

# COMMON SENSE ON THE GERMAN PROBLEM

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THE complete fiasco of U. S. policy on Germany is now a fact. When the leading German war criminals, Goering, Streicher, Ley, Kesselring, Von Rundstedt, Von Papen and others surrendered to United States forces, our allies discovered in dismay that the top gangsters in Germany considered capture by the Americans their only hope to escape the relentless grip of justice and retribution. As the days of Germany's surrender approached early in May, the toughest German criminals looked frantically for an asylum, and believed they had found it in the United States army. When Hermann Goering handed himself over to our troops, he knew perfectly well that the Russians make no distinction between fat criminals and thin ones. By his American captors he was treated with soldierly *camaraderie*, including newspaper interviews, dozens of pictures and all that goes with the reception of a celebrity.

A basic motive in appeasing the Nazis and Fascists before 1939 was the fear that resistance to Nazi-Fascist imperialism would upset too much the existing constellation of power in the world. The theory of British and American foreign policy in the years 1933-1939 was that Fascism and Nazism, repulsive as they might be in this or that detail, were nevertheless, on the whole, forces of order and stability. From the business men's point of view, this thesis could also be expressed in the formula that you *could* do business with Hitler and his Nordic confrères in Rome and Tokio. A policy of soft peace toward Germany is the perfect continuation of our pre-war appeasement policy. The fundamental thing to remember about the whole German issue is this: we are now the only people that still need to discuss and investigate the Germans. By contrast, every European is now a full-fledged expert on the German problem. Any peasant in Yugoslavia, Russia or Poland, any business man in Utrecht or Brussels, any working man in Athens or Oslo, could qualify to give graduate seminars on the German problem at Harvard or Columbia. The Czechs and Poles, the Yugoslavs and Russians, the Dutch and Belgians, the Danes and Norwegians, the French and Greeks do not need any books or lectures on the so-called German problem. These people *know*.

The British have suffered the horrors of war this time as never before in their history. Every third home in Britain destroyed or damaged, high casualties of soldiers and civilians, economic and financial draining of resources built up over more than three centuries, these are some of the losses that Britain has experienced in World War II. But despite all these setbacks, Britain was the only European belligerent that was spared the actual sight of German occupation. The Germans planned to make another Poland out of England, but missed the boat from Calais to Dover.

From the last few centuries of dealing with Germans, Europeans have learned that they are either at your throat or at your knees. Three hundred million Europeans have had the Germans at their throats for five years, and the British were in the German grip for an uncomfortably long time. In our own case, we have known the Germans only at our knees. Our home front sufferings in World War II on account of the Germans can hardly be compared with the experiences of the occupied nations. Total war brought to American civilians the crushing dilemma of having to choose between chicken and duck when steaks became scarce. One wonders what the reaction of a Greek or Belgian would be on being told that we suffered so much in World War II that we were *forced to eat chicken!*

If thirty million Americans had been liquidated in American Lublins and Oswiecims, we should be familiar with an aspect of the German problem that the Poles have come to understand. If seven million American prisoners had been kept in German concentration camps for five years and treated as the French prisoners were, we should grasp a facet of the German issue that the French people will not forget soon. If Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago and Philadelphia had been looted, destroyed and scorched several times, we should probably be in a better position to penetrate the feelings of the Russian people. If sixty per cent of our richest farm land had been wilfully made sterile, not to be retrieved perhaps for centuries, we could probably comprehend the state of mind of the Dutch. If young healthy American men and women had been offered for sale as slaves in public auctions in German towns and villages, we should be able to appreciate the hatred that fires millions of Europeans against their German tormentors. If thousands of young American girls had been requisitioned for German brothels to amuse the master race, we might possibly put ourselves in the place

of Polish, Russian or Jewish parents who were forced to sacrifice their daughters to German lust. If, under German occupation, a government of Fritz Kuhn, Coughlin, Pelley and Viereck had been set up in this country, we might better imagine what a Frenchman felt living under Laval and Petain, or what a Norwegian thought of Premier Quisling, that pet of the Germans.

There is another reason why it is difficult for Americans to understand the nature of the German issue. The German political experience before and during the Nazi system is so outside the reality of American life that it requires the intellect of a Newton, the vision of a Blake and the heart of a Lincoln to understand in Kansas City what went on in Buchenwald. Thomas Mann, one of the very few Germans who have finally seen the light, has warned the Germans that, while other nations too have committed wrongs, the scale and scope of German crime are such that one cannot see how they will ever again live fraternally with the rest of the world.

In his *magnum opus*, "Mein Kampf", the idol of modern Germany says that it is much wiser to tell big lies than to tell little ones, because the ordinary man, who himself occasionally tells a little lie, will see through it, but in the case of the big lie he will believe, because he will refuse to admit that anyone could make up such fantastic tales. This technique was used with astonishing success not only by German propaganda, but also by German organization of crime. If a few hundred or a few thousand had been starved to death by the Germans, such crimes would have been easily believed in the outside world, because they were crimes that were within the realm of known experience. But when the world was told that the Germans were systematically slaughtering millions of people in scientifically planned death factories, it refused to believe.

After our troops penetrated into the heart of Germany and saw what had happened in Belsen, Dachau and Buchenwald, the American public "discovered" these concentration camps that had been in operation for years. In following the reports of many of our soldiers on these camps I have been struck by the fact that practically all start by saying: "I had always thought that these stories about the concentration camps were propaganda." This was a posthumous triumph of Dr. Goebbels.

Whenever we shall hear henceforth of the *gemuetlich* German *Hausfrau*, we should remember the wife of the Buchenwald

camp commandant who had a little hobby: collecting tattooed skins of human beings. Whenever prisoners were brought into the concentration camp, this charming hostess looked for tattooed skins. After due killing of these prisoners, the *Hausfrau* made lampshades out of these tattooed skins, for her own use and pleasure, and also to have little gifts around for friends at Christmas and other festive occasions.

What we fail especially to understand is that, biologically, the Germans have won this war, although decisively defeated in the field. For over five years the Continent of Europe was forced to starve while the Germans lived off the fat of the land. In his New Year's message of 1943 Goering boasted that the Germans would be the last in Europe to suffer from hunger. Now that the Germans have lost control over twelve million foreign slave laborers, they discover that it is harder to work for one's own living than to steal wine from France, butter from Holland, cheese from Denmark, fish from Norway, meat from Yugoslavia and a rare taste of caviar from Russia.

Since Germany lost her war, fighting against democratic nations, she will not have to suffer in any way commensurate with her misdeeds. The gangster has always the advantage over the decent citizenry that he can use any means, fair or foul, to gain his ends, whereas the police and court who catch and try him are bound by standards of civilized conduct, have to feed and clothe him, and are concerned with his moral and material welfare. Likewise, the Germans did not really risk too much in their attempt to enslave the world. They knew that, should they win the war, the people of the world would be turned into carriers of water and hewers of wood serving the Teutonic masters. Should they lose the war, the Germans thought, the democracies would forgive and forget.

In 1941, a Balkan diplomat, who had been staunchly anti-Nazi before the war, was asked why he had switched sides and joined the German camp. "It is very simple," he answered. "If the Germans win, they will kill me if I have been against them, and favor me if I have been with them. If the Allies win, and I have been against them, no harm will be done to me, because democracies, after all, do not believe in violence and punishment."

The moral devastation of Germany is another legacy that cannot be quickly settled by military means. The Germans have very vague notions of what has happened in the world

in the last twelve years. Nor have they a better conception of what the world thinks of them. Many Germans, including some of the top war criminals among the generals, have suggested that we look upon the war as a football game. Now that it is all over, why not shake hands and forget about it all?

When Martin Niemoeller was freed by American forces, he immediately expressed his concern about the danger of Marxism to the new Germany. In this he was followed by leading Catholic priests, such as Bishop von Galen. Niemoeller was for all practical purposes a fanatical Nazi in the years 1922 to 1936. When his autobiography, *From the U-Boat to the Pulpit*, was published in 1934, it was hailed by the Nazi press as a great German story. In 1936 he discovered, after following the Nazi line for fourteen years, that Nazism and Christianity were not quite compatible. In this he showed greatness, as ninety-five per cent of his colleagues, the Protestant ministers, kept on believing in the Satanic doctrines of racialism and war. German ministers have dared, under United States occupation, to preach against the San Francisco Conference on the ground that some of the delegates were not "Christian", meaning Russian or Jewish.

Whereas the German people were shut off, in both world wars, from free channels of communication, thus remaining unaware of what the world thought of them, the American people were flooded, in both world wars, with pro-German propaganda. The *Reich* secretly subsidized daily papers in the United States and bought up propaganda agents. Even liberals like Oswald Garrison Villard and Ludwig Lewisohn pleaded for the fine values of German Kultur. After 1933, we had, first, the native American would-be pallbearers of democracy who tried to persuade us that resistance against invincible Germany was hopeless from a military point of view, and that Fascism and Nazism were in any case the wave of the future. So why not play ball with history, and let the Germans take over for just a couple of centuries?

As this intellectual fifth-columnism abated after Pearl Harbor, the work for the German cause in the United States was increasingly taken over by another set of propagandists, the so-called anti-Nazi Germans. With but few exceptions, such as the noble figures of Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster and Thomas Mann, the German politicians and publicists resident in this country came out with impassioned pleas for a soft treaty for

the Fatherland. If the anti-Nazi Germans were really fundamentally different from the Nazis, as they claim to be, they would concentrate their attention and effort on suggestions as to how Germany could make good the ravages wrought by her against three hundred million people. But because most anti-Nazi Germans share all the essential characteristics of the German tradition that finally culminated in Nazism, they do not tire telling the British and American peoples that the Nazi disease is a world disease, and that in any case Germans in general were fanatical anti-Nazis with the exception of Hitler, Himmler and possibly three or four more. As to the nature of the peace settlement, the anti-Nazi Germans in this country keep on warning us that Germany will not accept an unjust peace, that the Germans must be taught the virtues of democracy by a soft peace, and they occasionally even threaten with a third world war unless the United Nations make a peace that appeals to German pride and interest. At a time when millions of innocent civilians were methodically killed in the German death factories of Lublin and Oswiecim, these so-called liberal Germans saw fit to exhume all the unpleasant incidents in British and American history, from the mutinies in India to the lynchings in Alabama. One conclusion, therefore, inevitably imposes itself: the difference between the Nazi Germans and anti-Nazi Germans is not so significant as has been asserted by either group.

Now that the main source of German power and influence, the army, is destroyed, now that there is no German state or government, German interests abroad are still represented by a highly articulate and resourceful group of men who have access to all means of directly appealing to public opinion in the United Nations. The so-called anti-Nazi Germans in Britain and the United States have thus become the *last line of defence of German interests*.

We cannot understand the first thing about the German problem unless we try to grasp the essentials of the Nazi mentality through the behavior of the anti-Nazis. Just as the key to an understanding of German militarism is to be found in the behavior of German civilians, *Nazism can be best understood through the behavior and mentality of the anti-Nazis*. The key to an appreciation of the implicit and unstated premises of Nazism will be found less in Treitschke, Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg than in the flood of anti-Nazi books published by Germans in the past five years in Britain and the United States. Max Weber

was Germany's greatest liberal in the last two generations. Before he died early in 1920, he said this to one of his students: "I have no political plans except to concentrate all my intellectual strength on one problem, how to get once more for Germany a great general staff."

Self-styled anti-Nazi Germans reach the peak of effrontery when they call the Germans the first victims of Nazism. To these anti-Nazis, the Poles and Germans were both victims of Nazism, and both equally worthy of commiseration. In a sense, of course, the assassin is a victim, the victim of his criminal passion to kill. Nevertheless, society sends him to jail, although to his dear friends he is just the victim of the impulse to kill.

The theory of Germany being the first victim of Nazism is based on the assumption that only very few Germans were actually genuine Nazis. In this, the anti-Nazi Germans in this country differ in no way from the Germans in Germany. A desperate man-hunt has been going on in Germany since V-E day to track down a single Nazi, but so far our efforts have been in vain. The Germans never heard of such a thing. A German burger-master recently protested that no one in his town was Nazi, and when it was pointed out to him that he might perhaps slightly exaggerate, he shouted angrily: "Anyone who claims that a single inhabitant in my city was a Nazi is influenced by Jewish-capitalistic-plutocratic-communistic propaganda."

As to the future of Germany, we have to consider the non-democratic way of life as the only possible one for Germany for quite some time to come. Democracy is, in its truest meaning, a way of life in which people act and think voluntarily in most situations, in private as in public life. Everything can be imposed except the will to do something voluntarily.

German democracy was not a very inspiring performance before 1933, or else Adolf & Co. could not have had such an easy time getting into power and staying there for twelve cozy years. During those twelve years, German liberals died of a natural death, perished in the war or were liquidated by political terror, and some went abroad never to return. Furthermore, the requirements of permanent war under Nazism have greatly reduced the size and influence of the German middle classes. Ascending the throne of German power with the promise to save Germany from Bolshevism, Nazism has permanently altered the German class structure by proletarianizing large masses of the German middle classes.



Our main interest in the Germans, for the next fifty or seventy-five years, is to make them unable to wage war. Whether Germans rule themselves democratically, whether they have enough intelligence to see a fool before he leads them into disaster, whether they prefer sauer-kraut to apple pie, is for the Germans to decide.

Does the prospect of a non-democratic Germany in the near future mean necessarily that a new war is around the corner? By no means. It simply is not true that non-democratic nations are *ipso facto* a threat to world peace. Most of the Latin American countries are ruled by dictators. There are also countries in Europe (e.g. Portugal) and Asia (e.g. Turkey) that are governed by non-democratic regimes, yet do not engage in wars of conquest and enslavement. Why not? First, because these countries are not haunted by the master race megalomania. Second, because these people do not possess the industrial resources to wage modern warfare.

A non-democratic Germany will therefore represent no threat to world peace and freedom, provided the Germans will voluntarily abandon the collective mania of the *Herrenvolk* complex, and, even more important, if the Germans will not have resources with which to make war.

Whether the Germans will give up the master race mania depends solely on their own volition.

*Whether the Germans will be left again, as in 1918, in possession of the industrial resources to wage total war, will depend on the United Nations.*