

CURRENT MAGAZINES

"HAVE" AND "HAVE-NOT" POWERS

The Situation—Editorial in the *Nineteenth Century*.

Planning Post-War Europe—Mr. J. Emlyn Williams, in the *Fortnightly*.

Germany and Peace—Viscount Cecil, in the *Contemporary*.

The Atlantic Charter—Editorial in the *National Review*.

THE *Atlantic Charter*, which President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill travelled so far and under such difficult circumstances to write, was a nine-days wonder. That it might prove no more than this, was obviously an intense hope quickly formed, and before long cautiously acknowledged, by some who affect peculiar right to express the spirit of England. Similarly, for similar reasons, the Charter stirred resentment in certain American groups. From leaders of *America First* came the mocking summary "Wind, wind, wind," but it was plainly a feeling sharper than impatience with mere rhetoric that roused such men as Mr. Hoover against Point IV. The *National Review* and the *Nineteenth Century* denounced the manifesto for its pledge against annexing territory or imposing an alien form of government. It is a fair guess, however, that chief provocation came from the clause promising equal accessibility of raw material.

A conference which has had such controversial sequel calls for scrutiny much closer and more searching than most observers have bestowed upon the North Atlantic affair of the middle of last August.

I

That spectacular meeting excited indeed intense interest at the time it was held. Its setting, its risk, its precautions, the surrounding air of secrecy, the suddenness of the disclosures about it from London and from Washington, provided sure provocatives. But the curiosity abated fast, long before it should have abated, and it had been exercised far more on the externals than on the essence of the event. People asked about the precise place of meeting, about the personnel of the company attendant upon each of the Chiefs, about their method of transport and their safe return. In short, the kind of curiosity that picture

papers are quite adequate to appease! But about the document the two leaders signed—the document for whose composition they had incurred such trouble and risk—one noticed no more than a slight public concern. Not a few of the class called “general reader” turned away with just a touch of boredom at the discovery that the two men had come all that distance for conference about so abstract a statement. “Goodness, gracious”, they exclaimed,—“and was that all?” One cannot wholly blame them. There had been so many conferences, and so many statements jointly signed, that made no recognizable difference to anything.

That this manifesto on war aims, this “Atlantic Charter”, will make any great difference, it would be rash to predict. No doubt it will be redrawn and reinterpreted many times before it becomes, if it ever does become, the basis of world settlement. But, in the emergence of that way of thinking and planning of which this is an initial sample, there is a stimulant of high hope. There is nothing obscure about the causes which led these two men to issue, under immense difficulty, such a manifesto. Neither, let us acknowledge with sadness, is there anything obscure about the causes which have led some observers of the manifesto—both British and American—to assail it with abuse. As the Irish aphorism has it, “there is a deal of human nature in man.” But by some men the challenge of an utterly new time is not met with monotonous reiteration of an old response. We are fortunate in that just now the English-speaking democracies have such exceptional men to lead them.

The meeting in the North Atlantic must have been an *emergency* meeting. Two men, as nearly indispensable as men could be to their respective countries, each enormously busy, each required constantly for decision on matters impossible to foresee, decide to leave home for a conference of several days with each other. The task on which they set to work, a closer formulation of war aims, was a task which one of them had very recently refused to touch. Mr. Churchill, a few weeks before, had argued strongly in parliament that the time for such reformulation was still distant. He had dwelt upon the risk that those in complete unanimity as to what must be done might develop discord if they set out to assign reasons for doing it, and that difference of policy on matters which could well wait might thus impede action whose delay would be fatal. Such considerations, advanced in parliament with Mr. Churchill's never failing

skill a few weeks before, must have lost their force even for his own mind when he consented to join Mr. Roosevelt in the Atlantic conference. To add to the puzzles of the situation—What means a joint statement on war aims by the representatives of a belligerent and a non-belligerent Power (as the United States last August had still to be counted)? And why was Russia not represented at the interchange—the Power contributing on such an enormous scale to win the victory whose fruits were being there foreshadowed and planned?

These are a few of the perplexities which the Report of the proceedings called forth. I do not include another, of which much has been made both in the *Nineteenth Century* and in the *National Review*. They ask what sense can be found in a manifesto which declares in one clause that the Nazis will be completely overthrown and in another clause that no coercion will be applied to any country fettering its free choice of a form of government. For is not the Nazi system of government Germany's clear choice for herself? The explanation is surely obvious. Great Britain has no desire to meddle with Germany's internal affairs. By "the Nazis" is meant Adolf Hitler and his circle: the war is to destroy that régime as it now stands in power. They must be destroyed, not because Great Britain feels any responsibility for how the Germans are ruled at home, but because she regards those particular rulers as a standing menace to herself, and as victor she is entitled to clear that menace away—just as she is entitled to disarm the conquered, to exact an indemnity, or to take any other precautions for her own future safety that as victor she may judge right. This has no color of dictation to another country as to how it shall be governed: it is no more than a measure of self-defence. Let post-war Germany set up what form of government she chooses, subject to the condition that if she chooses one held dangerous by Britain, British garrisons may have to occupy her soil for an indefinite time, and the disarmament precautions may have to be made all the more stringent.

But though this alleged conflict of "Points" in the manifesto is illusory, there remain those other problems of interpretation noted above. Whence the sudden change of policy, the sudden decision to clarify war aims? The answer I suggest is that it was Mr. Roosevelt rather than Mr. Churchill who initiated the change, and that its motive was discovery of the true method by which effective appeal to anti-Hitler Germans in Germany itself may be made.

II

The Eight-Point Manifesto was obviously intended for neither a British nor an American audience. What interest had Americans or British in hearing that this war is not to acquire more territory at Germany's or Italy's expense? Or in a digression from war problems to speak of tariff rearrangement at that indefinite date "when the war is over"? It was for *enemy* listeners that this kind of statement was composed, and we have ample evidence that it was timely. Men so different, but alike so deserving to be heard on the method of propaganda to the enemy, as Dr. Hermann Rauschning and Dr. Otto Strasser tell us that the language of the *Atlantic Declaration* was just what had long been required and speedily withheld.

For the Goebbels Bureau had been tireless in assuring Germans that their only choice lay between a Hitler victory and the extinction of German national character. A map has been in circulation professing to show how merciless would be the British post-war measures if Britain were to win; how the German soil would be parcelled out among the various races which have cooperated in the Fatherland's "encirclement"; how French and Belgians, Poles and Czechs would sate their vengeful appetite; how no more than a slender strip would be reserved for Germans, and even it would be required to maintain a British army of occupation! It is the judgment of those best qualified to speak of the German public that this ridiculous picture has had a far-reaching effect. No doubt much of it is discounted, but a highly dangerous general impression remains, and the belief that British triumph would mean not the downfall of Hitler and his gang alone, but the obliteration of Germany, is a principal force which keeps the anti-Hitler Germans in sullen though silent acquiescence.

But, innumerable voices will ask, who knows that there *are* any anti-Hitler Germans? Or, if they do exist, who knows that they will be able to hear a word of this *Atlantic Charter*? Was it worth while to run the risks and make the sacrifices needed for the Roosevelt-Churchill meeting on a remote off-chance such as that?

Some two million Germans, in all, have from time to time been thrown by the Gestapo into concentration camps as "politically unreliable": that, perhaps, will serve as some evidence that there are anti-Hitler Germans. The Gestapo is a better judge on such points than the foreign, doubting cynic. That the broadcasts in German directed by the B.B.C. to

"enemy" listeners are heard by that section of the enemy for which they are meant, is clear from the letters that German listeners send, somehow, to the speaker. It is perhaps clearer still from the fact that angry answers to the B.B.C. speaker are made on the German radio. If it was not certain that the objectionable broadcast was widely heard, no such gratuitous advertisement would be furnished to it by Dr. Goebbels.

But it has been lamented by some of the best and most discerning friends of the British cause that B.B.C. broadcasts to Germans have not been more judiciously planned. Dr. Rauschning, for example, has pointed out that it is a waste of effort to dwell in such talks upon the manifold wickedness of the Hitler régime. On such matters the German listener is informed already, in ample detail, and it is just possible that an English voice, dwelling on his country's shame, may have an effect upon him the very opposite of what is desired. Moreover, Lady Milner asks in the *National Review*, should not pains be taken to secure for broadcasting of such character voices that are not obviously Jewish? It needs no anti-Semite bias to suggest a precaution such as this, but the B.B.C. has been neglectful of it.

What, then, is it desirable to present in a broadcast from London to Germany? Exactly, says Dr. Rauschning, such points as constitute the eight in the *Atlantic Charter*. These are matters on which anti-Hitler Germans are waiting to be reassured. Nothing will persuade them to join in national suicide: they will fight to the end, even under Hitler's leadership, rather than that. The *Atlantic Charter* clears away this misgiving. One may suppose that the former President of the Danzig Senate speaks on such a topic with some authority. His article in *World Review*, urging the true method of effective propaganda to Germany, was in type before he saw the Report from "somewhere in the Atlantic". But on seeing it he added a joyful footnote, declaring that someone, somehow, had got the sound policy adopted in the right quarter.

What matters it if there is indeed no early prospect of German internal disturbance? Atmosphere has to be created, and the creation of this, in so far as foreign influence can aid it, has waited too long. Once there is military collapse of the Nazis in sight, internal insurgence will begin—such is the German temperament, deserting a cause when its prospects fade. When Hitler has definitely begun, in the eyes of his own people, to lose, we shall need that inner insurgent cooperation to finish

the job as quickly as possible—and with least expense in lives more precious than those of Nazis.

III

Mr. Churchill's change of purpose is otherwise evident, but it is confirmed by a special feature—Rooseveltian far more than Churchillian—in the Atlantic manifesto. Who can read "Point Four" without feeling that it was drawn by the hand which drew so many summaries of America's "New Deal"?

It is indeed a New Deal for nations that is there foreshadowed. The forgotten nation, like the forgotten man, has had the misfortune—as Gibbon once put it—to draw a blank in the great lottery of life. There are riches of the earth that some other, some earlier, comer has monopolized. So here is a proud, resourceful, but indigent nation, short of the essentials—food supply, coal, oil, cotton, living space—and thus forced to accept the exacting terms of some other nation born to an ampler inheritance. Experience of the friction which develops between "have" and "have-not" persons should be enough to suggest what will happen in the international arena. "The brigand nation" has become a familiar figure, and—like any other brigand—must in the first instance be put down. But putting down burglaries and highway robberies and every other wild device of the desperately poor is not the only, or the chief, task of domestic statesmanship. The story of social reform for at least a hundred years has been a story of reaching the deeper sources of crime, removing so far as possible those motives in rage against social inequality and hardship which predispose to a criminal act. What doctors call the search for causes, rather than treatment of symptoms! *Laissez-faire* was the name for that wretched method of the mere empiric in social management whose living advocate—now happily almost alone in the United States—is Mr. Herbert Hoover. Its contradiction was embodied in the New Deal. What Mr. Roosevelt now designs is to apply his favorite remedial scheme internationally.

Not indeed for the first time was this propounded in the *Atlantic Charter*. Italy's lack of coal, Japan's lack of cotton, Germany's lack of oil and of fats, and a multitude of other deficiencies for which these may serve as a sample, had occupied the thought of the Geneva League, and an invitation had been officially issued to all Powers which felt thus at economic disadvantage that they should present their need to a committee

set up for the purpose of advice upon practicable reform. It had been emphasized to the League Council that in these economic inequalities lay a fertile source of war, and this very modest step of appointing a committee of enquiry was in consequence well within the province of a peace-promoting organization. But the committee elicited no response, except exclamations of contempt from leaders of those countries in whose interest it was set up. The rhetorical outbursts of Mussolini and Dr. Schacht are memorable. Should this close the question? By no means. The very purpose in *The Atlantic Charter* was to make direct contact with the German and the Italian people from whom their leaders have concealed the truth about British and American purpose.

Treating lawless nations as civilization has treated lawless persons, who must be helped even against their own will and by measures against which they vociferously protest, we may produce a genuine "New Order" for the world. The project will not, as President Roosevelt of all men must realize, have a quick and easy passage to acceptance by either British or American opinion. Already we hear mutterings about the folly of the proposal to rehabilitate Germany, when conquered, by providing her with access to the natural resources she is sure to misuse. Already shrill complaint has begun against the very thought of foregoing annexations of enemy territory! The analogy with domestic reform, so clear in other respects, will be illustrated by a fierce warning against "fatuous idealists" in the international field, like the old warning that prison reformers would "coddle the criminal", and we shall have again the old aphoristic brilliance about people "with soft hearts and not much harder heads". All this is in Mr. Roosevelt's now fully appreciated programme of obstacles-foreseen, and Mr. Churchill's re-emphasis in his speech to Congress upon impartial allocation of opportunity to use the raw materials of the earth shows that the plan is now his also. The all too self-conscious realists who in America destroyed and in Great Britain impeded the working of the League of Nations are for the time silent. Let us hope they are not only repentant but remorseful. At least, as Mr. Churchill subtly reminded them, they have in the present world chaos the product of their own activity to contemplate. Their method having been tried, it is not too much to ask for trial of an alternative.

Those international inequalities of fortune, like individual inequalities, can surely be remedied with the same adequate precaution for keeping order. In the domestic sphere their

remedy has been found not a provocative but a deterrent of crime. In general, they have arisen through no particular person's fault: they will arise somehow wherever a competitive system elicits the energies of competitors very differently endowed, especially if some of them entered much earlier than others into the race for prizes. Neither in domestic nor in international economics would any real remedy be found in compulsory equalization of goods: this would need, for one thing, to be periodically repeated, as inequalities proportioned to differences of endowment would very soon reappear, and this in turn would stimulate fresh inventiveness in the exceptionally talented to reestablish their own gain. The process, it is safe to say, would before long result in great wastage of the world wealth available for any competitor.

But though Communism is not the solution, it does not follow that we have no alternative to sullen acquiescence in the manifest inequities of the capitalist *status quo*, whose consequences we have experienced not merely in one World War but in two. *The Atlantic Charter* is a proposal to ensure us against a third.

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There was surely a perfect fitness in the development of this plan for the post-war future by the two men who can, beyond all others, speak just now for the British and the American democracy. Everyone who looks for democratic victory agrees that the leadership of a reconstructed world must be, in the first instance, in British and American hands. So many others, who mean just as well, can do so much less! It is a peculiar responsibility of the English-speaking races that has to be met. The responsibility is theirs because of the bond far closer than community of blood, far deeper than community of language, that binds them together. Their fundamental values are the same: they think and feel and purpose alike about what makes life worth living. Never before did they realize this on either side of the Atlantic as they realize it on both sides now: never in their history was the spiritual kinship of British and Americans so felt. The common peril has made differences vanish. But, when one reflects so, one is haunted by memories, memories of the sequel to 1918, of the fair promise that was so soon and so tragically marred. Can we make sure that we shall not have a like disappointment again. The terrible disappointment we had once should be a safeguard for next time. Also our realization

at this early stage, under such discerning leadership, that not only a common danger brings us together, but also the challenge of a common world opportunity. The opportunity will not merely remain, it will become intensified when the danger has faded away. Provided, that is, that we do not permit ourselves again to be misled by siren voices bidding us enjoy the delights of lassitude when our "escape" is complete.

A motto from the past comes back to mind. In those years when the twentieth century was very young, there was a popular phrase whose source, like that of many another phrase popular at the time, was a line in Kipling. It spoke of "the white man's burden". Responsibility that is, for backward races. Civilization, as Kipling saw it, had a task of racial trusteeship. His higher talent, scientific resources, clearer insight, should make the white man a conscious guardian of the less privileged in the human family. It is another, but not dissimilar, trusteeship that one can discern in coming days laid upon British and Americans. The term "white man" has a significance deeper than that of physical color contrast. By agelong usage, it stands for certain generousities of mind and character and will. An opportunity awaits one thus endowed, in the dawn that will follow the present world darkness. *Noblesse oblige*.

As we look at that ghastly spectacle of human degradation which we call the Axis Powers, what thoughts come to mind about responsibility to cleanse the world of such a plague! Not simply to destroy, but to rebuild, and out of material even such as that. To win the peace, as in winning the war, the Powers whose will is set forth in the *Atlantic Charter* must continue to work cooperatively. Every advance in science, every piece of new knowledge, involves responsibility for its use in duties which were not one's duties until this progress revealed them. So with the understanding we now have of how Europe is ceaselessly imperilled, and of the means by which it may be saved, there is a plain new task appointed. Not, like Nazis or Fascists, to exploit a subject world, but to rescue the subject world from their exploitation: to rescue even the misled rank and file of Nazis and Fascists themselves. It is the solemn duty of British and Americans not to shrink from this high assumption:

Pray God our greatness may not fail
Through craven fear of being great.

H. L. S.