as I have remarked in Part II, could not ever have been a Communist, although now he is at the head of a state that is Marxian in a great many important respects. As a young workman in Vienna he took an intense dislike to any Communist casually encountered. Had he met Mussolini at that time--say as a fellow-plasterer in the Austrian capital--they would have come to blows. Or rather, Hitler (when his chum began talking internationalism and class-war) would have gazed at him fixedly, with great distaste, and walked away, to commune with himself, bitterly, apart--asking himself how Italian agitators, anyway, got on to the pay roll of Viennese contractors. But let us go back to Mein Kampf for a moment, and hear Hitler's own account of the sort of man he was at the time.

I first came into contact with the Social Democrats while working in the building

trade. From the very time that I started work the situation was not very pleasant for me. My clothes were still rather decent. I was careful of my speech and I was reserved in manner. . . . During the first days my resentment was aroused. At midday some of my fellow workers . . . remained on the building premises and there ate their midday meal, which in most cases was a very scanty one. Towards the end of the week there was a gradual increase in the number of those who remained to eat their midday meal on the building premises. I understood the reason for this afterwards. They now talked politics.

I drank my bottle of milk and ate my morsel of bread somewhere on the outskirts, while I circumspectly studied my environment. . . . Yet I heard more than enough. And I often thought that some of what they said was meant for my ears. . . . But all that I heard had the effect of arousing the strongest antagonism in me.

Hitler did, however, enter into the debate in the end--he could not hold himself in any longer. He ardently defended capitalism, and the beautiful, generous, ruling class. "Then a day came when . . . some of the leaders among my adversaries ordered me to leave the building or else get flung down from the scaffolding." So Hitler left. Had Mussolini been there at that time he might actually have left head-first, without more ado. Then the future Axis would have been minus a partner. And Mussolini still would have been the harmless pet of British reactionaries, who would point out with emotion how trains now arrived at their destination to time, and how porters were deferential and grateful for a quite insignificant tip.

Hitler has not really changed since his days as a reactionary young bricklayer in Vienna: nor has Mussolini changed since the time he and Lenin hobnobbed in Switzerland--except that he went nationalist quicker than Lenin, in all probability, would have done.

As a result of this juxtaposition of the Fascist and National-Socialist leaders we arrive at a paradox. Nazi Germany is much more like a Communist state of some sort, Italy more like an odd variety of bourgeois state, to-day. Yet Mussolini is more proletarian than Hitler. Both are by origin peasants. But Hitler acts and thinks more like a bank clerk. As a consequence of this the Have-notism of Italy comes more from the heart than the sullen complaints of the disaffected shop-walkers north of the Brenner. In Germany, a great industrial country, it is the same as in England, or a little the same: there are no true peasants. Whereas in

Italy the peasant-soul is more intact. This is not Marx's machine-minding horde. But it makes a better foundation for a real earthy attack upon capitalism. Mussolini flings it up, at all events, with a hundred times more conviction.

Now I must take up the Haves and Have-nots where I left them for a moment, in order to compare the two Have-not leaders and to show how the Italian Have-not takes having-nothing in a rather different way to his German counterpart.

The struggle that is going on between the Axis bloc and the Franco-British bloc, is represented by the statesmen of the Axis as a class struggle.

I wish to eschew quotation, as far as that is possible. But this is a matter of such very great importance that I had better set before you a first-hand statement of the Axis standpoint. So here is a message from the Rome correspondent of The Times (30th May 1939): Rome. May 29.

In an article in the *Giornale d'Italia* Signor Gayda again throws the blame for the present European deadlock on the democratic Powers, and appeals to them to make a reasonable and necessary sacrifice in the cause of world peace.

There are three facts in the present situation, he says, which are incontestable:

(1) Italy and Germany are not aiming at hegemony for themselves. They merely wish for a revision of the hegemony which Great Britain and France have established by their overwhelmingly excessive share of the principal strategic points, areas for colonization, and sources of raw materials throughout the world.

(2) A greater share of Lebensraum is a vital necessity for Italy and Germany, whereas its refusal by the democratic Powers has not the same vital importance for them.

(3) By refusing what Signor Gayda calls "real collaboration" Great Britain and France appear resolved to provoke a war which would go down to history as the inevitable outburst of a "class struggle" between the nations. No more absurd way of bringing about the collapse of civilization could be imagined.

The Marxist "class struggle" introduced into nationalist, or "capitalist," politics, is a novelty of the first order. Is this paradox justified by the facts? That is what I

propose to ask. From what I have already said you will have gathered that my answer will be a refutation of that belief.

The Democracies (that is England and France, egged on by the U.S.A.) are provoking a war which posterity will regard as "the inevitable outburst of a `class-struggle' between the nations." Such is Signor Gayda's contention. That is to say that if Great Britain and France do not allow Germany to restore the old frontiers of the German, plus the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and return, in good repair, all the colonies taken from Germany after the War, a class war will be on.

Since, however, Germany suffered a great military defeat in 1914-18, surely that country, like any other country in history, must be reconciled to losing something fairly considerable? At the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War, in which Germany was the victor, France lost two of her richest provinces, Alsace and Lorraine, and a great deal of treasure. (The terms were not Carthaginian in their severity: but it was afterwards admitted by the Prussians that it would have been better even from the German standpoint to have been satisfied with the destruction of the Bonapartist Empire, and not to have imposed such onerous financial terms.)

In 1880, however, France did not begin asking for the return of those two provinces, and threatening a class-war if she did not get them. Russia, in 1918, lost Poland, the Baltic States, and so on; but did not, until October 1939, threaten a class-war if they were not immediately returned. Russia had threatened a lot of other class-wars since 1918, but never that particular class-war.

Italy is more modest. All Italy wants is Tunis, the port of Jibouti, the Riviera, Savoy, and Corsica. If France is ever partitioned, as Poland is, the last three would of course go to Italy automatically. But in the meanwhile France refuses flatly to return anything at all--though she lets it be known, unofficially, that something might be done about some of these items if that old Communist, Mussolini, would stop threatening a class-war if he doesn't get them. But let us suppose that, rather than have a class-war (it used to be called a nationalist war, but no matter) England and France agreed to these arbitrary proletarian demands of Germany and Italy. The latter countries would then become on the spot extremely bloated Haves. Even Mussolini would have to stop making use of communist jargon. And who can doubt that those now very powerful countries would behave as the Capitalist (whether individual or state) always does--throw their weight about, and do a bit more expanding, just to round off their

possessions? At this point, would a class-war be started against them? Or would they still retain all their "proletarian" privileges; and would war waged against them have to revert to the style and title of "Nationalist war"? These are confusing vistas.

What is at the bottom, of course, of this great confusion is the figment of the "great power." Neither Germany nor Italy are as poor as many other states. They are only Have-nots viewed as great powers.

Nobody remarks how disgraceful it is that Spain or Turkey are Have-nots. That is because they are not "great powers." And the Balkan countries, and most of the Latin-American countries, are practically beggars. Should they all catch this new class-war fever, in which the poor "great power" states are indulging, we shall then be in for a maze of Nationalist wars (calling themselves class-wars) which would beggar description.

Italy and Germany are said to be bankrupt. Whether we are bankrupt or not I can never make out. But it feels extraordinarily as if we were. Certainly seventy per cent of the population of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are (to put it no lower) just as poor as the people of Italy and Germany. As to the French civil servant, farmer, small manufacturer, or employee, he does not feel fearfully like a capitalist. So what it seems to amount to is that one per cent of the Axis bloc population feel miserably poor compared with their opposite numbers (again one per cent) of the "Demoplutocracies."

Now things are a little clearer, I think. That is what this class-war is to be about--about surplus power, and "great power" economics. But were the majority of the English and French peoples to see their "hundred families" or their "upper tens" about to hand half of their ill-gotten gains over to Herr Hitler, surely they would at last protest, and insist that this booty should be given to them--not to Herr Hitler at all! Perhaps they might even take a leaf out of Hitler and Mussolini's book, and threaten a class-war too, if this transaction were proceeded with!

VI GROSSDEUTSCHLAND IS SO GROSS

THE class issue imported into Nationalist politics, and into "great power" politics, is a bogus issue. Or so I suggest. Much rather it is a peonage of the European that is involved. Herr Hitler's "niggers" are going to be Wops and Bulgars, Balts and Albanians--not Basutos and Kaffirs.

Europe is faced with a large-scale pressure of white upon white. The most distasteful kind of colonial war upon the Boer War model has begun. As to the "class-war" colouring, that will be Imperialist sansculotism of the Napoleonic pattern: and it can only lead to the kind of thing that was depicted by Goya in his plates, *Los Desastros de la Guerra*, the after effects of which have such longevity that even to-day it is impossible to make the Spaniard regard his French neighbour otherwise than as a natural enemy.

To subdue the Czechs and Slovaks, the Hungarians and Croats (as it will be tomorrow) without bloodshed, is certainly better than spilling a lot of blood. But it is the most disagreeable form of colonization nevertheless--like that great mistake of England's, the destruction of the national independence of Ireland, which is likely to cost us all dear even in the present generation.

That this most inexcusable form of colonization should masquerade as a war between the poor and the rich does not improve matters. And as regards the attempt to extort from the democratic bloc transfers of African or other "great power" pickings, that is only a proposal for a sharing-out of "great power" booty. It is undesirable that this specious formula should become current, and deceive the supposedly capitalist populace of our ruined countries.

There is only one struggle between the poor and the rich, and that is the conflict within the individual states, which aims at the destruction (by slow means or quick means, according to whether you subscribe to the Socialist or "Radical," or to the Communist solution) of that system of exploitation by which all that is creative and intelligent is smothered or prevented from realizing itself by the parasitic and the unintelligent. But that has ceased to be communism, or socialism even; it is now only plain common sense: the wish for a New Deal everywhere, a wish that is shared by every intelligent man, whether he belongs

to a political party or not.

But nations have a life of their own, just like the individual man. And if a nation by reason of its qualities--its mechanical genius and its great industry--outstrips another country, becoming more rich and powerful, should we object to that?

For instance, I read recently in the *New Statesman and Nation* (3rd June), an article about the German penetration of Hungary, in which were the following passages:

Whatever the Germans want, the Hungarians will do, hoping thereby to maintain their relative independence, as a nation. . . . Hungarian business men are helpless. A prominent Hungarian editor said to me: "We will have a try at running business, but we can't compete with either the Germans or the Jews. We are always a little tired, and we are too intelligent to work day and night, and make ourselves into machines."

Well of course (one says to oneself), if the Hungarian merchant is "always a little tired," he must expect to drop out a little, and to make way for the dynamic German (or the latter's enemy, the Jew) who is never tired, whatever else he may be.

Yet how one sympathizes with that Hungarian, too, who does not take life seriously enough to consider it incumbent on him to slave day and night! All the Slav neighbours of Germany resent this unfair competition, of the dementedly assiduous Teuton. In 1914 I gave expression to exactly the same resentment myself. For such spectacular efficiency is competitive: it is not just industry-in-the-void. So it presses upon all the neighbours of this unnecessarily hard-working state.

There is another factor in the German unpopularity--and it is quite certain, whatever happens, that the Germans will never be a popular people. I refer to the team-work, of the pan-Germanic bagmen, of Teutonic Kultur. That is very unpleasant. The solidarity of all Germans conveys an impression of pistons and driving belts, not of flesh and blood.

Grossdeutschland is an "empire," in any case. Let us come back to that. And it is one of the sort of "empires" you can be. In this case it is achieved by absorbing other people in your immediate vicinity: wearing down the resistance of those with whom you are geographically in contact, and eventually dominating them,

economically and politically.

This is rather like the career of a Casanova, all of whose successes were within the circle of his family--among his first, second, and third cousins, nieces, grand-nieces, and so on. He might be just as spectacular an amorist. But we should feel that there was something stuffy or wanting in fresh air about the history of his escapades.

That this sort of empire is in many ways sounder than the British type (which is an archipelago, extending all round the world, and extremely difficult to protect) is true. It seems natural to add to your girth, if you are a state bent on expanding, by accretions gained at your own borders, by swallowing up a weak state here, and a weak state there; until, like a glutton, you have a massive layer of fat all round your original periphery.

But these accretions are fatty layers, not sinews of a process of intrinsic body-building. Moravia and Bohemia make Germany look bigger; but such Imperial appendages are apt to slow her down. Too many of them would decrease her effectiveness. In the end you become a ramshackle institution like Austria-Hungary. For the Balts, Czechs, Croats, etc., will always be hostile to inclusion in any lesser body than a federal European system.

If Germany may eventually suffer from having swallowed too many other nationalities (small in population but grimly patriotic) there are several nations who are not "great powers," yet who are fundamentally weak because of their composite character. For a small power that has swallowed more than is good for it is in no better case than a big power who has done the same thing. Yugoslavia is a case in point. Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Albanians, Germans, Magyars, all live in uneasy partnership.

The highly industrialized Croats, the most active dissident minority, regard the Serbs as barbarians. The fact that they are Catholics, unlike the Serbs, who are Orthodox, does not help matters. The Serbs were made a present of them (and of the other minorities) after the War. Serbia has gained in size, but not in strength.

Rumania, as it appears on the map to-day, is more than twice the size it was in 1914. Transylvania, Bessarabia, the Dobrudja, make quite a sizable country of over seventeen million people. But not more than six or seven million of them are Rumanians. The rest are Magyars, Germans, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Jews,

Tartars, or Turks. As none of these people care particularly about being Rumanian, they are hardly going to fight to the death for "Rumania" as at present constituted. And the Rumanian proper is by no means the best fighting man in the world.

Poland, or the territory marked "Poland" on the map, was nearly as large as Germany or France. There were over thirty million people who had Polish passports. But of real Poles--as Polish as all those with German passports are Germans--there are not much more than half that number. As Poland was a wretchedly poor country, with an exceptionally detached ruling class, even "Poland" was not quite what it seemed on the map.

That Czechoslovakia was not what it seemed--but so fragmentary and racially-divided a nation, made up of Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Magyars, Poles, and Sudeten Germans, that at scarcely more than a touch it fell to pieces--is another melancholy fact of post-War history, which opened many eyes in the West to the true position of affairs.

As to Russia, it tops the list of European nations with an aggregate of one hundred and seventy millions, not counting the newly-acquired territory from Poland. This is a very imposing figure. But it represents the Imperial amalgamation of one hundred and seventy-four different races, European and Asiatic. Its nine principal federated republics are: (1) the Soviets proper. (2) White Russia and (3) The Ukrainian Republic, both recently enlarged. (4) Trans-Caucasia--Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. (5) Turkmenistan. (6) Uzbekistan. (7) Tajikistan. (8) Kirghizistan. (9) Kazakstan.

What percentage of this racial conglomerate of one hundred and seventy million people can be counted as at once European and politically homogenous (for the Ukrainians, a mass over thirty million strong, are as separatist at least as are the Catalans in Spain) it is difficult to say. However, the Russian State is so inaccessible--and in any war its action will be traditionally defensive--that it is unnecessary to speculate about its homogeneity. There are plenty of people to defend it. Even if it is not so big as it looks from its abstract census figures, it is a great gulf of hostile and inhospitable territory, which would prove the grave of Fascist hopes much more effectively than Madrid, if Hitler were ever so stupid as to try his luck there.

But to return to the map of Europe, west of Russia; however many small nations Germany may absorb, becoming dangerously bloated in the process, she will never be so ramshackle a "nation" as Yugoslavia, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, or Poland.

For in the end we come back to what is perhaps the fact of prime importance regarding Germany--and it may well be the most important single fact in modern Europe: namely, its size. Grossdeutschland is really gross, that is the essential thing. Not on account of the vast extent of its territory, as is the case of Russia: that is not much larger than France. But because of the enormous number of more or less pukka Germans in the world.

These numbers are really formidable, approximating to something in the neighbourhood of a hundred million souls. Numerically this means a great deal more than one hundred and seventy million "Russians," made up of one hundred and seventy-three different races. For although the hundred million Germans do not all belong quite to one race, they have spoken the same tongue and shared the same culture for a very long time.

Of the hundred million Germans seventy-five million are in Germany proper: there are three and a half million Sudetens; two million in Switzerland; almost a million in Rumania, and so on, throughout the centre of Europe, Mussolini of course having his quota until the recent expulsions. Then eleven million Germans live in the United States and Latin America.

The great point about these hundred million Germans is that they do nationally cohere, as I have said. They are truly a nation: much more one thing than are the component nations who live upon this island, for instance; the English, the Scots, and the Welsh. The Germans have for so long been drilled to think of themselves as cogs in an immense political wheel, they are so imbued with a crude patriotism, that they must be reckoned with as something very solid, which it will be very difficult to dissolve.

Now as to the proletarian claim of the Axis which we have been considering: that can be substantiated indirectly, perhaps, on the grounds of the greatness of this mass: also of a certain (intellectually low-g geared) mass-psychology, of which they are possessed. That I have canvassed at some length in my chapters about the Führer.

The Nuremberg Rally, that apotheosis of the mass-will, can provide us certainly with a suggestive image of plebeian pomp, with the "little man"--almost a Poy--namely Herr Hitler, presiding over it. If such an exhibition is not proletarian in the Marxist sense, it is yet a gala of abstract numbers. And great numbers concentrated in one place do abolish the individual, and put in his place an organic unity, of another order, which is in fact anti-him.

How Nietzsche, the theoretical "aristocrat," came to mistrust the Prussian Imperialist technique, is made plain by Nuremberg; for which that technique prepared the way. The mass methods of standardized "Germanism," as Nietzsche saw, were heading in the opposite direction to the Olympian exclusiveness of Goethean calm. They were headed towards something that spelt the rule of a fanatical Demos: a really demoniacal Demos, and not the sham one brought about by the French Revolution.

A second image which suggests itself to me concerns a more intimate and spontaneous exhibition of the same demoniac Demos. One of the more agreeable of my experiences the last time I was in Berlin was a visit I paid to a night club--no longer the old plutocratic Nachtlokal of the Weimar Republic, but a much more popular affair: only Germans in the first place--party men and their families, officials, journalists, but no heterosexual nightbirds, nor exotic millionaires, this time. The orchestra--accordions, drums, and saxophones--broke into popular airs; and chains of people, thirty or forty men and women, sitting at one of the massive tables, swung from side to side, their hands joined across their bodies, shouting the refrain of the song. This swaying chain became intoxicated with the beautiful animal sound of peasant jubilation, and bounded and rolled about, like a Negro congregation; gay, glassy-eyed, and shiny-cheeked. I remember the red sunburn of these faces all looked dark, like heads in a photographic negative, in the half-light of the ship's lanterns (it was a club got up to look like a ship). One of the schoolroom forms on which they were sitting tipped over, and one end of the human chain crashed to the floor. But they all still went on swaying from side to side, chanting their peasant dirge of joy.

These chanting and rolling chains are an invariable accompaniment of German festivities. The rough energy of their mass-incantation is typical of Germany. It demonstrates how joyful an appetite discipline is with them: how they seek the disciplined madness of numbers even in relaxation. To be promiscuously together, rocked in one rhythm, till they feel more like an element than a man, is the German heaven. They are certainly less particular than we are, in every sense

(compare the statistics of bastardization in Germany, which are the highest in Europe, one German in every eight being illegitimate).

How does all this affect my argument, against the "proletarian" claims of the Axis? Seemingly it must take away from its force. But that is a mistake, as I think I shall have no difficulty in showing.

Germany to-day is a proletarian state, in the sense that it is the whole people in action all the time--like the people in the singing-chain I have just been describing. But Germany under Hitler is so highly nationalized and so unaltruist in its emotions--that it is potentially a top-dog class (in the form of a nation) with which we have to deal: not a great horde of poor men, merely, banded together to defeat the injustice of irresponsible capitalist power.

The Marxist technique is being used by Herr Hitler (who is a great copy-cat of all the things he professes to despise), but to the ends of nationalist domination. And the German shows no signs, certainly, of a compassionate brotherhood towards the poor nations in his vicinity. He experiences no brotherly solidarity with the Bulgar, or the Serb, because the latter is poor. He takes their poverty for granted.

The German's attitude towards another Have-not is that of a Have--or at least of one who will jolly well see to it that he becomes a Have, before very much more time has elapsed. That is why I assert that the Have--Have-not business is a sham, and the "proletarian" claims of the Axis bogus.

VII THE EMPIRE-BUILDER REPUDIATES HITLER'S ALIBI

MY "Confessions of an Empire-Builder" are not at an end. Here is a concluding chapter, for my empire-building part--packed with further revelations of the inside workings of the British mind. The Briton, upon whose empire the sun never sets, gazing out over the waves that have protected him since 1066, is assailed with visions of extreme and portentous squalor. But let me proceed.

What perhaps I dread most of all is a state of affairs in which England--no longer an empire, nor even a "Power"--is at war with Ireland; a country where at any moment now a particularly raucous little Hitler might arise. What the Jews have been to Herr Hitler the "creeping Saxon" would be to him.

A most fearfully squalid little war with Ireland (while Scotland looked sardonically on, from its Maginot Line, running from the Solway Firth to Berwick-on-Tweed) would from my point of view be the last straw. I can imagine it in all its disgusting details. As I put my ear to the ground, of the time-tract lying immediately beyond 1939, I can catch the confused whispers of a period when the Potato Famine will be bearing its lugubrious fruit; when the infernal machines in letter-boxes and in postal-packets, which are a mere diversion to-day, have expanded into full fledged military operations, once the empire-bubble of John Bull were pricked. That is why I am all for that bubble; unless of course you could have a proper Volapük society, from Moscow to Tangiers, instead of all these little sovereign peoples, jabbering away in their private idioms, making a Babel of the earth.

Now there is no difficulty about foreseeing the sort of thing that is likely to happen--Scene One. Dublin sends its ultimatum to London, and what is left of the boys of the bulldog breed mobilize. The Boys of Wexford are already on the march. They have the command of the sea--and sea-power counts. Since the fall of the British Empire the English have not had time to learn again the arts of agriculture. Food queues therefore from the start. Margarine and cat's meat before a month is out.

Scene Two. The English Lines before Bristol--which the Irish Fleet (sea-power

again!) has seized, and which the English army are investing. The Irish Brogue comes floating across No-man's-land from the enemy trenches. Bedads and begorrahs in great plenty--you'd think you were at Finnegans Wake, be Jazers! Extremely ill-played Irish pipes make the English think, with fear and trembling, that the Scotch are there; until it is explained to them that before the English put a stop to it under Cromwell the Irish piped a lot in their slovenly way, which was, of course, why Ireland used to be called Scotland.

But at the sound of the Brogue the English Tommies (no longer can we use the word British--the Welsh claim that) go all sentimental. They want to fraternize. Their less susceptible officers (of the clubman-class) find it extremely difficult to hold them in check--reminding them, however, that the Irish were always treacherous (look at the way they picked off the Black and Tans) and "they have only put on the Brogue to unman you. Paddie is not a white man and you know it!" a young subaltern exhorts them. "You know how he has always stabbed Britain in the back!" Stiff upper lips slowly return. The Tommies look grim at the thought of the Black and Tans, and sniping begins again.

Just at this moment, however, an Irish patriot (of English, or Spanish, parentage, but all the fiercer for that) leaps up. A stream of colloquial Gaelic (which none of the Paddies understand) issues from his lips. He whirls over the top, he charges across no-man's-land, followed by hordes of Paddies, rolling up the English line, and pushing it back a couple of miles. Irish "Fighters," led by the Goering of Ireland, machine-gun the new lines of the English as the latter dig-in with dogged pluck. Whereas the I.R.A. (who occupy rather the same role as the Asturian miners or dynamiteros in the Franco war) contrive a home-made land-mine. Luckily--owing to the fact that they have mixed up post-meridien with ante-meridien--it goes off a day too late, just as the Paddies are again attacking, and it blows up an entire Irish-American battalion, who had come over from New York the week before, to get a bit of their own back for having been forced by John Bull to go and live in such an anti-Tammany country as the U.S.A.

Scenes Three and Four. These are bitter scenes indeed, and squalid beyond description. Things are looking pretty black for Britannia--now that all the Irish have emigrated back again they outnumber the Sassenach by two to one. But Portugal, England's oldest ally--and now a strong, aggressive, little empire, even if it has a dash of the tar-brush--saves the day. It prevents (sea-power again) a Carthaginian conclusion to this most bitter little war, by blockading Cork, and blocking up the Bristol Channel.

The Black levies of England's last colonial possession--loyal little Jamaica--save the day at the Battle of Devizes. The Irish break and run at the sight of the black prognathous jaws under the tin-hats. It is a great success for British--I beg your pardon, for English--arms. "There's life in the old lion yet," The Times leader begins. The News Chronicle says it is "the spirit of Bustamente" that did it.

England, at the Peace of Bristol, cedes what was once known as Domnonia to the Irish Empire, and Wales goes too--all the "celtic" lands. Wales becomes an autonomous republic, within the Gaelic Confederacy, though not allowed to possess a fleet, owing to Taffy's well-known trickiness and unreliability. Besides, the Irish say, it might fall into the hands of John Bull--who still has an old tub of a battleship left over from the last world-war, which mounts sixteen-inch guns, and as regards whose sailors the dominant Irish suffer from a certain inferiority complex. This is partly because the English ships are always relatively clean, whereas the Irish ships are always exceedingly dirty--though they have a crack cruiser, named Macushla, presented by the Irish community of the U.S.A.

The English royal family still intermarry with the Danish royal family, just as when Britain was an empire on which the sun never set--though it no longer has the face to call itself Great Britain, to distinguish it from Brittany. But owing to their considerable colonial possessions--Greenland and Iceland --the Danes are a little offhand with the Court of St James's. They only marry their least attractive princesses to their impoverished cousins at London, who now are socially very inferior to the stuck-up Stockholm crowd for instance. The Swedes are regarded as the premier nation of the Nordic group, to which England belongs. They intermarry with the Irish and occasionally the Portuguese.

I promised you revelations of what goes on inside the head of an empire-builder these days, and there is a sample of it. A John Bull nightmare, if you like. But it has to me an air of squalid probability about it. I don't like the look of it, as a dream, at all. I believe it is one of those Dunne-dreams, that foretell what is about to occur.

Gangster-states, large and small, resulting from the break-up of Europe as the consequences of another general war, have been predicted by so many people that the above anticipation of events is quite unsensational, and may in fact be highly accurate. I think it would matter very little belonging to a community no

bigger than could comfortably be settled on the Isle of Wight. But communities take some time to grow together and to become organic. The English, if they ever come down with a bang--instead of slowly relapsing into a small island state-- will suffer terribly. One cannot help wishing for them not too sudden and violent a decline. And especially the thought of their being bullied by the Irish (possibly re-Eireated from America, as I have suggested) is extremely unpleasant. They would be shown no quarter, I am afraid, by an Ireland politically more important and more populous once more--for before the potato famine, when the population of Ireland was halved, Ireland and England possessed about the same number of inhabitants, and may do so again, of course. On the other hand, if the seat of government were in Edinburgh, instead of London, that would be all to the good. England would be kept in apple-pie order by the Scotch. And that should be the English patriot's dearest wish, if it ever came to that, and Britannia went to pieces.

But I will not allow these distressing thoughts to infest my mind any longer. It is the worst of being an empire-builder manqué. The empire that you have not built is there inside you, as it were, and at the slightest threat to Singapore, or to Hong Kong, or even to British Honduras, it asserts itself. It settles heavily on the chest. An unborn colony, the British hinterland that never was--the island that should have been painted red-- in the bosom of the pukka sahib who took the wrong turning! It causes you to have bad and squalid dreams. Ugh! Those brogue-infested trenches before Bristol, in an Anglo-Irish war. That was a sort of dirty crack, of whatever-it-is dreaming-on-things-to-come. My final confession of an empire-builder is this. If the empire that has been ruined by class-rule--and which will get us into a war of extermination if we cling to it, or if our bankers do, just as surely as hugging a meaty bone in a den of hungry lions would take you to Kingdom Come inside a second or two--if all these colonial possessions could be turned overnight from a private park into a public park, as a first step, we should be saved a lot of unnecessary trouble.

For my part, I hate being a standing excuse for Herr Hitler. Were there no private empires, but one public empire, the armaments of "sovereign states" would lose their meaning. It is African and Asiatic colonies in the hands of neighbouring states ("sovereign" like his own) that gives Herr Hitler an alibi for Czech or other conquests. A bad excuse is better than none. Could we abstain from hypocrisy for a moment, and not protest our concern for the Kaffir or the Redskin, we would see that Hitler's coercion of the Czechs is in a different class of things from, say, the French subjection of the Atlas chiefs, or from the

conversion of a sparsely populated African wilderness into European farm-lands.

I am an unrepentant Paleface in this matter. I like to think of the Czech as free and independent with more acuity than I can muster for a Hottentot. Incidentally, I have much more Paleface feeling than Herr Hitler.

If there were no colonial empires, in Africa and Asia, there would not be a shadow of excuse for Herr Hitler's unspeakable restlessness. We are, and we shall remain, his alibi for the subjugation of the Slav. It is our Hottentot, babu, and black boy subjects that afford him an indirect sanction for the acquisition of Slav subjects. The unfortunate Slavs (for whom, as a Celt, I have much fellow-feeling) have to be swallowed by the Teuton, because we refuse to disgorge our coolies: or, to be more correct, because the City of London refuses. And (to let the empire-builder have the last word) it is not a true alibi: for a Pole or a Croat or a Swiss is not a savage, and if you threaten his liberty it means more to a good European than if you are a little bit arbitrary in your dealings with a dark gentleman in a loin-cloth, or a big oily lady with a ring in her nose--though neither of the latter need be treated like cattle (even if you do treat men and women in Durham and Tonypandy like dogs).

VIII SOVEREIGN-NATIONHOOD

THE expression "sovereign state" you will have encountered, here and there, within inverted commas. These commas, of course, were used to suggest that there was something bogus, or something anomalous, about it--in spite of the fact that we take this "sovereignty" so much for granted.

If the concept "empire"--the pipe-dream of competitive nationhood--ought to be scrutinized from every angle, at the present juncture, this other concept, "sovereign state," which stands behind it, requires very badly examining, too. In this final chapter of my empire-building part I propose to do so. The present chapter is all about "sovereign states."

Has it ever occurred to you that it is a little odd you should be invited--indeed compelled--to kill other men by your Government (they dress you up in uniform to do it, of course, which somehow diminishes the anomaly) whereas the same Government would hang, behead, or electrocute you if, on your own initiative, you took the life of another man--even if he happened to be the citizen of another sovereign state, and even if you dressed yourself in khaki in order to commit the murder?

Formerly you were allowed (this was over a century ago) to "call out" or challenge to mortal combat--it was called a "duel"--anybody you disliked. If you killed him you usually had to lie low for a few months. It was not entirely legal to call a man out. That was because otherwise people would be running each other through the body in the streets quite casually, and this would have been too indiscriminate. It would have resulted in an undesirable anarchy.

Violence also was confined to members of the ruling class. That kept the death-roll within bounds. A "common man" had no "honour": consequently he could not take your life on the pretext that you had done something to his "honour."

In our time there are no duels: there are no serious duels even in Germany--else Dr Goebbels would have been killed long ago. To-day "honour" has practically disappeared from the scene, in civil life. The law court has taken the place of the duelling-ground. Only nations to-day have "honour" of that mystical intensity,

taking with it the privilege of killing.

It is safe to say that nations in this matter of "honour" and its defence, have more than made up for the elimination of "affairs of honour" upon the social plane, and for the decay in private brawling. But this is natural: for the "common man" is now allowed collectively to have "honour." He has become a "gentleman," so to speak, in the mass. It is he who is vindicating his honour when two nations go to war. Even women have honour in the present age, and in many countries are allowed to bear arms. So "honour," having become a much more all-embracing attribute, naturally enough the homicide attendant upon its functioning is much more considerable. The more abstract it becomes, the bigger toll "honour" takes of human life.

Now please do not mistake me. I am not saying that you should refuse to take up arms in defence of your country (though I confess I should regard it as preferable if the word "honour" could be dispensed with: it always makes me a little sick when I hear it). Why I am discussing "honour" in this unceremonious way is in order to arrive at the inner truth about the "sovereign state." It is because your country is a sovereign state that the gentlemen you elect (a little lightheartedly and muddle-headedly) to govern you have the right to ask you--nay to force you--to kill. And if the medieval notion of "honour" had not found refuge in the concept of national sovereignty (likewise medieval) the sovereign state would not be quite so evilly potent.

If "gangsters," who govern another sovereign state, take it into their heads to make a dead set at you, well there it is, your rulers have no alternative except to ask you to go caveman. And knowing full well that such a contingency is almost certain to arise--since it always has in the past--there is no sovereign state that does not manufacture great numbers of bombs--and much more efficient ones than the I.R.A. amateurs can make. Real beauties--which they boast about when other sovereign states get tough.

The "sovereign state" really is a notion that is worth thinking about a great deal. A people is "a sovereign people" before it can become "an empire people." And a "sovereign state" can do no wrong within its own frontiers. Its intangibility is absolute. A mile inside its frontier--watched across this sacrosanct dividing-line by its horrified neighbours --it can organize a witch-hunt and burn a hunted sorceress at the stake. It would be "gross interference in the internal affairs of a neighbouring and friendly power" for the press of the neighbouring country to

describe these witch-hunts as "barbaric." If a "sovereign state" wishes to be barbaric and resort to thumb-screws or what not that is its own affair.

The sovereign state has the look of an anachronism, to the average man of to-day, when first he becomes conscious of this concept and begins to give it his serious attention. He is apt to wonder how it is he has not heard more about it. The "divine right of kings" is a theological and political concept which has received, at one time and another, a good deal of attention. But people have tended to keep quiet about the "sovereign state."

The reason for this is not far to seek. Your own ruling class rules a sovereign state! If there were no sovereign states there could be no wars, or even revolutions; it would impose all sorts of limitations upon "private enterprise." Power would not disappear from the world; but it would take on a much more complicated form. The present patchwork structure of society, cordoned off within its "historic frontiers," is more convenient for the exercise of power on an impersonal scale. For international financial operations it is preferable to have nations.

Wherever I go to-day I hear people talking about a Federal scheme, the object of which is to induce the great democratic states of the West, especially Great Britain and America, to abandon their national sovereignty, pool their resources, have a common Parliament and armies under one direction. The establishment of something that would resemble the British Commonwealth of Nations, but more centripetal, is, I suppose, the idea.

Let me say at once that I am in favour of such a scheme: and if France, Spain, Portugal, and the Scandinavian countries would join it so much the better. Let me also say that I have not always been in favour of arrangements of this order; I have tended to advocate individualist political structures: small units as against big ones. And I will explain why--for there are things against as well as for, and it is important that everybody should be in possession of the arguments against, before they are invited to vote on it. This is not the usual practice in a parliamentary democracy. But both sides should be heard.

Here then is the case against the surrender of sovereign rights, and against a great merger of this kind. The main argument runs on the same lines as that used against any monopoly or trust: namely, it would be too big, and the interests of the individual would suffer accordingly.

As recently as two or three years ago I favoured that small unit--the nation. "For years to come the whole world will be busy answering the question: `Are you for the super-state of internationalism, or for the sovereign state of non-international politics?'" So I wrote in 1936. And my answer then was that I preferred the sovereign state--preferred decentralized government to centralized government. Or, as I put it, I was for the part, rather than for the whole. I was for "those who wish to retain the maximum freedom for the parts: and to withhold unreasonable and too oppressive power from the whole. For the whole would be only a verbal figment," I added. "It would mean government by a handful of individuals."

"The part" seems to me at present just as much a "verbal figment" as "the whole." It also means government by a handful of individuals, and by no means the most representative. Whether the unit thus mis-represented comprises forty million or four hundred million souls makes little difference.

When I stated that, should we follow the Geneva road of the League of Nations Union, then "the destiny of England, perhaps for centuries to come, is to be decided in a Swiss city by a motley collection of gentlemen whose names most of us are unable to pronounce," I was overlooking the fact that the Parliament that sits in London is so peculiarly unrepresentative of the real interest of England that "a motley collection of gentlemen" in Geneva could not be any worse, and, in spite of their unpronounceable names, might be considerably better.

It is a very powerful argument in favour of retaining sovereignty and independence, that "out of sight is out of mind," and that power ought to be vested in the hands of people who are in daily contact with those they are to rule. Even such a short way away from the Scottish Border as is London, it is far enough for a Parliament sitting in London to forget or overlook the peculiar needs and problems of Scotland. That is a very powerful argument. But how much more valid it would be if the Parliament sitting at Westminster did not forget and overlook just as much the peculiar needs and problems of Londoners, who are right there under its nose!

I have had my eyes fixed upon the political scene now for six years without intermission. My conclusions to-day differ, not unnaturally, from those arrived at earlier. More every day I am convinced that to isolate any part of that Whole is impracticable. We should let the whole thing rip. Our instinct as men born to a great tradition of human freedom is to hold back what we can from the political

merger. The monster business concern is "soulless," we say; the monster state must be the same. But monstrous and "soulless" wars to stop the merger--to stop Earth Ltd. coming into being--are no solution. Such wars, in any case, can only be undertaken by mergers. (Grossdeutschland is a merger.) One monopoly is much the same as another: though if I have to be part of a vast concern I prefer it should be a trust that has swallowed up the English. I want to be with them, wherever I am, on a my country submerged or afloat principle!

Some years ago I hoped to be only with the English--for us to be distinct. Now, after a great deal of close observation, I see that is impossible. I have to have my England diluted, or mixed. Dear old Great Britain has to take in partners. I believe if we could all of us have made up our minds to that earlier we could have avoided a general war. No one would have taken on all the Anglo-Saxons and their satellites.

But the most compelling argument of all in favour of the great international merger is that it has already occurred. That surely should be an argument to put a stop to all argument. Even the anarchists, for all their rigid isolationism, are a part of the system they oppose. And as for us, have not we taken to barter?

What I mean is that whether nations merge politically or not, they cannot keep out the Zeitgeist or isolate themselves from the spirit of their neighbours. Ideas pay no attention to frontiers; they slip in and out like elves. But since it is only the soul of a nation that is worth preserving, once we recognize that that long ago has merged, however exclusive it may have desired to be, the political and economic side of it is unimportant. It is not worth having great nationalist wars if there are no true nations left to fight about.

Before the Great War Sir Norman Angell wrote a book entitled *The Great Illusion*. And the Great War in due course proved itself a Great Illusion, and Sir Norman Angell very properly got the Nobel Peace Prize. For if people had listened to him there would have been no war.

This famous book exposed the futility of nationalist war, seeing how interlocked--that is to say, internationalized--were all national economies. Nations could not act as if they were detached, or even semi-detached, any longer. If they persisted in doing so they would suffer for it. Such was Sir Norman's argument.

There is, however, another equally "great illusion," as I have just indicated, and I

wish that someone would write a book to demonstrate it at the present time. I should like to see a long and duly statistical book written to show how the economic interlocking is not the only one, and how that spiritual identity to which I have referred must prove even more embarrassing for the isolationist.

The opposition blocs, Totalitarians on the one side and Democrat-Marxists on the other, are poles apart politically, it is generally believed. And indeed it is true that in almost every respect we are superior to them. Yet if the Totalitarians affect to despise and to oppose democracy and communism, why there is nothing easier than to show how deeply the Germans are "tainted" with Marxism, or how democratic a demagogue like Hitler is, all allowance made for the strange form democracy must take when popped into field-grey and jackboots.

Nor do we entirely escape this horrid system of spiritual barter. Every day we import some Totalitarian trick--just as eggs with Heil Hitler on them get through our defences.

The individual national systems as typified by their governments, are in every case too corrupt, too stagnate, and in some cases even too ludicrous, to make any intelligent European observer feel over-conservative. If France, Italy, Spain, and England joined up, the resultant state, when it brought forth its composite executive--sitting in Paris, of course--could scarcely prove to be less good than are the individual governments as they exist to-day. The insularity of the English would be modified, the French receive an access of "steadiness," the Spaniards lose some of their grandeeism, and the Italians lose Mussolini (with about as much regret as a man loses a stiff neck).

How greatly some federal scheme for the Western democracies would appeal to me is obvious from what I have said. But we must be realist, and we have to ask ourselves if it is likely to happen.

Were you to propose to-morrow to the French and English nations that they should amalgamate, even the majority, their respective "publics," quite apart from the wealthy and influential minorities, would be stunned at the idea. They would receive your proposal at first with incredulity, ridicule, and distrust.

Should you propose to either, on the other hand, that they should attack and destroy the other, they would understand that at once. Owing to the Entente Cordiale they would be a little astonished at first; but in a very short time they

would come to see that their neighbours were a lot of treacherous blackguards, and the sooner they were pushed off the earth the better.

The prospective federalist will find it none too easy to reverse what for so long these unfortunate people have been encouraged to think. The Government and the Press of all countries have exploited national sentiment too thoroughly for it to be possible, without long preparation, to bring them to take seriously such a merger. And the people of the United States have been taught to regard Europe as a backward, impoverished, quarrelsome, and unscrupulous part of the world ever since 1920. That cannot be undone in a day.

However that may be, the effort should be made. The more "sovereign states" that cease to be sovereign the better for all of us. And it is not perhaps too much to hope that the fact of a common tongue, English, will start the rot; disintegrate these stupid barriers.

CONCLUSION

I HAVE never been at a funeral: but a desire to laugh is supposed to obsess people on such occasions. I find it extremely difficult, I confess, to be serious about what is happening just now. It seems so terribly absurd--or so absurdly terrible.

A "total war"--not a war of armies, but of peoples--a war in mufti, in top hats, dressing gowns, and crêpe de Chine, necessarily must be productive of Heath Robinson effects. There is bathos as well as pathos when the battlefield is ubiquitous, and the front line liable to be Tooting Bec, or the Serpentine. The height of the macabre should be attained where the least military-minded of all European publics become involved in battle.

There is an old gentleman I know who lives near Newcastle, who is slowly losing his reason. He is chairman of the local A.R.P. committee. His days are spent in a round of anxious alarms, fanned at stated intervals throughout the day by the booming voice of the B.B.C. announcer, retailing hair-raising "news." Recently, before the war, this unfortunate man thought he would take a little exercise. He started out on a country walk. But he had not got far before something occurred to him which brought him to an abrupt halt. He returned to his house and hurriedly summoned the A.R.P. committee. After a little preliminary beating about the bush and gas-mask chatter he imparted to them the

unexpected aspect of his A.R.P. duties which had struck him so forcibly while out for a walk.

In time of war (he put it to them) suppose he went for a walk, just as he had that morning, and suppose, as he was crossing a lonely field, a German plane came sailing down. Engine trouble! The plane alights a short distance away; out steps a German pilot. What next? What should he as a civilian do? Would it not be better if the committee went armed? Should the enemy airman not at once be shot? Or should he essay to capture him? Or would it be better to walk away and inform by telephone the military authorities, who would organize a battu?

This poor gentleman's sanity is already impaired. Any day now he is liable to go over the border line, and see in his committee nothing but a pack of spies, bent on revealing to the enemy the position of air-raid shelters possessed by all the most prominent citizens.

It is impossible not to feel that our people are psychologically unprepared. Of course after a few weeks of Blitzkrieg there would be as many "Old Bills" in Tooting Bec and Downing Street as ever there were upon Bairnsfather battlefields--tin hat on head, peeping cheerfully out of holes and crevasses of tumbled masonry. They would be as full as ever of the old Pickwickian philosophy. The English would certainly not crumple up under a Blitzkrieg.

Beyond those practical questions of mental adjustment to an unexampled emergency, however, and of physical preparation, is the fact to which Dr Bene* drew attention recently. This was in a speech at the Liberal Summer School at Cambridge. Dr Bene* said that very severe criticism could and should be passed on the practice, procedure, means, and methods of the European democracies--the great old democracies as well as the smaller, newer democracies. It is their lack of belief and faith in their own principles that in the first instance calls for criticism; their "utilitarian opportunism."

We should accept such observations coming from a distinguished foreign critic, with gratitude. English democracy, we should be prepared to agree with Dr Bene*, is too negative a thing. But is that the fault of the man in the street?

The latter-day John Bull, that rather lazy person (in brain and body) recognizes dimly that he is ruled in a slovenly manner, and so escapes the hardships which citizens of the high-tension states endure. He is well pleased, up to a point, to be

ruled in a slovenly way.

Habeas corpus he is justly proud of. It is a great feather in his cap, and political stand-by: it guarantees him against the worst servitudes. It gives him that free feeling. His body's all right anyhow--his "corpus!" On the other hand he observes English land going out of cultivation at an alarming rate: the spectacle of distressed areas that would shame an Asiatic despotism dispirits him. He counts up his blessings and burdens and finds that they cancel out. This leaves him in a state of suspended animation. He experiences no great urge to rebel, nor yet to send up hosannas. He vegetates and hopes for the best. He is the "Old Bill" of the peace. He does not know "a better 'ole"; he thinks he knows of a few worse ones--and he is right.

We live in the midst of an unromantic decay. But when we are talking about John Bull we must remember that there is no country in the world in which there are not to-day multitudes of people equally in a state of suspended animation. In Canada wherever there are people working there are almost an equal number not working, and who have not the heart for even such work as they might find to do, preferring to live "squatting," drawing the dole, reverting to animal conditions. The latest returns from the U.S.A. give figures of those out of work as approaching twenty million: in Australia, Spain, Russia, whichever way you turn your eyes, it is the same picture. Man, the industrial giant, has unfortunately the mind of a child, it is said, to elucidate this paradox. So what can be done about it?

There is an exception to this universal spectacle of aimless squalor. It is to be found in our up-and-coming friends, the Totalitarian states, especially Germany. But that exception is even more depressing than the rule. For there, at a beggarly wage, they employ everybody, and maintain them in an undernourished condition, thanks to the destructive needs of the good old Prussian war-machine--which, in due course, will get half of them wiped out; which is not very helpful really, as a solution to the present problem of "want in the midst of plenty," nor very satisfactory from the standpoint of the German.

In a pre-war broadcast Mr Churchill observed: "Whether it be peace or war . . . we must strive to frame some system of human relations in the future which will bring to end this hideous insanity, which will let the working and creative forces get on with their job." The mere abolition of war is not enough to make the world safe for those "working and creative forces" of which Mr Churchill

speaks. No more than war can solve this puzzle of the giant-with-the-brain-of-a-child, can the mere absence of war do so. Lloyd George once talked in that way, and see what's come of it. The emphasis should not be on war or no war--as if the stupid pan-Germanism of Herr Hitler were rudely interrupting what would otherwise be a plutocratic paradise. This Mr Churchill is apparently coming to understand, though the life of arms has always been his especial concern.

I will return to Dr Bene*'s strictures. It may be as well to say that he was addressing students of politics. And for those who are not students of politics it is necessary I think to point out the special significance the terms used have for the politician.

Politics may be said to be divided into two main classes: one rests upon the utilitarian argument, the second rests upon the argument from principle. Dr Bene* would say that the English nation in 1939 knows only the utilitarian argument. It treads the path of opportunism. It has too little principle.

But what is a "principle" anyway? An "unprincipled ruffian" in a novel of Ouida's was a man who observed none of the moral checks inculcated by the Christian religion. To-day the greater number of Englishmen are "unprincipled" from that standpoint; for though they may automatically observe a fair number of the moral checks, it is no longer because of principle, but is utilitarian. There can be no argument from principle if the principle is a shadow of itself. And how closely such principles as "honour," "probity," "loyalty," and so on are bound up with the practice of religion requires no stressing.

That a political body is more robust with "principles" than without them is undeniable. And the trouble is that a nation is not a Ford car, as the press and most politicians seem to think. It is organic. The principles by which it is stiffened up take a long time to grow and require a lot of attention.

The roots of all manner of principles, good and bad, superstitious and otherwise, are still there in the hearts of Englishmen. But very few new ones have been planted: and the old ones have been allowed to go to seed.

By means of press campaigns you cannot grow new political or ethical principles overnight. Nor can you neglect for half a century such and such a principle--political or ethical: and then suddenly turn the hose-pipe of newspaper propaganda upon it, and expect it to sprout up and blossom on the spot, as if

nothing had ever happened to it.

Politicians understand very well how much better it is to exploit something deep-rooted rather than to have to build up from scratch. So they are always rooting round and testing how much life there is left in this or that superstition, hoping they can make some use of it. Herr Hitler, for instance, does nothing but that from morning till night. How successful he is it is impossible to say. The fruits of that revivalism will manifest themselves now that we have a war. Now we should see just how deep that "rebirth" is.

In synthetic, forced, "rebirths" I am a firm disbeliever. And if Dr Bene* meant to say to his Liberal listeners that we should go back after the manner of Hitler--go back and be Whigs, or make the Puritan walk our streets again, or resurrect some village Hampden to puff his chest out at the clanking Teutonic Knight unearthed by Herr Hitler, I am not with him.

Most Governments are, in fact, arbitrary, and consequently the curse and scandal of human nature; yet none are of right arbitrary. . . . There can be no prescription old enough to supersede the law of Nature and the grant of God Almighty, who has given all men a right to be free.

That rings out finely--it is Otis: but where would be the use of talking about "a grant of God Almighty" in these days, to eighty per cent of our people? They do not believe in any "right" to be free. They think instinctively in terms of power--not of right--as much almost as the professionals of power-politics.

Yet if we have not got "principles" we should invent them. It is time we had some new ones. And perhaps instead of laboriously reviving old ones--however fine--in imitations of our romantic friend the other side of our frontier the Rhine, we could get the soil ready for a new crop. The soil would still be English soil. There is no fear that it would lose its ancient virtue. It will always be productive of fine healthy libertarian impulses. But let us never go back to the Morris dance, as would certainly happen were we to have a British Hitler!

However, we shall not have time, for a while, to think about Morris dances. And there will be no Hitlers anywhere after the present general war. Nor will there be time to cultivate new "principles." We shall have to rub along with what is left of the old. It was my purpose in making the above observations about what Dr Bene* said to show how vain it is to hope, with society in the state in which we

find it at present, for a "crusading" spirit; and how improper indeed it would be to look for it.

The Englishman, since it has come to fighting, will have something to fight for--the future, which the Anglo-Saxons will make a better job of than the Germans. And he will have something, also, to fight against.

No intelligent person wants a German hegemony in Europe. I am not "anti-German." But the uniformed athlete bank clerk (who does not even any longer hark back to the Dioscuri and to Laocoön) who rules the roost in the Dritte Reich is an unprepossessing person. This brazen roost is ruled with a cocksureness that is a transparent bluff. Benno von Arendt, a theatrical designer, is called in to supply the ministerial and diplomatic army with glittering uniforms. But this game of poker has been in progress for six years. Few of these chefs de Protocol, commissars, sub-marshals, police-magnates, but must feel that it is an epic likely to end, for them, with a pistol shot. For where will all this braided and bemedalled galaxy be if the régime crashes? They strut about, but it is an anxious feverish strut.

The actual physical impact of National Socialism is overpowering certainly. It is a galvanic creed. The more the mind is driven underground, the more highly energized the body becomes. Berlin is like a March day on the East coast. It is so tonic, in its athletic tension, that to sit at a café upon Unter den Linden is to risk being blown off your seat. The patriotic vim of the passers-by, keyed-up from eye to heel, is such, that a seat on the street is not practical politics.

But our sleepy John Bull has no need to envy this Spartan robot beyond the Rhine. He is an empty mechanism. His Freude is not John Bull's Freude--Kraft durch Freude--a fearful formula! Frankly a "Strength through Joy" ship must be one of the most unpleasant vessels afloat. Give me a reeking old tramp--give me a slatternly French packet--give me an emigrant ship, with all the babies being sick over the laps of their screaming mammas! Give me anything rather than this smug Ark of Joy!

When one reflects that Herr Hitler--non-smoker, non-drinker, vegetarian--is doing his best to discourage smoking, to remove from the poor their Schultheiss, and cut down their rations of pork--substituting abstract "joy" for all other stimulants--it is easy to imagine what Germany must eventually become. A Sunday School of sunburnt state-paupers, armed to the teeth.

How politically unwise this is, it is hardly necessary to point out. Beer, tobacco, and eggs play a bigger part in politics than anything, even religion. For any one, at all events, not drunken with ideologic "joy" himself--not susceptible to that particular sort of platonic intoxicant--to visit a place in the grip of so much bleak uplift, is going to be no fun.

No, there is nothing the average Englishman need envy about Grossdeutschland or the lot of its bleakly "uplifted" inhabitants. And, if it comes to that, who would not rather be a Canadian lumber-jack on the dole--grilling a few fish he has caught outside his cabin, with a smell of conifers in the air like pine bath-salts--able to sleep in the sun all day on his back, and drink all night with the "peasoups," listening to their Norman songs? The mere thought of Hitler's Germany almost reconciles one, does it not, to our ramshackle civilization?

Nor need the educated Englishman to-day experience an inferiority-complex regarding his highbrow "German cousins." That nation, which has had such a passion for artistic expression, and the nationals of which have been such great masters of it in the medium of sound, is to-day culturally extinct. To-day not one German in ten can tinkle upon a piano. Great music has so completely died out that there is hardly an echo left. Germans would far rather look at what passes for acting in Hollywood than at the great traditional acting at which they once excelled. Their philosophers are university hacks--sentimental variants upon American psychology accounting for a sporadic thin brochure. The books the Germans read (apart from the fearfully exciting Kampf of Herr Hitler) are heavy-handed echoes of the Russian or of the French. The paintings they acquiesce in (and Herr Hitler insists upon) have their spiritual home within the walls of Burlington House.

No, the argument does not lie to-day between a nation of shopkeepers, and a nation of musicians and philosophers. There are none of the latter left beneath the Swastika, nor have there been for many a day. Bismarck saw to that, long before Hitler was born. It lies between the French and Celtic culture generally, allied to the genius for tolerance of the Anglo-Saxon, on the one hand, and the most efficient exponents of machine-age barbarism--camouflaged beneath a bosky peasant homeliness--on the other.

THE END