

## FACING THE GERMAN PEOPLE

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WE still do not know why we fight wars. We are told that they arise from Capitalism, Imperialism, Nationalism, Caesarism, Fascism, Prussianism, Hitlerism, Militarism; that economic and social systems, over-population and national frustration cause war. There is truth in that. However the question, why we do not work patiently and tenaciously to exhaust all possibilities of peaceful solution, is as yet unanswered. Under the impact of the unspeakable and unpardonable crimes committed by the Hitlerite régime, many are inclined to see the origin of the present war simply in the evil men who rule Germany or, more generally, in the German character. Even if, forgetting Italy's attack on Ethiopia and Japan's aggression against China and the U.S.A., we accepted this sweeping statement, we should still have to ask ourselves: Which were the forces that brought about all the battles for thousands of years, before people knew anything about Prussia and Germany and their certainly blood-stained history? For example, over four centuries the cruel colonial wars were fought without Prussia's or Germany's participation, save for one or two exceptions after 1900. The colors of a German monarch or state did not fly in one of the numerous wars on the American continent.

I doubt whether, in spite of all economic, sociological and psychological research, and libraries full of books, we know much more about the origin of wars than the ancient Hebrew writer, who tells us in *Genesis* the simple story of the aggressor Cain and the peace-loving Abel. They represented two economic systems, if we want to say so; the tiller of the ground, and the keeper of the sheep. There were two types of worship, or "ideologies". Cain disliked Abel's way of life, considered it detrimental to him. He finally was very wroth and his countenance fell. Negotiations broke down, and Cain killed Abel. I am very far from being a "Fundamentalist," but as far as I can see, even the latest theories of "frustration" as the cause of war do not offer more enlightenment than this old story from before the dawn of history. In that saga, materialists and spiritualists may find their outlook confirmed. But we do not know why Cain acted as he did, instead of seeking and accepting a peaceful understanding. Up to this day, Cain still slays his brother Abel

throughout mankind. Still "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground."

For the sake of argument let us accept as justified, as I personally do not, all the economic complaints of the ruling groups in Germany, Italy and Japan. What do they prove? Nothing else than that they started to gamble with all material, intellectual and spiritual resources of their nations, risked literally everything in order to gain some doubtful economic advantage. Where is a reasonable proportion between the immense values at stake and the uncertainty of gain even in case of victory? And all this occurs under the leadership of the same generation which experienced the problems of victory and defeat in and after the First World War. Why do nations still fight for economic goals, when history, at least since 1918, proves that even the victors share the fate of the defeated—to be partners in a post-war world of increased economic and social insecurity? It may be my fault, but I do not see that economy answers the question "Why wars?"

Many Germans—and not Germans alone—say that the *Treaty of Versailles* was economically unbearable for Germany. Certainly all Germans have been very critical of the Treaty, but they were deeply divided as to the methods for revising it. All living under the same *Treaty of Versailles*, Germans of the same social groups, under exactly the same economic conditions, of the same education and even of the same political or religious affiliation, came to opposite decision. "Abels" wanted patient attempts to change the Treaty gradually, in order to avoid an armed conflict. "Cains" demanded rash and dramatic action, whatever the immediate consequences. It seems to me still an unsolved riddle, why we have this intellectual and moral cleavage in the human mind. We must accept it as a fact, and not only for one nation or one period of history.

Cain Hitler tries to convince the world that all Germans are of his kind, and he is very successful in his propaganda. A growing number of writers and speakers of the United Nations tell us that not only under Hitler but for centuries all, or most, Germans have been militaristic, supporting enthusiastically aggressive policies of their governments, and incidentally yearning for dictators. Leaving out former periods, I feel that 80 years of parliamentary history show a record very different from that in the general anti-German propaganda. In the sixties of the nineteenth century Prime Minister von Bismarck had to break the Prussian constitution, because an overwhelming

majority of the diet refused to vote for his plans of increased armament, which prepared his wars against Austria-Hungary and France. It is true that after the victorious wars of 1866 and 1870 important sections of the *bourgeoisie* became extremely nationalistic and militaristic. But large groups of Liberals, the Roman Catholics and the rapidly growing Social Democratic Labor Party continued their opposition. Bismarck tried to crush the Roman Catholics and the Social Democrats by exceptional laws, and was defeated by both of them. Term after term, one third of the voters elected Social Democrats for the Reichstag against Emperor Wilhelm's imperialistic policy. Some smaller left wing liberal groups also continued their opposition. In the Roman Catholic *Centrum* Party there was a latent reluctance to go too far in supporting the militaristic and colonial policy. During the first world war Social-Democrats, Roman Catholics and Liberals finally formed a bloc for a Peace of Understanding, and forced decisive democratic reforms on the Emperor, even before the revolution in 1918. This does not suggest that all Germans submitted easily to regimentation.

The German democratic republic was shortlived. So were many attempts in history to master military defeat and desperate economic situations by democratic methods. Vichy is only the latest lesson in this experience. French history from 1789 to 1940 was full of the struggle for democracy, and 1940 was by no means the first breakdown of democracy in France, a country supposedly far superior in political wisdom to Germany. Incidentally, France's democracy never introduced franchise for women, as the German republic did.

Hitler has sometimes tried to justify his dictatorship with the statement that before 1933 the Reich was ruled by 47 political parties. This is, of course, a ridiculous exaggeration. There were, however, never fewer than a dozen parties in the Reichstag. Seven or eight of them were of importance. In the republic one party alone was never strong enough to form a government. In the federal cabinets, of which I was a member, Social Democrats, Democrats, the Roman Catholic *Centrum*, right wing Liberals (Stresemann) and one nationalist monarchist tried to cooperate. It is difficult indeed to come to decisions in such a cabinet. At the same time there was a bewildering variety in the state governments of the German nation, which supposedly is inclined to like uniform political patterns. Prussia had a moderate leftist government, Bavaria had an extremely rightist cabinet, Saxony and Thuringia had extreme leftist governments

(even with Communist cabinet ministers), and so on through 20 states: all types of government from right to left. The political partisans fought each other bitterly not only in parliaments, public meetings and newspapers, but literally in the streets. Inside all parties there were vehement clashes and frequent splits and partitions, which increased the number of parties. I was elected for eight successive terms to the Reichstag, but I do not remember that I ever reported to my constituents without having to face severe criticism by a minority, sometimes by a majority of my political followers, Chancellor Stresemann often told me how he suffered under unfair attacks in his own party. He and the first Reichspräsident of the Republik, Friedrich Ebert, and many statesmen died prematurely, hunted down by the attacks of a slandering opposition.

In view of these facts, is there really any reason for insisting, that Germans like regimentation and want to follow their leaders blindly? From 30 years political experience in Germany I come to a different conclusion. Already under the Emperor, and even more in the republic, the Germans in all strata of society have shown a remarkable lack of political discipline, and produced an abundance of political doctrinaires. It has been most difficult to govern with this multitude of quarrelling, theorizing parties. Incidentally, the struggle between labor and capital was in no country fiercer than in Germany. It is sometimes forgotten that Germany is not only the land of Hitlerism, but also the fatherland of Karl Marx. Apparently the fight between Hitler and Marx is not yet decided. Up to this day Hitler has no mass following among the industrial workers. For seven years now he has not even dared to permit the factory-workers to elect their shop councils, although the law requesting it is still in existence. If it were so easy to regiment the Germans, Hitler would not need prisons and concentration camps with hundreds of thousands of political rebels as inmates, and his hangman Himmler would not have organized an élite guard of a million young men for a potential civil war. Himmler himself in an official pamphlet has said: "I know that there are millions in Germany who feel sick at their stomachs every time they see the black uniform." Nobody knows how far fear and force extend in present-day Germany, and where the national unity really begins. We do not even know with certainty how deeply or how superficially the ten years of Nazi drill have indoctrinated the German youth. The best observers of our underground movement inside Germany were of the opinion that the adolescents are much more

critical of the system than the Nazis who fought against the Weimar Republic for Hitler's rise into power. The youngest generation accepts Hitler's system as a fact, and expects much more from it than Hitler's government can give. The Weimar Republic is for those young people only a page out of the history book. They may believe in Hitler's genius, although this is by no means generally true, but the situation under the Nazi régime, especially the corruption of most local Nazi leaders, furnishes material for much criticism. These youngest Nazis may be demoralized, measured by Christian standards. They may be cynics and nihilists, but it is doubtful whether their belief in Nazism is very strong. With the rapidly growing disillusionment as a consequence of the fourth year of war, many of these young Germans may be open to new ideas, which have so far been withheld from them.

Knowledge of the psychological situation in Germany is most important for the political warfare and for the approach to the Germans after the defeat of their armies and the destruction of the Hitler system. I have never met a German with a political mind in America who was not amazed to find how little the speeches of the statesmen of the United Nations are directed towards the aim to weaken Hitler inside Germany by encouraging his opponents, and by playing on the deep-rooted passion of most Germans to distrust their governments. The only exception is that of Stalin and his aides. Never has a Russian statesman addressed the Germans as "Huns." Never has a Russian pictured the Germans as the only aggressor nation in the last 80 years. The Russians speak of "that cannibal Hitler", of "the German gangster government," or "the Hitlerite state." They fight "Hitler's army," and hate "the Nazis." In his speech of November 7th, 1942, Stalin himself went so far as to call the demand to destroy Germany and her army "illiterate". Russia, he declared, wants only to destroy Hitler's army and Hitler's state. This is the language of an experienced propagandist, of an expert in engineering a revolution. Many in America and in Great Britain want a revolution against Hitler, but very few people in these free countries do anything to prepare this revolution psychologically by telling the foes of Hitler (which means our allies inside Germany) whether and how the victors are going to cooperate with them after Hitler's overthrow. Why should our friends risk their necks, if victorious revolution would mean only bringing about an armistice and peace of revenge against the totality of the German nation?

In modern history a nation has never been able to throw off a strong dictatorship before the armies of the ruler were decisively defeated on battlefields. This is by no means a particularly German experience, in the allegedly obedient character of the Germans. It was true for France under Napoleon I., in 1814 and 1815, and under Napoleon III., in 1870. It was true for Russia under Nicholas in 1917, exactly as it was true for the Germany of Wilhelm and the Austria-Hungary of Emperor Karl in 1918. Why expect from the Germans what no other nation could achieve? A revolution will not be possible in Italy or Germany or any other occupied country in Europe, unless the armies of Mussolini and Hitler are in a state of disintegration.

In the meantime we have to fortify the enemies of Hitler inside Germany. Shortwave broadcasting is one of the methods to do it. I doubt whether the British and American broadcasts are very successful, as far as they go beyond the announcement of important news. The opinion of anonymous commentators or German refugees will not tempt people inside Germany to risk long prison terms or execution by listening to foreign stations. What we need soon, and what many Germans expect, as I know, is a political offensive by responsible leaders of the United Nations. I remember well from inside Germany how Woodrow Wilson's insistent distinction between "the German people" and "the masters of Germany" in 1917 and 1918 increased the latent tension between the war-weary masses and the obsessed war-lords. Some of my American friends warn me that the Germans, recalling their disappointment with Wilson, would have no confidence in a declaration of leading men on our side. If this were true, would the Germans trust more to speeches of anonymous or irresponsible broadcasters? Whatever hard feeling about Wilson's 14 points may still exist, the fact remains that most Germans have lost their faith in victory, and want to see some light on the question as to what they have to expect after the coming defeat. They know their fate will be hard. They hope that the leading Germans responsible for this war will be liquidated. But they also want to see outlines of Germany's fate after Hitler. Only leading personalities in the United Nations can convince the Germans that there will be a clear distinction between the "German people" and the "masters of Germany." Roosevelt, Stalin, Churchill, Hull, Eden, Attlee, Bevin, Willkie and others should address the Germans who have broken with the Nazi party or never belonged to it. The Germans, many of them politically better educated than some people realize, know

very well that there can be no complete unity in a coalition of thirty nations. But they also assume that a fighting coalition must have something in common if it brings such enormous sacrifices.

To address Germany during this advanced stage of the war means also to express some ideas about post-war Germany and the social and political forces with which the United Nations intend to cooperate. Will the United Nations really give East Prussia and Silesia to Poland as compensation for territories which Russia claims from the Poles? In this case they should know that they will not find one political group in Germany which would accept voluntarily such a plan. It would make the Germans irremediable foes of the Poles. There also is no hope of convincing Germans that the minority problems could be solved by enforced mass evacuation, and by sending millions of people deeply rooted in the soil to other territories. Would it not mean the continuing of Hitler's barbarous population policy by somewhat more civilized methods? Finally, there never has been and never will be a movement inside Germany which could be used for the dismemberment of Germany, as long as the European continent is a chess-board of many sovereign states. It might be different, if Europe should become a Federation or a group of Federations, or if we could find some other system of European coordination and cooperation which would include restriction of national sovereignty for all. In a system of fixing economic and political units beyond national border-lines, the division of Germany into several parts might be considered possible and even useful.

It may well be that in 1944 or 1945 the victors will be able to enforce any kind of peace on Germany, including her dismemberment in a Europe where all other countries are permitted national unity and national sovereignty; but no group in Germany will back such an order; it would be a scheme imposed by conquerors, and supported by some German Quislings. It would be a policy against all experience of history.

The old German party system is destroyed for ever. Most Germans will not regret it. The confusion inside the old parties has facilitated Nazi propaganda against them. For many years the border lines between the parties had become artificial and their programs shaky. There were, for instance, leaders of the Roman Catholic *Centrum* Party who were closer to the Social Democratic Labor Party than to many members of their own party. On the other hand there were Social Democrats who were

more deeply separated from the left wing in their own party than from moderate conservatives with ideas of a Christian Social Order. In all parties from the left to the right there were people who easily could have cooperated together in one positive progressive party, based on the principles of democracy with strong social tendencies. This of course does not hold true for the National Socialists and the Communists, because both of them wanted to establish their own armed dictatorships. Incidentally, the division between "Free" and "Christian" Trade Unions and Cooperatives had become completely obsolete. It seems unthinkable that the German workers want once more a division in their organizations along religious lines.

We may expect that the following political ideas in large groups will survive the German catastrophe: Social Democrats with the character of a People's Party and not of a Class Party; Christian Conservatives, which may or may not be divided into a Roman Catholic and a Lutheran group; Communists and perhaps a group of Liberals with strong national tendencies. The Communists would have importance only in case of an overwhelming Russian victory and a peace treaty in Europe which would be more influenced by Russia than by the Anglo-Saxon powers. In my opinion this danger is not as large as many people in America assume. Russia's military resistance is neither surprising nor miraculous. She was the only country which had prepared for war militarily and industrially for 20 years. Even Germany had a preparation only since 1933. Russia is fighting only on one front, and only on land. Germany has several fronts on land and on sea, and has to police nearly the whole of Europe including her vassals. Even together with all her satellites Germany has far less than Russia's man-power. What is there astonishing in the fact that Russia is able to stop Germany's aggression somewhere deep in Russian territory, and even to counter-attack, successfully? But it would be amazing indeed, if the Russians were able to throw the Germans back into Germany proper, and succeeded in a complete military victory, before Anglo-Saxon air-power and the invasion of the continent in the rear will give the death blow to Hitler Germany. Incidentally the invasion of the continent by the Anglo-Saxons will be a real hope to all foes of Hitlerism in Europe and a signal for uprising against the Nazis. The Russian victories will not produce repercussions, because the fear of Bolshevism is not only Goebbels's invention. It is a real thing in all countries on the continent. I feel it is useless to conceal that it is very different



to have Bolshevism on your doorstep from talking about it at five thousand miles distance.

If the Germans are granted some self-determination for the reconstruction of their political life after Hitler's overthrow, it will be possible to come to a three or even two party system in a Germany of a moderate democracy with a constitution which protects the government from being the plaything of unfair opposition. The American presidential system with some modifications may be much better fitted for Germany than Parliamentarism after the French pattern, which had more to do with France's sudden collapse than Fifth Columnists and other scapegoats presented by the French radicals. Already now the statesmanship of the United Nations should encourage a future scheme in Germany along these outlines. It should be understood that no German who held a leading position in the Nazi party, even if he was only of local importance, should have any chance to influence post-war opinion in Germany. On the other hand, one should not yield to the fashion now popular in certain circles to label everyone as "Fascist" who is sceptical of Marx or Socialism and cautious about democratic radicalism. This is the same unfair classification as branding every progressive social reformer as "Communist."

In all probability Germany's social structure after the war will present to us a majority of manual and white collar workers, a rather strong minority of impoverished urban middle-class people and farmers, and a small but economically still powerful section of industrialists, merchants and bankers. It is more probable than not that the victorious Anglo-Saxon powers will have earlier and easier relations with that small privileged minority than with the masses of the German nation. This is one more reason why one should not be carried away by emotions for a wholesale revenge against the Germans. It is difficult to imagine that the managers of the big industrial and financial corporations in America and in Great Britain intend to fusillade their colleagues in Germany. Hitler's financial wizard Dr. Schacht, still admired by American bankers and industrialists, has certainly more chance of being invited by them for a reconstruction visit to Manhattan than of death by a firing squad of the American army of occupation in Germany.

Whatever types of control the victorious United Nations want to impose on Germany, they will need the collaboration of forces inside Germany, able to respond to democratic appeals and to help in Germany's economic, political and cultural recon-

struction. That should exclude the appointment of German Quislings, who would remain in an isolation of distrust and hate. Only Germans who are able to gain the confidence of the German masses and at the same time have an honest desire to cooperate democratically with the victors will be of use. What are the plans in Washington and in London? Do the victors want to cooperate with the common man in Germany, with its unions, its cooperatives, its associations of farmers and business men, its coming democratic mass parties, or do the victors plan a superstructure of international monopolies backed by high finance in America and England? Will we recognize the fact that a vast majority of the people from Spain to Poland and from Norway to Sicily are in some respect or another anti-capitalistic and want less exploitation and more economic democracy and social security? Or do we intend to go back to the *status quo* of society in 1939, although the war has shaken the fundamentals of the old social order and in wide sections has destroyed it completely? More Germans and other Europeans ask these questions than the broadcasting commentators and their governments realize. It is not enough to harp on the theme of overthrowing Mussolini and Hitler, if we are never given the slightest hint as to which economic, social and political plans the Allies have for the Europeans.

I have resisted the temptation to deal with the crimes of Hitlerism inside and outside Germany. They are worse than any report can picture them. The punishment of the war criminals can be fast and thorough after the war. The problem, however, only begins after those swift trials and their executions have come to an end. There is a nation of 75 million Germans in the centre of Europe, confused and corrupted now, but with undeniable intelligence and skill, and great potentialities for the rebuilding of the world. We have to defeat their military machine and to crush their present political system completely and for ever. At the same time we should be prepared to meet the German people who will be our partners in the post-war reconstruction. Permanent domination of Europe by the Germans will prove impossible. It will be equally impossible to reconstruct Europe without the cooperation of a purified, reeducated and reorganized Germany.