

A P E N G U I N S P E C I A L

C. E. M. JOAD

# Why War?

**"My case is that war is not something that is inevitable, but is the result of certain man-made circumstances; that man can abolish them, as he abolished the circumstances in which the plague flourished."**

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Abdul Majid Khan  
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**WHY WAR?**  
by C. E. M. JOAD

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# WHY WAR?

by

**C. E. M. JOAD**

AUTHOR OF

*Guide to Philosophy*

*Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*

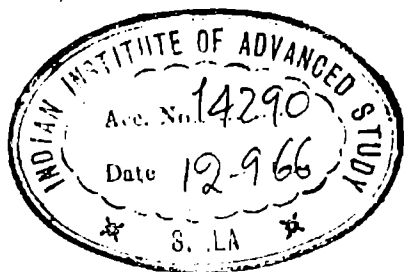
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# WHY WAR?

## CHAPTER I

### THE CRISIS REHASHED

#### INTRODUCTORY

##### *The Author's Background.*

FOR most of my life I have been a Socialist; my opinions and convictions are those of a man of the Left. When at the end of last September we felt the breath of war, most of those who share my political views, whose hopes are mine, who, as individuals acknowledge the same values, and as reformers desire the same changes in society as I do, and with whom, therefore, I am in the habit of discussing public affairs—in a word, the great majority of my friends and acquaintances, were urgent that we should “take a firm stand” with France and Russia against “Fascist aggression”. We were to intimate to Hitler in plain language that, if he persisted in his designs for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, we would fight him.

They did not believe that this “stand” would in fact result in war, for faced by a combination of England, France, Russia, and Czechoslovakia, with only Italy as a doubtful ally, Hitler must, they thought, inevitably withdraw. His bluff would be called, his prestige dimmed, his power shaken; but should he, in spite of these considerations, nevertheless persist, then we were to fight.

I found myself unable to agree with this reasoning, or, subscribe to the course of policy which it recommended. I am by tradition and conviction a pacifist.

The tradition began with the last war which I thought ought never to have been fought and which, after years of untold suffering, left the world worse than it found it. For the conviction I hope to give grounds in the pages that follow. Tradition and conviction form the background from which our opinions spring; they shape the mould—a mould which grows more rigid, as we grow older—within the confines of which the views which we are asked to accept must accommodate themselves.

Let me, then, starting from this background of pacifist tradition and conviction, baldly state the reasons which seemed to me to tell decisively against the course of action which my friends were urging upon the country. The reasons are not, you may think, very convincing. I agree that they are not. They belong to the category of immediate reaction rather than to that of mature reflection. But I let them stand partly because they *were* my reactions, partly because, though later consideration might and did modify some of the details, it did not alter the main outlines of the picture which they present. Nevertheless, I would have the reader regard them as being in the nature of a rehearsal of the play of argument which is to follow, rather than the play itself.

#### REFLECTIONS ON THE CRISIS

##### (1) *The Wishes of the Sudetens.*

(a) *General Considerations.* I have never been able to see why the desire of part of a nation to secede from that nation and to become part of another nation should be regarded as necessarily sinful. I cannot even see why it should be always and necessarily opposed. National frontiers are not fixed for all time, nor do they always follow the lines of racial and cultural division.



In the case of Czechoslovakia they were of recent origin and notoriously violated racial and cultural divisions.

(b) *Particular Considerations.* Here were Germans living just across the German border in a non-German State under a non-German government, and the great majority of them wished, it appeared, to become part of Germany. Well, why not? No doubt it may seem a strange thing that anyone should wish to belong to Hitler's Third Reich, but Germans *are* strange, and it *was* their wish. With what right, then, did we propose to prevent its fulfilment?

Let us for a moment imagine an analogous case. Before the Union between England and Scotland, a colony of Englishmen is, we will suppose, living just across the Scottish border and is subject to the rule of a Scottish government with which its members are profoundly discontented. They, accordingly, demand to be incorporated in English territory, in order that they may become part of the English nation and subject to English rule. Should we regard this desire as wicked, or even as unreasonable? Should we not rather strain every nerve to unite our fellow countrymen with ourselves, and should we not passionately resent interference on the part of some continental nation which showed signs of trying to prevent our union? What business is it, we should ask, of theirs?

## (2) *The Versailles Treaty and its Aftermath.*

The inclusion of the Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia was one of the changes effected by the Versailles Treaty. This Treaty my friends of the Left have always denounced, and in my opinion rightly denounced, as setting the seal upon an unjust peace, a peace of humiliation and revenge, imposed by conquerors on a prostrate foe. Among its many unjust provisions were the lopping off of outlying parts of the German Reich

which were artificially grafted on to the bodies of other nations, and the dismemberment of Austria, to which country the territory of the Sudeten Germans had hitherto belonged.

The inclusion of the Sudeten Germans in the Czechoslovak State was dictated by no abstract principle of justice, was demanded by no natural tie of blood or sentiment, responded to no call of common race. It was an arbitrary act, by which the victors in the war sought to build up an artificial State for the restraint of the beaten foe.

The conduct of the Czechs in this matter was not, it seemed, itself above reproach. They had shown themselves anxious to establish a strong strategic frontier against Germany. In the drawing up of this frontier the mountains of Bohemia played an important part, forming, as it were, a natural barrier. This barrier, the Czechs insisted, must be on their side of the frontier, and since some three million Germans lived south of the barrier, the three million Germans must be on their side of the frontier too. They must, therefore, be included in the Czech State. The customary sentimental nationalism which crystallizes round such phrases as "The Mistress of the Seas", "The Fatherland", and "La France", seems to have played its part and to have issued in a demand for "the traditional lands of the Bohemian Crown". At any rate the Czechs refused to be satisfied with the creation of a racially homogeneous State and, incorporating alien elements within their nation, planted the seeds of the devil's crop which Europe harvested in the autumn of 1938.

*Liberal and Labour Denunciation of the Formation of the Czechoslovak State.* To the injustice of this arrangement Liberal and Labour leaders were by no means indifferent at the time. Nor did they allow it to pass without protest.

On April 26th, 1919, the Permanent Commission of

the Labour and Socialist International passed the following resolution: "The Conference refuses to recognize any claims of alien nations to sovereignty over such homogeneous German districts as form a geographical unit with German-speaking districts."

In an official manifesto issued in 1920 under the title *Labour and the Peace Treaty*, the Labour Party complained that "the German districts of Czechoslovakia (by arrangements to which Germany is compelled to agree beforehand) are refused the right of self-determination", and demanded that "permission to the predominantly German areas of Czechoslovakia to determine their political future should be granted".

The Right Hon. Arthur Henderson wrote in a pamphlet entitled *The Peace Terms*: "Millions of Germans are placed under Czechoslovak, Polish and Italian rule. This," he added with his customary foresight, "will create irredentist populations as considerable as those which provoked the Serbian agitation before the war." Nor was the Labour Party alone in denouncing these arrangements. Lord Balfour, Lord Milner and the United States Secretary of State also protested. To put the point bluntly, it was a gross injustice to have included Germans in a predominantly Slav State, and decent men said so at the time. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that what was unjust in 1920 was still unjust in 1938.

*From 1918 to 1938.* The State of Czechoslovakia, once established, lived on terms of uneasy hostility with its neighbours. At the time when Germany was being denied entry into the League, Czechoslovakia formed with France a system of alliances designed to perpetuate the helplessness of that unhappy country by putting her into an international strait-jacket. These alliances were being strengthened at the very moment when, in 1925, Germany signed the Locarno Treaty and was received once more into the family of nations.

In a book by Dr. Krofta<sup>1</sup> one may read of the measures which Czechoslovakia took in 1930 to prevent the *Anschluss* between Germany and Austria.

I mention these matters not because I do not detest the brutal dictation by means of which Germany presented her demands, and hate the violence and bullying with which she carried them into effect; not because I do not feel a profound admiration for the dignified demeanour of the Czechs in adversity; not because I am not warmly sympathetic with their humiliation and do not sorrow for their loss; not even because I am not conscious, as are many of my fellow countrymen, of a sense of shame that, after having encouraged them with implied promises of support to adopt a particular attitude, we should have left them without support to suffer the consequences which the adoption of that attitude entailed—I mention these things because one's hatred of Nazi methods, one's admiration of the Czechs, one's sympathy, one's sorrow and one's shame should not, in my judgment, be allowed to blind one to the facts that the Sudeten Germans ought never to have been incorporated in Czechoslovakia, that the Czech Government was in large part responsible for their incorporation, that, having incorporated them, it denied them their fair share in the administration of the country, that it followed for 15 years a policy designed to ensure that a great country which had been "downed" should be kept down, and that during the years that succeeded the war its attitude was one of the factors militating against the co-operation of the Allied Powers with Republican Germany, and was one of the factors, therefore, in bringing Europe to her present pass.

And reflecting upon all these things, I could not refrain from asking myself why my friends should be

<sup>1</sup> *A Short History of Czechoslovakia.*

prepared to fight in defence of an arbitrary settlement which they had been the first to denounce as unjust, and to perpetuate an arrangement which they had from the first foreseen to be incompatible with the peaceful settlement of Europe.

To sum up. The Czechoslovakian affair was a bad business, but we need not make it worse than it was by suggesting (*a*) that Czechoslovakia was an ancient and well-established country of which the Sudeten German territory formed an integral part; (*b*) that we had not, many of us, been urging for years past that this territory should be transferred to Germany; (*c*) that we had given a definite promise to defend Czechoslovakia, if it were attacked on account of its retention of this territory, and (*d*) that we were guilty of base and dishonourable conduct because we did not in fact go to war on Czechoslovakia's behalf. Had there been a war, Czechoslovakia would have been the victim of disasters to which it would have been impossible to assign bounds. She would have become the cockpit of Europe.

The whole affair was, I repeat, a bad business, but it would have been worse but for Mr. Chamberlain's courageous intervention, and it would have been worse, if there had been war.

### (3) *State Sovereignty is Infringed. Well, Why Not?*

I add one further consideration which may have more weight with me than with my readers. I am by conviction an internationalist, who believes that it is only under some form of international government, or, it may be, of federal government, that the peace of the world can be ultimately assured. Such a form of government would involve the supersession of the absolute sovereignties of individual States. It would mean that each nation had ceased to be both judge

and jury in its own cause, and had subordinated itself, as private individuals subordinate themselves, to the jurisdiction of some overriding authority. Inevitably the National States object; it is, indeed, upon the rock of their objection, of their obstinate refusal to forego one jot of their sovereign authority or to surrender one tittle of their private interests to the common interests of mankind, that the present League has come to shipwreck.

Imbued with this conviction, I naturally regard the pretensions of sovereign National States as the greatest obstacle to the establishment of international government and to the assured peace of the world. I shall have more to say on this subject later in the book.<sup>1</sup> For the present, I confine myself to a single point. The existence of sovereign States in the world is, I say, a menace to peace, and a durable world settlement will entail the supersession of their absolute sovereignties. Now one of the features in the Czechoslovakian affair which was considered to be most shocking was the interference by one State in the affairs of another. This was condemned because it was regarded as an infringement of national sovereignty. Another shocking feature was the withdrawal of certain areas from the territories under Czechoslovak authority and their transfer to another government. This was considered to be a violation of national integrity. How, it was asked, could the Czechoslovak State, with its authority diminished, its sovereignty infringed, and its integrity violated, how could it hold up its head in the comity of nations? National sovereignty was, I agree, infringed, national integrity was admittedly violated, and, as an internationalist, I could not but exclaim "a good job, too." Indeed, I viewed this particular aspect of the affair with the greatest equanimity. Who was I to hold up my hands in horror because the sovereignty of a

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. VII, pp. 135-139

national State was called in question? The fewer the sovereign States and the more their sovereignties are infringed, the better I am pleased. Nor can I see with what logic those who look forward to world government as the ultimate guarantee of peace deplore the humiliation of one of the sovereign States whose existence they admit to constitute the most serious obstacle to world government.

The brutality with which Czechoslovakian sovereignty was violated was a totally hateful thing and I hated it; the behaviour of the Czechoslovakian people during the crisis was admirable and I admired it; their suffering and humiliation were deplorable and I deplored them. But this particular consideration which provoked my friends to a passion of outraged indignation, *the authority of a sovereign State had actually been infringed*, left my withers completely unwrung.

These, then, are some of the reasons which, during the crisis of last September, seemed to me to tell strongly against forcible intervention on the part of this country to prevent Germany from absorbing the Sudeten German territory of Czechoslovakia. Now I am bound to confess that none of these considerations seemed to have much weight with my friends of the Left.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CASE FOR THE LEFT

THERE WAS SMALL DANGER OF WAR THEN: THERE IS  
A MORAL CERTAINTY OF WAR NOW

#### *The Left's Case.*

NONE of the reasons given in the last chapter for abstaining from war on behalf of Czechoslovakia had "weight with my friends of the Left". Why had they not? Because they viewed the Czechoslovakian affair within the context of a larger whole. It was, for them, only a move in a planned policy of German aggression which aimed at nothing less than the domination of Europe. When the domination of Europe was complete, Germany would turn her attention to Russia or to the British Empire. Those of my friends who are Communists were concerned for Russia; those of them who are patriots, for the British Empire. Many were concerned for both. All accordingly took the view that German aggression must be stopped, and the sooner, the better. There would never, they maintained, be a better opportunity than that afforded by the Czechoslovakian affair. Therefore, they concluded, we must call a halt to Fascist aggression now. If "calling a halt to Fascist aggression" means war, then we must go to war. The case is as familiar as it is formidable. Much of this book will be devoted to answering it. Let me, however, first do it the justice which it deserves by stating it with such force as my pen commands, and in such detail as my space affords.



*That a Dictatorship Must Justify Itself by Results.*

Fascism, it is argued, is incurably aggressive. The reasons for this view are partly those upon which Communists lay stress; in part they are derived from an analysis of the psychology of dictatorship. A brief exposition is here necessary since the doctrine of the inevitability of future war owes much of its support to this analysis.

It is urged with much force that a dictatorship, being a non-democratic form of government, comes into existence not by a mandate of the popular will, but through a seizure of power. It follows that the power of a dictatorship, not being based upon the votes of a consenting populace, is by its very nature unconstitutional. Even when his rule is supported by the popular will, the dictator can never, because of the censorship which he imposes, feel sure that the people are behind him, and in practice always suspects the existence of underground opposition. This persistent suspicion drives the dictatorship to adopt violent and coercive measures against its opponents, real or imaginary, which, inspiring hatred in those who suffer, fear in those who expect to suffer from them, provoke further coercion on the part of those who conceive themselves to be the objects of hatred. Meanwhile the dictatorship, conscious that it is an object of suspicion and distrust to the outside world, and uneasy, as such a government must always be, in the knowledge that it may not carry with it the support of the people, is driven to justify its régime by results. It announces that it is averting a danger, preserving the State, conquering an empire, or acting as a bulwark against the forces of barbarism (represented at need and according to choice as embodied in Communism or Fascism, or in whatever system the dictator dislikes), which threaten to disrupt civilization.

Now, whether these results are in fact achieved, or whether, if they are, they are worth the price which is being paid for them, is always an open question. Being open, it is a question which men may feel tempted to discuss. Yet, because "results" are in a quite special sense the justification of the dictatorship, it is precisely this discussion which it cannot afford to permit. If it must justify by results, it cannot allow its results to be criticized.

### *The Infallibility of the Dictator.*

From these considerations the familiar phenomena of dictatorship derive. There is the dogma of infallibility; whatever the State does is good, because the State does it.<sup>1</sup> Whereas in a democracy it is recognized that a policy, adopted with the best intentions and disinterestedly judged to be in the then existing circumstances the best in the field, is nevertheless open from the first to certain objections, and may quite frequently turn out badly in the result; and whereas these facts are considered to constitute a legitimate ground for criticism, which may be equally disinterested, of the policy pursued, to express doubt of a dictator's policy is to threaten the safety of the State. Thus criticism is equated with disaffection, disagreement with treason; while the right of citizens freely to express their views with regard to the policy of the government that professes to represent them, and the laws which they are required to obey, is suppressed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "National Socialism cannot be judged right in this and wrong in that respect. As we, the National Socialists, are convinced that we are right, we cannot tolerate any other in our neighbourhood who claims also to be right." Dr. Goebbels in a speech delivered March, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> "We deny the right to criticize the Government to those who have no share in the responsibility and the burden of work." Dr. Goebbels in a speech delivered March, 1934.

*The Parade of Unity.*

There is the insistence upon unity. Men who think and behave alike are, it is obvious, easier to govern than individuals who think for themselves; it is, for example, easier to govern sheep or rabbits than men. The need for unity generates a tendency to war, for war is the most effective method of inducing uniformity of feeling, of ironing out differences and silencing criticism. Hence dictators, even when they dare not go to war, will keep the possibility of war ever before the people, and by making them a prey to the emotions of fear, suspicion and hatred, produce a condition of inflamed aggressiveness and feverish loyalty.

Hence the demonstrations, the parades, the public shows, for which dictatorships are notorious; hence, too, the deliberate inculcation of patriotism, the insistence upon discipline, the frequent appeals to loyalty; and hence, finally, the belligerent foreign policies, the sabre-rattling speeches, the demands for expansion, the insistence upon historic rights, the cries for vengeance, the consciousness of mission. All these are directed to producing an atmosphere of feverish excitement as a substitute for a genuine and steady public spirit. And sooner or later the stunts, the threats, the sabre-rattlings, will, it is claimed, culminate in war.

*The "War with the Dictatorship" is Inevitable.*

For war produces precisely the atmosphere upon which dictatorships thrive, an atmosphere in which men become the preys of emotion and the dupes of propaganda, while fear prompts them to surrender their liberties into the keeping of their self-chosen protectors. Hence dictatorship prepares for war, glorifies war, preaches war, and in the end, whether it wants to or

no, is driven to war. "Fascism," writes Signor Mussolini in a celebrated article, "believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace". To realize that such an avowal forms an integral part of the ideology of dictatorship, is to realize also the extreme difficulty of living at peace with the dictator countries. In a word, dictatorships must provide their people with bread or circuses, and when the bread is scanty, the circuses must be abundant; or to translate into modern terms, when the butter is meagre, the guns must be many.

The conclusion of the analysis is that no limit can be assigned to Fascist aggression. Driven by an inner psychological need, the Fascist dictators will stir up trouble wherever opportunity offers. Abyssinia, Spain and Czechoslovakia are, thus, but the preludes to the Ukraine and Colonies. It follows that there can be no peace under Fascism and no permanent peace with Fascism. We are faced, then, with making a stand sooner or later against Fascist aggression. If things must come to a "show down", the sooner the better, since with every fresh aggression the Fascist powers grow stronger and more confident, and the democratic powers weaker and more confused. As a friend put it to me recently in conversation, the further the British Lion's tail recedes between its legs, the easier it is to twist.

### *Reasons for Making our Stand Now.*

¶ If there is war now—I am still, remember, following the argument on which my friends based their views that we should "stand firm" last September—we shall have Russia, France and Czechoslovakia to help us, with a good chance of the United States coming in later. Consequently if we "stand firm" now, there is a reasonable chance that we shall not have to fight at all. For faced by such a combination, Hitler will withdraw, and, having once called the dictator's bluff, we shall have rid the

world of the nightmare of fear that has for so long oppressed it. If, on the other hand, we do not make a stand now Hitler will overrun Czechoslovakia; Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugo-Slavia and probably Rumania will enter his orbit, and Russia will retire into isolation. One day Hitler, driven by the inexorable logic of the dictator's position, will make a further aggressive move, a move against the British Empire itself. Then this country will fight, whether pacifists like it or not; but it will fight, shorn of honour and prestige, stripped of every vestige of moral authority, bereft of allies (with the possible exception of the French) having alienated the sympathy of the world by its cowardly vacillation, having undermined the edifice of collective security, and in the course of many years of truckling to the dictators having jettisoned one by one all the allies who might to-day be found at its side, who will have scurried to make their terms with Hitler while the "going was good".

For if we betray Czechoslovakia, what small country, it is asked, will place trust in Britain's word or rely upon Britain's assistance in the future? "My country," Mr. Hambro, President of the Norwegian Parliament, is reported to have said, "is so small that Mr. Chamberlain won't even go to the expense of an aeroplane to Berlin to save us."

The position which I have outlined is admirably summed up in the following passage by Miss Sheila Grant Duff, British correspondent from 1936-1938 in Prague, and author of that admirable book *Europe and the Czechs*:

"After the Munich Agreement, Germany faces the world stronger by over 4 million citizens, fortifications in which more than £100 million had been invested, important chemical works in Aussig, where the two most dangerous poison gases of the world are manufactured. She contains within her frontiers important mineral deposits vital to her war industries. She can control at will the whole of

the agricultural supplies of Czechoslovakia. A wedge of territory under German influence has been driven between Hungary and Poland, so that the Nazi grip on those two countries is strengthened. The only country on Rumania's coveted frontiers not subject to German influence is now Soviet Russia. The entire resistance to German economic and political expansion in Central and Eastern Europe has collapsed. Germany can expand, if she will, unhindered towards the East, or if she prefers, she can exact concessions from the Western Powers by the same threat of war or submission; and war which Germany would now face on one frontier alone, protected from Soviet Russia by a vast barrier of neutral territory, with the military power of Czechoslovakia harnessed to the German machine, and in the control of resources and food supplies which no country will now withhold."

And the moral?

When the war comes, as come it must, we shall be weaker and Germany stronger, so much weaker, so much stronger, that what would have been a victory in 1938 may well be a defeat in the not too distant future. And the further moral? That we should take our stand against Fascism before it is too late.

### *Heat Engendered by Munich.*

The argument which I have just summarized has been widely used by speakers and writers of the Left. Those who embrace the conclusions to which it points feel a passionate conviction which makes them scornful of those whom it does not convince. We are either fools, if we do not see the truth, or rogues conniving at the betrayal of democracy and the triumph of Fascism if, seeing it, we nevertheless do not accept its implications. We are labelled "crypto-Fascists", that is to say, persons who either through folly pursue policies which assist the spread of Fascism without knowing it, or through

wickedness consciously desire Fascism to triumph. The heat which has been aroused by the issues raised by the Munich settlement is indeed very great; families are divided, friendships broken, and Members of Parliament hitherto amiably disposed are found to be not on speaking terms.

THE TWO CONTENTIONS DISTINGUISHED: (I) THAT THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO WAR

The emotional atmosphere in which the case which I have outlined is normally advanced and discussed tends to obscure the fact that it involves two rather different contentions. The first is that, had Mr. Chamberlain "stood firm", there would in fact have been no war, since Hitler was bluffing; the second, that since he did not "stand firm", war sooner or later is inevitable.

### *The Theory of the "Put-up" Job.*

The first contention is supported by a great and growing mass of legend. There was, for example, Mr. Wickham Steed's famous letter in *The Times* which, appearing in the spring of 1938, confidently announced that Mr. Chamberlain had already decided to abandon Czechoslovakia to her fate and had made his decision known to Hitler. There was the story of the confidential interview which Mr. Chamberlain accorded, also in the spring of 1938, to American journalists, in the course of which he categorically informed them that in no circumstances would this country go to war in defence of Czechoslovakia.

The suggestion which "the legend" is designed to convey is that the crisis was an artificial crisis deliberately staged, with the object of inducing the British public under threat of war to consent to the betrayal of a

country to which it was supposed to have given pledges of support. Hitler and Chamberlain had in fact arranged it all behind the scenes in advance. One is asked to picture Chamberlain putting it to Hitler, "I don't know how I can get the British public to consent to *that*", and Hitler replying that, if he, on his part, mobilized his troops, massed them on the border, issued an ultimatum to Czechoslovakia to expire by a certain date, and that if Chamberlain, on his part, also ordered a partial mobilization and made visible preparations for air-raid defence on the home front, the alarm at the prospect of war would be so great that the British public would be prepared to agree to anything in the hope of preventing it, the relief when it was called off so profound, that they would not look too closely at the terms of the agreement. Hence the peculiar character of Britain's preparations. Were they not precisely of a kind to arouse the maximum of alarm at the minimum of cost? Trenches were dug and gas masks distributed. They would not have been very useful, but they were very alarming. What would have been useful but non-alarming? The mobilization of the army and the air force. But the army and the air force remained unmobilized. Highly significant!

And so the great bluff was staged. . . .

And if we ask why it was staged, why, in other words, Mr. Chamberlain connived at the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia and made such apparently frantic efforts to avoid war, the answer is that it was not because he wanted peace and saw no other way of obtaining it, but because he realized that Hitler's prestige was bound up with the success of the Czechoslovakian adventure, and he did not want the adventure to fail for fear that failure might bring Hitler down. And he did not want to bring Hitler down, just as Mr. Baldwin did not want to bring Mussolini down by applying oil sanctions at the time of the Abyssinian affair, because the fall of



Hitler and Mussolini would probably have been followed by the establishment of Communism in Germany and Italy. Thus fear of Communism is exhibited as the dominating inspiration of British foreign policy, and the Marxist interpretation of events in terms of the class war is shown to apply with its usual appositeness.

*Support for the "Bluff" Theory.*

In support of the "bluff" theory there are well-attested stories of the unreadiness for war in Germany, the unwillingness for war in Italy. I have been authoritatively informed not once but many times of the revolt against Mussolini's government which broke out in the towns of northern Italy. After Hitler's ultimatum to Schuschnigg and immediately prior to the occupation of Austria, General Brauchitsch is authoritatively reported to have told Hitler: "If there is question of war, the army cannot serve in its present state." Sir Stafford Cripps, speaking at Dartford, announced that he "had the opportunity of reading this week-end<sup>1</sup> a series of confidential reports by the underground movement in Germany giving an objective view of the sentiments of the people and the state of unpreparedness of Germany. The German railways were completely blocked and road transport was thrown into confusion". Who, again, has not heard of the interrupted telephone communication between Prague and Paris, which prevented President Benesh from finding out from his own ambassador what was happening in the French capital? . . .

THE TWO CONTENTIONS DISTINGUISHED: (II) THAT WAR IS SOONER OR LATER INEVITABLE

The second contention is based directly upon the

<sup>1</sup> October 11th, 1938.

arguments which I summarized earlier in the Chapter. Fascism is incurably aggressive; it must continue to expand. Sooner or later a conflict with the British Empire sprawling defencelessly across the face of the world is inevitable. The longer it is put off, the weaker we shall be. Therefore we must take the risk of war now in order to avoid the certainty of war later. In other words, we should offer war in order to preserve peace.

### CHAPTER III

## THE CASE ANSWERED

THERE WAS REAL DANGER OF WAR THEN: THERE IS  
NO INEVITABILITY OF WAR NOW

I PROPOSE to comment very briefly on the two contentions summarized in the last Chapter before discussing the larger issues which loom behind.

DISCUSSION OF CONTENTION I, THAT THERE WOULD HAVE  
BEEN NO WAR

*Mr. Chamberlain the Actor!* The first consists of a judgment of probability tacked on to a hypothesis. The judgment of probability is to the effect that probably—almost certainly, many would say—there would have been no war. The hypothesis is that the whole affair was a “put up job”. The judgment of probability, it is impossible to disprove. My own impression is that not only the man in the street but the men in the know expected war and believed that, on Tuesday, the 27th, and Wednesday, the 28th September, Britain was within an ace of it. Mr. Chamberlain’s famous wireless broadcast on the Tuesday night, deeply moving as it was, was the speech of a thoroughly frightened man. He saw war coming; he hated war from the depths of his heart; he doubted if he could avert it now, but he was still trying and had not yet given up hope. This was in effect what he said. If he did not mean it, did not mean it because he knew that

there was not and never had been a chance of war, did not mean it because he had already arranged with Hitler the details of the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, did not mean it because the crisis and the panic were only calculated moves in a strategic plan whose object was to frighten the British into accepting the betrayal of Czechoslovakia, then Mr. Chamberlain is the most consummate actor who ever missed his vocation. The same comment might, I think, justly be made on the speech delivered the next day in the House of Commons, in the middle of which the Prime Minister received the telegram asking him to Munich. He had been depressed, and suddenly he was surprised and delighted; what is more, every member of the Government showed the same delighted surprise. If this, too, was acting, it was astonishingly good acting.

*Statesmen the Puppets, not the Masters of Events.* The view, that the whole crisis was deliberately engineered by Chamberlain and Hitler as part of a conspiracy to parcel out Central Europe under an Anglo-Fascist agreement, seems to me fantastically melodramatic. It presupposes a much greater degree of farsighted planning, calculation and, I should add, of deliberate wickedness, than history or experience warrants us in attributing to those driven, harassed men we call statesmen, whose so-called policies are little better than a string of piecemeal decisions extemporized against time, and wrung from them by the pressure of immediate circumstance. Politicians do not control events; they react as best they may to events which are not of their making. So vast is the contemporary political and economic field, so far-reaching the forces that determine twentieth-century history, that the function of statesmen seems to be that of registration clerks rather than of business directors. Reflecting upon the history of the past twenty-four years, one is tempted irresistibly to adopt that interpretation of history with which Thomas

Hardy's works have made us familiar, and to contemplate, as he does in *The Dynasts*, events moving to their predestined conclusion unaffected by the cerebations of statesmen in council. Of the major events of this period—the War, the Coal Strike, the General Strike of 1926, the growth of unemployment, the economic collapse of 1929, the financial crisis of 1931, and now we must add the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1938—few have been such as statesmen have willed.

Nor did our statesmen will the settlement of Munich. At Munich, fear was the dominant force in British diplomacy, fear which the post-crisis revelations of British unpreparedness in the field of air-raid precautions has proved to those who trust for their security to defence to have been only too well-grounded—fear, and the people's overwhelming repugnance for war. The Government simply did not want to fight for Czechoslovakia, if it could possibly avoid doing so, because it was afraid of war, and because the people did not want war. And so it gave way; gave way, that is to say, to a dictator palpably threatening war unless he was allowed to have his way, or, to use the politer language of diplomacy, to achieve a substantial part of his objectives.

### *That Germany Would Have Fought.*

As for Germany, it was only three weeks later that Hitler was confessing: "This success was possible only because we were armed and determined to stake our force if necessary"; while in a speech on October 20th, Goebbels put the same point with even greater bluntness. "We didn't want a war," he said, "but we were ready to fight had we not got what we wanted." Of course, Hitler and Goebbels may have been lying—I gather that they have often been found lying before—but, in the light of the praises lavished upon war in Nazi Germany, the inculcation of military virtues into the young, the doctrine

that readiness for war is a sign of virility and a proof of courage, the parading of the young man who stops a bullet on the battlefield as the highest embodiment of male, of the young woman who produces him for the purpose, as the highest embodiment of female virtue; and the identification of superior might with superior morality, which have characterized the thought, the writings and the teaching of Nazi Germany, it seems to me only too likely that, on this occasion, they were telling the truth. Germany, I believe, would have gone to war *if* she had been thwarted. Chamberlain, I also believe, saved us from war at the last moment, and I am duly grateful. His prolonged and strenuous efforts to avert war were, in my view, wholly admirable; in this emergency he acted as a wise and courageous man.

Upon the argument that Germany, with the probable assistance of Italy, would not have ventured to challenge the might of England, France and Russia, I am not sufficiently an expert in military matters to comment. But my friends of the Left, who make such confident use of the argument, are not military experts either. Certainly if Hitler reasoned as I reason, prudentially and calculatingly, he would not have ventured to challenge such an array of force. But then if Hitler reasoned as I reason, he would not be Hitler, and he would not be where he is to-day.

*Ce n'est pas Magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la Guerre.* Let us for a moment forget the crisis and glance at the background from which it sprang. I have stressed above<sup>1</sup>—I shall have occasion to stress again—the part played by the tragic past in bringing about the still more tragic present. I have referred—I shall refer again—to the wrong done to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and by the post-war policy pursued by the allies with the object of prolonging the humiliations imposed by the Treaty and perpetuating the weakness

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 9-12.

of the enemy they had beaten. Of that policy the tragedy of Czechoslovakia was the fruit. If we had to buy peace with dishonour in 1938, it is because we imposed peace by dishonour in 1918. If the German people are now dominated by emotions of anger and cruelty, it is because cruel and angry emotions dominated our treatment of Germany. Looked at objectively, the tragedy of Czechoslovakia is thus seen as the end result of a chain of causes which began with the dishonour of Versailles. Mr. Chamberlain was right not to invoke national honour as a pretext for crowning that tragedy with a tragedy still greater. Politics is a perpetual choice between the lesser of two evils; it was with this choice that Mr. Chamberlain was faced at Berchtesgaden and Munich. He had either to yield to the threat of force the concessions which the allies had failed to make to the dictates of justice, or he had to face the hazards of war. He had either to connive at the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, or to contemplate the possible destruction of European civilization. God knows, the settlement that he brought back was not honourable, but we do wrong to fix the dishonour upon Mr. Chamberlain. It belongs to the policy of the last twenty years. And dishonourable as some have thought the peace to be, at least we are not at war. As the inevitably witty Frenchman was heard to remark with the inevitable shrug of Gallic shoulders, "*Ce n'est pas magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*"

*Postscript added in August, 1939.* The preceding paragraph was written eight months ago. Since then, Hitler has marched into Prague; Czechoslovakia has ceased to exist as an independent State and been replaced by the *Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia*; the policy of appeasement has been officially abandoned, and the policy of the *Peace Bloc* to restrain aggression has taken its place. As the culmination of that policy, we in England are daily expecting the signature of the Russian

pact. The policy of appeasement having failed, many are found to declare that it ought never to have been adopted; that, in other words, the line taken by Mr. Chamberlain at Munich was mistaken. I cannot agree. My disagreement is prompted not merely by the reflection that it is easy to be wise after the event, but by the conviction that Mr. Chamberlain is not and was not such a simpleton as his critics would have us think him; that he must have known at the time the risk that he was running when he signed the Munich agreement, have realized that he was gambling on Hitler's good faith. And knowing all this, he was nevertheless, in my judgment, right to take the risk, right to chance the gamble.

For he was playing for a high stake, the stake of peace, not temporary but permanent peace, and reconciliation in Europe. As I remark on a later page (p. 53) there was at Munich "a bare possibility that the corner of war may have been turned once and for all." Well, the possibility did not materialize. But it was right to give it every chance to materialize; even if the chances had been only one in five that Munich would prove but the prelude to a wider settlement, that Hitler would co-operate, Europe be appeased, and our world know peace, it was surely worth while, knowing that it was only one chance in five, to take that chance. Perhaps Mr. Chamberlain may have estimated the chance a little higher than that. It is natural to feel optimistic on signing an agreement which, one believes, has saved Europe from war; but the supposition that he was so childish as not to realize the risk which was so apparent to everybody else is itself childish; and, realizing it, he was, I insist, right to take it.

Nor did the subsequent failure of the gamble to "come off" prove him wrong. Since Munich I cannot, with one important proviso to which I refer later,<sup>1</sup> find much ground for cavilling at Mr. Chamberlain's conduct

<sup>1</sup> See p. 41.



of affairs. He has consistently pursued a policy which, though not that of a pacifist—and what chance would the exponent of an avowedly pacifist policy have of retaining the premiership of England to-day?—has, nevertheless, studiously refrained from provocation, and aimed continuously at conciliation. Having carried this policy up to the last limits of safety, he abandoned it only when nothing short of a determined application of pacifist principles to the conduct of international affairs would have justified its continuance. Since its abandonment, he has refrained from using abusive or provocative language and striven to avoid occasions for war, while preparing to meet it if it comes. As will subsequently appear, I do not agree with this policy, because I do not believe that, given the present international anarchy, the way to meet force is to confront it with a greater force. But our empire is founded upon force, Europe is governed by force or by the fear of it, and, as I have already remarked, had Mr. Chamberlain gone further in the direction of appeasement and reconciliation, he would not be Prime Minister to-day. But, granted the assumptions of so-called power politics, Mr. Chamberlain's methods are at least preferable to those of the Opposition, which in its anxiety to compete with Dr. Goebbels in vituperation, seems determined to give the maximum of provocation while taking the minimum of precaution. Had we had a Labour government during the last six months, we should have been at war to-day. And it is by no means certain that we should have been victorious. [*End of Postscript.*]

*On Not Being a Chamberlain Man. (1) Disagreement between Mr. Chamberlain and Myself in Regard to the Past Policy of the National Government.*

Having said so much in support of the policy followed by Mr. Chamberlain at Munich, I find myself assailed

by the inevitable suspicion that I may be accounted a Chamberlain man. This is very far from being the case. Although I think that Mr. Chamberlain acted rightly when the crisis came, although I think that his action averted war, I do not think that he acted rightly before it came. Indeed I should say that the policy pursued by the National Government since 1931 was indirectly responsible for the crisis, and that the credit which belongs to Mr. Chamberlain is only such as might be given to a pilot who, having driven the ship of State on to the rocks, contrives at the last moment to display sufficient skill and courage to get it off again.

As will subsequently appear, I believe that in some form of international or at least of federal government backed by the force of the federated nations lies the only hope of enduring world peace.<sup>1</sup> But this Government has been no friend to the international idea. In Manchuria, in Abyssinia, in Spain, it has betrayed the ideal of collective security, making it plain that, while it would rush to arms to repel an attack upon the territory of the British Empire, or to avenge an affront to the pride of the British nation, it would not fire a shot or risk a life in defence of the principles on which the League was founded.

*The League as an Instrument of Franco-British Policy.* Let us consider for a moment the record of the League, taking as a guide to our consideration H. N. Brailsford's pamphlet *Towards a New League*. It is an extremely well-informed pamphlet whose object is ostensibly to attempt an answer to the question, how far has the League determined the course of post-war history? How far, in Brailsford's own words, has it "been a decisive influence in the complex of causes that determine peace or war"? It is in order to provide material for an answer to this question that Brailsford sketches the history of the League during its first sixteen years of

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. VIII, pp. 161-165, 176-180.

existence. The survey is brilliantly done. As the reading continues, one has the impression of ascending in an aeroplane and, under the direction of a supremely competent guide, surveying a piece of territory whose woods one has hitherto been unable to discern because of the abundance of its trees. And the result of the survey? I will put it in Brailsford's own words, from which in the light of history's record it is difficult to withhold assent: "This chapter of history would have been in no essential different if the League had never existed. The springs of movement, the starting points of change, were never at Geneva."

What is the moral?

That the League has functioned not as an international assembly seeking to promote the welfare of all nations, but as an instrument for pursuing the aims of London and Paris. It has been used to preserve the Versailles settlement, to keep Germany within the strait-jacket into which the allied statesmen put her in 1918, and to perpetuate the divisions which have bedevilled Europe for the last twenty years. A cynical observer has remarked with some truth that English Conservatives supported the League, only in so far as they saw in it an inexpensive method of policing the Empire. That there was no real comprehension of the ideas of which the League was however imperfect an embodiment, was made abundantly plain when the question arose of supporting those of its weaker members who were the victims of aggression. A policy of sanctions rigorously pursued would in all probability have brought Italy's Abyssinian venture to an untimely close. The refusal to enable Japan to import certain necessary elements in the manufacture of munitions—tungsten and nickel, for example—would have made the Japanese invasion of China impossible.

At the time of writing bombs are falling on Valencia and Barcelona. These places are not entirely without

the means of defence, but there are others in Spain, for example Guernica and Granollers, which, being wholly unprotected, have been wiped out. These outrages have stirred the British conscience to its depths; yet the engines of the aeroplanes that dropped the bombs are more likely than not to have been of British manufacture. Meanwhile such attempts as have been made in England and America to prevent the British and American constructors of aeroplanes, manufacturers of armaments, and miners of ores and metals, from providing the Japanese, the Italians and the Germans with the instruments which are necessary for the perpetration of the outrages which the British and American publics profess to deplore, have been unavailing. The necessary steps could have been taken by the League; they could still be taken by the British Government; they have not been and are not being taken, and the fact that they are not constitutes one of the reasons why I am not a Chamberlain man.

*Criticism of Recent British Foreign Policy.* But though we have not lifted a finger to protect the victims of the aggressors which, according to our bounden duty under Article XVI of the Covenant we should have done, our abstention has not been dictated by pacifist considerations. It was not because we were unwilling to risk the hazards of war that we have continued to supply the aggressors with the means of making it, but because we were unwilling to undertake any risk on behalf of the League idea. While we were delivering Abyssinia and China to the aggressors whom economic sanctions would have stopped, we were allowing it to be known that we should fly instantly to arms the moment that "our vital interests" were threatened. The British Empire as it exists to-day is, as in a later passage I hope to show,<sup>1</sup> a standing temptation to the land-hungry nations to break the peace of the world. In a

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 184-187.

strong and all-inclusive League lies, as I shall also try to show,<sup>1</sup> the one hope of the world's future peace. Yet our Government has always been prepared to fight for the former, while it has given lukewarm and timid support to the latter. The League having been reduced to impotence, Europe has become an armed camp. Across the trenches that to-day run athwart the Continent, two hostile groups of Powers, the "Have" and the "Have Not" Powers, sit precariously poised on their mountainous armaments. In such a situation, each incident becomes a crisis, and every crisis brings Europe to the brink of war. For these reasons, I should hold that the policy pursued by the National Government during the last seven years was in large part responsible for the situation in which it was only by unremitting efforts that Mr. Chamberlain, at the last moment and at tremendous cost, succeeded in preserving peace. For that policy Mr. Chamberlain must take his full share of responsibility.

(2) *Disagreement between Mr. Chamberlain and Myself as to the Kind of Society which Ought to Exist.*

Again, I cannot count myself a Chamberlain man because I am a Socialist. The economic system under which we live seems to me to be grossly inequitable. It is a system which permits the luxury and ostentation of the few to outrage the poverty and misery of the many. It divides the economic wealth of the country so unfairly, that 80 per cent of the capital of the country is owned by 6 per cent of the population; that 17,600,000 out of the 20,000,000 persons who receive income in Great Britain, in other words, about nine wage-earners out of every ten, draw less than £250 per annum, and 12,000,000 of these 17,600,000 receive an income barely above subsistence level,<sup>2</sup> with the result that nearly

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 163-166.

<sup>2</sup> Figures taken from *The Socialist Case*, by Douglas Jay.

half the people of this country are under-nourished.<sup>1</sup> I do not think it right that a few rich men should be allowed to make profits out of the labour and the toil of many poor men, and I want to see the system which permits them to do so superseded and replaced by another system, under which the key industries of the community, transport and electric power, coal and railways, steel and agriculture, are owned by the community itself and administered as a public trust in the interests of its members. Now I do not believe that Mr. Chamberlain wants a system of this kind, and there is, therefore, between us, if I am right in so thinking, a fundamental disagreement as to the kind of society which ought to exist.

*Relevance of the Disagreement.* This disagreement finds expression in the realm of foreign policy. Mr. Chamberlain wishes to maintain the Empire; it is for him and for his class a source of pride and profit. I question our right to exploit subject peoples and to retain under our rule territories such as India which wish to be independent. Thus while Mr. Chamberlain considers British domination to be glorious, and would fight to maintain it, I would be glad to see it surrendered. It is not, in my view, power and domination that make a nation great, but the happiness of its people, and to the happiness of the people I believe poverty to be the greatest single enemy.

Mr. Chamberlain, again, is a representative of the class that rules the Empire and is enriched by the profits of other men's toil. I am not a Marxist, but I think that the Marxist interpretation of history is sufficiently near the truth to justify the conclusion that in Mr. Chamberlain's position and antecedents will be found one of the keys to the interpretation of his foreign

<sup>1</sup> According to the recent report of Sir John Orr, 22,500,000 persons in England and Wales are living on a diet which is below the minimum standard for health, while 4,500,000 are living on a weekly income of 10s. per head, of which only 4s. is spent on food.

policy. He will not, as I have pointed out, fight for the League, but he will fight for the Empire; he will not hold out the hand of friendship to Russia, but he aims at a Four-Power Pact which will first isolate and then threaten Russia. He finds himself, as does the class which he represents, in a dilemma. Fascist practices threaten his Empire, while Bolshevik doctrines threaten his income. The choice is difficult, but for the present it has been made in favour of income, while not foregoing the hope of retaining Empire.

I cannot, then, avoid the suspicion that one of the motives for the Munich settlement was the desire to erect a common bulwark with other capitalist Powers against the dreaded flood of Socialism. This is not a motive to which I can subscribe. In sum, my temporary adhesion to Mr. Chamberlain's foreign policy gives me much disquiet. So strong is tradition, so clamorous the voice of instinct on this issue, that they almost outweigh the dictates of my reason; almost they make me think that, if Mr. Chamberlain is my leader, I *must* be on the wrong path.

(3) *Disagreement between Mr. Chamberlain and Myself as to the Right Policy for Avoiding Future Crises.*

In the third place, I do not agree with Mr. Chamberlain's recipe for avoiding crises in the future. This is quite simply to build up a prodigious armament. I shall critically consider below<sup>1</sup> the doctrine that armaments give security. I shall try to show that they have not given security in the past, and to substantiate my belief that they will not do so in the future. For the present, I shall content myself with pointing out that the policy of appeasement plus armament is a contradiction in terms. You cannot conciliate, if you threaten; you cannot make peace, with a pistol in your hands. Surely

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 65-73.

we ought to have learnt by this time that violence and the threat of violence produce nothing but the fruits of violence which are more violence, more broken treaties, more incalculable suffering for the millions of people against whom the violence will be directed. The Germans no doubt have a bad government, but we shall not persuade them of the fact by denouncing it or killing them. Fascism cannot be defeated by the policy upon which Fascism thrives, the policy of force and intimidation. Armaments have never brought safety in the past; are we so bankrupt of courage and resource that we can devise no other method in the present ?

There must, one feels, be in any event some flaw in the reasoning which sees in rearmament the only possible aftermath to Munich. Mr. Chamberlain's policy is avowedly based upon a belief in the good faith of Herr Hitler. "The declaration which I signed at Munich," he said, in his first statement to the House of Commons after his return, "was something more than a pious expression of opinion. I believe there is sincerity and goodwill on both sides."

Does he *really* believe this or does he not ? If he does, why the rearmament ? If he does not, why the cold-shouldering of Russia who, if war with Germany is to be feared, would be our most potent ally ? It is difficult to avoid concluding that Mr. Chamberlain believes Hitler or disbelieves him according to whether belief or disbelief is the more convenient at the moment; disbelieves, when he wishes to convince us of the necessity of intensifying the speed of rearmament, believes, when he wishes to find reasons for the continued cold-shouldering of Russia.

Does this ambiguity conceal the skeleton in the cupboard of the British governing class, their fear of Communism ? Is the anxiety for an agreement with Germany and Italy not after all the fruit of an honest desire for appeasement, but of the determination to



make a common front of capitalist powers against the U.S.S.R.? I do not know. That fear of Communism is not the main motive that dictates the Government's foreign policy I am convinced, but he would be a rash man who asserts that it exerts *no* influence. And if it *does* exert influence, it is, in my view, a bad influence. Here, then, is a further reason why I cannot account myself a Chamberlain man. I believe that a durable peace can be based only on a concord of *all* the European nations,<sup>1</sup> and this will not be achieved by an alignment of Powers on two sides of the class-war issue.

*Postscript added in August, 1939.* The delay which has attended the signing of the Russian pact, the manifest distaste for alliance with the Bolsheviks which animates the governing classes of Great Britain, and the corresponding suspicions on the part of Russia of the intentions of British statesmen, have lent much subsequent colour to the doubts expressed in the preceding paragraph. It is not, however, to register this confirmation that I have inserted this second postscript, but to underline the argument of the preceding paragraphs [*Disagreement* (3)]. In these paragraphs I insist that, if negotiations are to be successful, the parties to them should neither threaten nor be in a position to threaten one another. Since Munich, we have threatened with a vengeance; threatened to the tune of an expenditure of £700 million during the current year on preparations for slaughtering the helpless victims of the dictators, by whom we conceive ourselves to be threatened. Is it matter for surprise that in the atmosphere engendered by these threats negotiations fail? Is it any wonder that we find ourselves in greater danger to-day than at any moment since the last war ended? Reflecting upon the present situation, I feel myself bound to enter the proviso anticipated in my earlier postscript (see p. 32)

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 169-171 and 194-196.

against wholehearted agreement with Mr. Chamberlain's conduct of affairs. And the proviso is fundamental. I do not believe, as the subsequent pages of this book will show, that the right way to deal with the threat of force is to threaten force in your turn; that the safest policy for meeting the might of supposedly hostile armaments is to build armaments yet mightier. Whatever may be said of the merits of such a policy on general grounds, it seems to me obviously disastrous, if you are at the same time trying to negotiate; disastrous, that is to say, for the success of the negotiations. Successful negotiations demand an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. It is not such an atmosphere that the expenditure of these millions of pounds on preparations for killing the negotiators, should the negotiations happen to fail, engenders. It is, I should say, no accident that things have gone from bad to worse since Munich; no accident that the fear of war was never greater or more justifiable than it is to-day. Hence the substance of my third disagreement with Mr. Chamberlain is not removed, but increased, by the events which have taken place since the foregoing paragraphs were written in the autumn of 1938. He should have taken advantage of the situation momentarily created by the Munich settlement to make a gesture of goodwill to Germany, proposing, as I argue on a later page (see pp. 194, 195), a Peace conference at which he would have been prepared to offer specific concessions, and to back his offer with disarmament. Instead of doing this, Mr. Chamberlain intensified the pace of British rearmament. Admittedly, he did not close the door to negotiations; admittedly, he refrained from overt provocation, and these things are to be accounted to him for virtue. Yet by intensifying the armaments race in order that he might be in a position to confront German power with power yet greater, he was, I am convinced, ensuring the failure of the policy of appeasement upon which his heart was set. After Munich Mr.

Chamberlain should have "gone pacifist". It may plausibly be argued that, had he done so, he would not have been Prime Minister to-day; for England, the fact is, alas, only too obvious, is not yet a pacifist country. But since I am, with certain qualifications, a pacifist myself, I cannot, it is equally obvious, wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Chamberlain.

#### DISCUSSION OF CONTENTION II, THAT WAR IS SOONER OR LATER INEVITABLE

##### *The Author's Agnosticism.*

This contention it is impossible to disprove. It is, however, equally impossible to prove. Believing, as I do, in freewill, I do not regard any development in human affairs as inevitable. I should, therefore, reject the Marxist interpretation of history which ascribes its course to the determining effects of economic forces, just as I should reject any purely deterministic interpretation of history.

I differ, I find, from most of my friends in not knowing certain things which they believe themselves to know.

I have, for example, in recent years engaged in controversy with a Rationalist on Materialism and a Catholic on Christianity. Both my opponents, however acutely they might differ in other respects, had one very important characteristic in common. They were both convinced that they possessed certain knowledge in regard to the ultimate constitution of things, which I knew that I did not possess. The Materialist, Mr. Chapman Cohen, knew that this universe was neither purposed nor planned; that life was an incidental by-product of physical forces; that the material and the alien conditioned and determined the vital and the

spiritual. The universe, he considered, functioned like the works of a gigantic clock through the automatic interaction of its parts; mind was just one of the parts; and, although he did not know who wound the clock up—the one saving sign of agnostical grace—he was quite certain that it was not a God. My Christian opponent, Mr. Arnold Lunn, held diametrically opposite beliefs. The universe, he held, is planned and purposeful; mind, or rather spirit, is at the heart of things; the highest activities of the human spirit already reflect, and may in the future become one with the nature of ultimate reality; and this ultimate reality is a personal, creative God.

But although the beliefs were in every respect diametrically opposite, the certainty was the same. My modest profession that I did not know whether there was a God or not, was received by both with contumely, scandalising Mr. Cohen, who regarded it as a weak-kneed evasion of an Atheism which I had not the courage to avow, and paining Mr. Lunn, who thought it would serve me in poor stead on the Day of Judgment.

Now this assumption of knowledge in regard to the nature of things is unwarranted. Compare it, for example, with T. H. Huxley's profession of agnosticism: "I was quite sure that I had not a certain 'gnosis' which atheists, theists, pantheists, Christians, all possessed, so I took thought and invented what I conceive to be the appropriate title of 'agnostic'." Huxley's attitude seems to me the only reasonable one in the circumstances. The more we enlarge the area of the known, the more also we enlarge its area of contact with the unknown; and we know, or so I should have thought, too much about the world to-day to think that we know anything for certain. With the same dogmatic certainty as they pronounce upon the ultimate nature of things in the present men proceed to predict the future.

*Rival Certainties in Regard to the Future.*

Here before me as I write are two books expressive of two diametrically opposed schools of political thought. One is *The Coming Struggle for Power*, by John Strachey, the other, *The Greater Britain*, by Sir Oswald Mosley. Now however much these two writers differ on other points—and on practically all they are diametrically opposed—they concur in one important respect: they both *know*. But what they *know* is different, as different as what Mr. Lunn and Mr. Cohen both know.

Mr. Strachey, laying bare the inherent antinomies of capitalism, envisages the future in terms of class conflict. This, he holds, is inevitable; a temporary Fascist régime may delay but cannot avert, a new capitalist war may side-track but cannot ultimately supersede, Social Democracy may blur but cannot for long conceal this fundamental antagonism of the classes. Only Communism can resolve the conflict, and this it will do by superseding the whole conception of class. First, we must pass through the inevitable period of working-class dictatorship.

Sir Oswald Mosley carries nationalism to its logical conclusion in the Fascist State. Internationalism and world co-operation are myths; a world of Corporate States economically self-sufficing is the goal of economic development and the ideal of foreign policy. Hence an affirmation of the omnipotence of the State, and a call to discipline for its members, who are to dedicate themselves to the service of what Sir Oswald Mosley regards as the coming god.

Authority, certainty, inevitability; these are the dominant notes struck by the writers of these two highly significant books. Unlike myself, they know both what is going to happen and what ought to happen; and between the future which they consider certain and the

future which they consider desirable, there is, oddly enough, in each case very little difference. Certainty is thus informed with optimism, and men supply the place of knowledge by converting their conjectures into dogmas.

The conflict of rival certainties is one of the features of our time. These certainties are the petrified products of living philosophies. While these philosophies are academic and find expression only in the tenets of a school, they tolerate rivals; indeed, they have no option. But when their tenets are embodied in the programme of a party, and that party is successful in obtaining control of the government, they develop an intolerance of other philosophies, and of the ways of life and theories of politics which other philosophies countenance and encourage. Now Communism and Fascism are philosophies of this type. Parties are instruments for precipitating philosophies into action and realizing their tenets in fact. Precipitated into action, realized in fact, these philosophies aspire to control the whole life of men, prescribing his morals, his beliefs, his friendships and his loyalties, and deciding what he shall read, learn, think and write. Not content with determining the present, they must also prescribe the future. Thus appears a new race of political Old Moores, each with its own dogma of infallibility, each with its different prophecy of a different future.

#### *What Fascists and Communists Know.*

Thus Fascists *know* that democracies are decadent, and that the future belongs to Fascist States conceived, according to the nationality of the knower, after the Italian or the German model; Communists *know* that war in the future is inevitable, either between competing capitalist Powers for raw materials and overseas markets (the older doctrine), or (the new doctrine) between the

democratic Powers—whose capitalist nature is temporarily allowed to recede into the background of consciousness, while their democratic features dominate the foreground—buttressed by the Soviet Union on the one hand and the aggressive Fascist States on the other. It is because it is *known* that this conflict awaits us in the future that we are urged to anticipate it in the present when the scales are—or rather, before we betrayed Czechoslovakia, were—weighted in our favour.

*The Author Speculates about the Future.*

For my part, I should like to say that we do not *know* anything of the sort. "I beseech you, gentlemen, in the bowels of Christ," Cromwell adjured the Irish bishops, "to conceive it possible that you are mistaken." It is an adjuration which might with advantage be addressed to the "knowers" of the future, for it is on the basis of their knowledge of certain war in the future, that they bid us take the steps which may well provoke war in the present. It is a salutary exercise to reflect upon the frequency with which the face of foreign affairs has changed in the last fifteen years. I can remember when war between France and Italy was regarded as "certain"; I can also remember when war between Poland and Germany was regarded as "certain". A few years ago Germany was "certainly" going to attack Russia. Now it seems to me to be possible, even likely, that within the next twenty years Germany will come to terms with Russia. Admittedly, to a superficial view, nothing could be more opposed than the doctrines of Marxism and National Socialism, and their respective protagonists are on terms of avowed hostility. Yet, as F. A. Voigt has pointed out in his book *Unto Caesar*, the superficial view may well be delusive. Marxism in Russia exists to-day mainly for the purposes of export, while National Socialism in Germany does embody

certain elements of Socialism. Both States are authoritarian. The German Staff is said not to be in favour of war with Russia, while many Russian generals and politicians have been murdered because they are said to have been in favour of some form of arrangement with Germany. Hence a regrouping of Powers, featuring Russia and Germany in alliance open or tacit against the democracies of the West, is at least a possibility. It is as possible as the alignment of Germany and Italy against Russia, France and England, as possible though not, I should say, as probable as Mr. Chamberlain's Four Power Pact.

But these are the idlest of speculations. I mention them not because I attach weight to them—who, after all, am I, that I should venture to pronounce upon the future?—but to reinforce my contention that the future is unknown. The fact that any one of a number of possibilities may occur renders it infinitely hazardous to assert that one of them *must occur*. Hence I conclude that it must be wrong to offer war in the present, because that one of them which is war in the future *must occur*.

### *Uncertainty of the Future: Application to the Present Crisis.*

Now let me apply the conclusions of this somewhat discursive reasoning to the crisis. I have already given my reasons for supposing that to have withstood Hitler would have been to increase the risk of war. I now add that to make accommodations, to grant concessions, to give way here, to compromise there, would diminish the risk. The following are some reasons for this view:—

(1) If Hitler absorbs all the territories with the desire for which he is credited, one of two things may well happen: (a) he will suffer from indigestion and become indisposed for further assimilation—it is not, after all, a foregone conclusion that all South-eastern Europe



will lie easily on his stomach; or (b) he will digest and be quieted. Germany, in other words, will become a sated power, and, with satiety, may once again be prepared to show symptoms of humanity and to settle down into moderately decent behaviour. After all, hunger and humiliation were the causes that produced Hitler. When both causes have disappeared, their effects may disappear too.<sup>1</sup> Even if Hitler remains, it is not inconceivable that he should himself begin to behave. Kemal Ataturk, once an aggressive dictator, became by a similar process, a quiet one. Admittedly, to allow Hitler to take what he wants may, in the long run, involve a smaller British Empire, but a British Empire maintained intact in all its present bulk may, as I argue later,<sup>2</sup> be a factor making not for but against world peace.

(2) The more Hitler expands, the more likely he is to tread on the toes of Mussolini. It would not require many shakes of the Rome-Berlin axis to shake one of the partners off.

(3) Such is the rapidity of the development of the aeroplane, such the acceleration of its speed, that in twenty years' time America will be brought within the orbit of European affairs. Just as England has ceased to be a separate island, so America will have ceased to be a separate hemisphere. It is, I think, in the highest degree unlikely that the influence of America will be thrown on the side of the dictatorships. If it is thrown on the side of England and France, it may prove a decisive factor in maintaining peace.

(4) A day gained for peace is, in any event, a day gained. If you believe, as I do, that war is the worst of all evils, then it can never be right to increase the risk of war in the present in order to diminish the risk of war in the

<sup>1</sup> The question of the best method of dealing with the psychology of Fascism is discussed on a later page. See pp. 187-190.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 192-194.

future. The future is unknown; hence, if we can only postpone war, we give unknown factors a chance. Francis Joseph died in 1916, and his death would in any event have probably signalled the break-up of the Austrian empire. Hence, if the 1914 war could have been postponed for two years, it might never have occurred.

The future, I repeat, is unknown. Germany may explode internally, Italy go bankrupt, Hitler be bitten by an adder. History hangs on the threads of a thousand chances. Let any of these be twitched ever so slightly, and the course of history is altered. Thus a war postponed may be a war averted.

(5) It is impossible to estimate the long time effects of the decline of the birth-rate, but once they make themselves felt in a decline of populations, they will be great. The peak year for England is, we are told, 1941; thereafter the population will begin to drop. Once the drop starts, it will be rapid and its rapidity will accelerate. According to the estimate of Enid Charles, given that the birth-rate neither rises nor falls but remains constant at its present rate, there will in 200 years time be some six million persons in England; if it continues to fall at its present rate, in thirty-one years' time there will be 30 million English; in sixty years' time 18 million; in 100 years' time five million. The birth-rate is, I should imagine, more likely to fall than to rise. All the factors which have produced the fall which has taken place during the last forty years are still operating, while the incentives to bring children into such a world as ours is becoming are not great.

In Germany and Italy the peak years come later, but the artificial inducements by means of which the dictators have sought to increase the birth-rates of their countries have not been very successful and in these countries, too, the populations will, given the continuance of the existing birth-rates, presently begin to decline. The changes which these declines will produce upon

the international situation are difficult to forecast, nor can they be discussed here. It is, however, hard to believe that they will not transform it. The conclusion is the same. If we can stave off war for the next twenty years, we may find ourselves faced with a situation from which the present urgencies and stresses have totally disappeared.

*The People's Quickened Desire for Peace.*

One other point is relevant to the present discussion. Upon one feature of the crisis all observers were agreed: This was the utter repugnance for war, the overwhelming desire for peace, expressed by all citizens. The reason is not far to seek. It has been impossible for people to avoid acquiring some knowledge of the nature and processes of modern war. Therefore they know that, when war comes, they will be its victims. The fact that the next war will be the first in which the civilian populations of all the belligerent countries will inevitably and from the outset be the objects of attack, has profoundly affected the attitude of the civil populations to war.

The invention of the bombing aeroplane has with some justice been called the greatest single disaster in the history of mankind. It is just possible that this apparent disaster may prove to be a blessing; it is just possible, that is to say, that the horror of war with which all peoples are imbued, a horror for which the menace of the bombing plane is directly responsible, may prove to be a real factor in the promotion of peace.

Broadcasting on October 2nd, immediately after the crisis, the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed the hope that,

“In this interval of relief from tension the task may be resumed of stopping this insane race of armaments. . . .

Surely it is required of nations who have seen the horrors of modern warfare staring them in the face, that they should as a sign of recovered sanity determine that once for all the use of bombing aircraft shall cease, and that the once-clean skies shall no longer deal destruction on mankind."

The Archbishop was voicing a view which has since become increasingly prevalent, the view, namely, that there can be no future for a civilisation which has not the collective wisdom to prevent itself from murdering its members from the air.

Let me cite some of its more significant expressions:—

"This Council, acutely conscious of the grave dangers threatening the citizens of East Ham from the ever-increasing competition in air armaments between the Great Powers, welcomes the declaration by the ex-Foreign Secretary in the House of Commons on February 2nd, that it is the Government's intention to re-open the question of air armaments with other countries.

"In the light of that declaration this Council would respectfully urge upon the Government to take the initiative along the lines of Article 35a of the British Draft Convention of 1933, and propose to the Powers that they shall immediately devote themselves to the working out of the best possible schemes providing for the complete abolition of naval and military aircraft and the effective supervision of civil aviation to prevent its misuse for military purposes.

"This Council believes that nothing short of the abolition of the air weapon will afford the peoples of our great cities reasonable security from the air menace and it calls upon the Government to put forward for public examination plans for the control of civil aviation against abuse so that, when negotiations are re-opened on air disarmament, there may be the possibility of an international agreement which will bring a real measure of security to the peoples of the world."

The above Resolution passed by the East Ham Borough Council in April, 1938, has, since the September crisis, been endorsed by the Councils of Bermondsey, Bethnal Green, Bexley, Fulham, Lambeth, Leyton, Mitcham, Shoreditch, West Ham and Woolwich.

I cannot believe that the English people are peculiar in respect of their dislike of the prospect of being burnt, blinded, poisoned and dismembered. It is reasonable, then, to suppose that the inhabitants of Berlin, Milan and Paris feel the same repugnance and for the same reasons. Now it is just possible that this new unwillingness of the people, an unwillingness born of their discovery that war is no longer something which is waged far away by soldiers and such, to be read about in the picture papers at the breakfast table and observed in safety on the screen from comfortably upholstered seats—it is just possible, I say, that this unwillingness may prove a turning point in international affairs.

To borrow a metaphor from chemistry, the people's new unwillingness may be the catalyst which precipitates an era of peace, of peace which is extorted from the statesmen, whether they like it or not, by their discovery of the deep repugnance of their peoples to war, and their consequent realization that after the citizens of the world's capital cities, the first victims of any war might well be themselves. For it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the peoples might choose to end their sufferings by visiting them upon the statesmen whom they considered responsible for them; moreover, it is difficult to suppose that this possibility has not occurred to the statesmen. . . .

It would not, however, be wise to lay too much stress upon these considerations. They represent at most a possibility, a bare possibility that the corner of war may have been turned once and for all at Munich, and that a new era in human affairs is opening before us.

But while that possibility exists, it must surely be false to say that war is inevitable, and wrong to take any steps which may bring war nearer now, in the belief that by so doing we may avoid a worse war in the future.

*That War Between England and Germany is in no Sense Inevitable.*

And are we, as reasonable beings, to accept the implied suggestion that it is impossible for Germans and Englishmen to live together in the world without fighting each other, or for that matter, Germans and Russians, or Germans and Frenchmen? To say that a peaceful Germany and a peaceful Britain cannot co-exist is tantamount to the assertion that war must succeed war world without end, each war becoming more horrible than the last, until the belligerent nations have succeeded in exterminating one another.

This is a doctrine of despair. If it is true then, indeed, our civilization will perish; if it is true, our civilization deserves to perish. For my part, I refuse to accept it. As I shall try later to show, the present mood of Germany has been engendered by certain specific grievances, grievances which are the results of removable causes. There is no eternal law of nature which forbids these causes to be removed, although there are great difficulties of policy, the result of mistakes in past policy. It is the task of statesmanship to overcome these difficulties. We are not justified in supposing that in this task statesmen are *bound* to fail.

It is even possible to indicate the conditions which will make for failure, and those which will make for success. For example, I would venture the suggestion that negotiations are likely to fail which are conducted in an atmosphere of threats; to succeed, if conducted in an atmosphere of conciliation. The effect of arma-

ments is to enable those who possess them to threaten; in the absence of armaments they have no alternative but to conciliate.

The primary condition for the success of the negotiations with Germany is that we should not hold a pistol to her head. She is then less likely to hold a pistol to ours. Negotiations, in other words, should be accompanied by, nay more, they should be preceded by, disarmament. The point is developed at length on a later page.<sup>1</sup> Here, again, I find myself at variance with Mr. Chamberlain. Why, I should like to ask him, does he regard it as so important to be able to threaten those with whom he is proposing to negotiate?

#### SUMMARY OF THE FOREGOING: THE AUTHOR'S TWO DISAGREEMENTS

It will be convenient to summarize the main conclusions of these somewhat rambling pages of exposition and refutation. They may be expressed in the form of a series of differences.

(1) I differ from the exponents of the Left-wing point of view in thinking (a) that war would almost certainly have resulted, had we "stood firm" against Hitler in the matter of Czechoslovakia; (b) that it was not, therefore, right to take the risk of war entailed by "standing firm"; (c) that although the Czechoslovakian affair cannot, as the Left rightly insists, be considered in isolation from its context, the context to be considered is not that which the Left emphasizes. *Rightly* regarded, the Czechoslovakian affair is the end result of a chain of causes extending backwards to the Treaty of Versailles and beyond. Some of these causes were injustices, some were blunders on the part of England and France.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 201-205.

It is, therefore, disingenuous to represent the Czechoslovakian affair as one in which all the rights were on one side and all the wrongs on the other; (d) that it is far from certain that we shall have to fight Germany in the future.

(2) I differ from Mr. Chamberlain in thinking (a) that the preservation of England's imperial greatness is not an adequate reason for risking the life of her inhabitants; (b) that the British Empire in its present form is a menace to the peace of the world; (c) that prodigious armaments are not a means to safety in the future, and do not form a hopeful basis for negotiations with Germany in the present.

#### *Transition to Main Argument.*

It is, I think, clear that the list of differences just enumerated presupposes a general background of principle and conviction, which, I imagine, is not shared by those with whom I differ. This background constitutes a framework into which the events which occur in the international sphere are fitted for examination and interpretation; and just as events are interpreted in terms of the background, so the arguments which I have used above are supplied by it. They are, indeed, only the surface expressions of the underlying position which informs them. If you like to put it impolitely, they are rationalizations of that position.

Now the general background, the underlying presupposition of the arguments which I have used is that in existing circumstances wars between States are always wrong, and that among the courses of action which it is open to statesmen to take, they are never under modern conditions justified in taking that course which is a declaration of war. It is to the examination and defence of this position that I now turn.



## CHAPTER IV

### SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES

#### *Disavowal of Principles.*

A SHORT chapter concerned to state general principles or, more precisely, concerned to disavow them! I am to try and set forth the pacifist case that war between States is, in existing circumstances, never justified, to point out that no good can come of it, and to urge my readers to do all that is in their power to prevent their statesmen, at whatever cost, from committing the act of final folly.

Nevertheless, I want to begin by repudiating some at least of the principles upon which this case is usually based. Two of these principles are that human life is sacred, and that force is always wrong.

#### (1) *That Human Life is Not Sacred.*

I do not believe that human life is sacred. I am, for example, totally unable to understand why the community should pursue with such ferocity the attempted suicide. After all, we did not choose life, we were pitchforked into life without so much as a by your leave, to make the best of it. Now the best of it very often turns out to be the worst of it. Why, then, continue to drive a bad bargain? If we had asked for life, the position might well be different. It might be plausibly argued that, having gone out of our way to get it, we were under some obligation to make the best of it. But we did not, and I cannot, therefore, see why we should not be permitted to abandon it, as soon as it becomes more of a nuisance than it is worth. Yet the

community, which is at the moment devoting most of its savings to increasing its efficiency in the taking of the lives of members of other communities, has the audacity to pronounce human life to be so sacred that no man may take his own—if a man cannot take his own life whose life, one wonders, can he take?—on pain of being regarded as a criminal if he fails, and a madman if he succeeds.

*The Right of Easy Death.* Again, I am totally unable to see why the community should forbid easy death.

Let us imagine a man who is the victim of an incurable disease; he suffers, we will suppose, from a cancer in the rectum, and must face the prospect of daily agony. He knows that he will not get better, but will gradually get worse; he knows that he is a misery to himself and a nuisance to everybody else. And knowing all this, and racked by continual pain, he very naturally longs to die. Accordingly he begs his doctors to deprive him of a life that has become burdensome, to grant him the one boon that he craves, the boon of death. His doctors, being compassionate men, wish to grant him what he desires. Nevertheless they must refuse; at least, they must pretend to refuse, for in practice humanity insists on breaking in, and the doctors kill surreptitiously by an overdose of drugs. The fact that the killing must be surreptitious, the fact that a man has no *right* of death, seems to me outrageous. For why, I repeat the question, should it be assumed that we are under obligation to make the best of life, or to prolong it when we have no further use for it? And, if we *do* decide against living, what right has anyone to override our decision and to decide that we must live, whether we will it or no. It is not death that is dreadful, but pain. As Socrates pointed out, whether the condition of being dead is better than that of being alive, we do not know, since no one of us has had experience

of being dead. But we *have* had experience of pain, and we know that it is evil, which is, I suppose, why we object to death, thinking that we cannot have death without first undergoing pain. Death in fact would be all very well, were it not for the dying. Thanks to science, the dying can now be made painless, and the gravest objection to death would appear to be removed.

Yet, while forbidding a man who, having no hope of life, desires death, to achieve pleasantly and painlessly what he desires, we are spending some £580 millions a year on preparing the means of inflicting death in its most hideously painful forms upon human beings in the prime of life who desire nothing better than to continue to live.

I find it difficult to subscribe to either of these counts in my fellow-countrymen's creed. I do not think that it is right painfully to destroy human beings that I have never seen; but then I do not think that it is right to refuse the boon of death to those who are in pain and desire it.

Of course, it *may* be the case that human life is sacred and should not on any account be taken, but if it is the case, I do not see how it can be proved that it is. Some claim an intuition to this effect; they just *know* that human life is sacred, and cannot and must not be taken, although they are unable to say how and why they know. For my part, I must confess to experiencing no such intuition. If I saw a man laying a mine on a railway line just before an express train was due, I should have no hesitation in shooting him, just as I should have no hesitation in shooting a mad dog. It is not so much to the taking of life that I object, as to the being forced to take it under orders. What I deny is that the community has the right to make me deprive of life people I have never seen, whenever it happens to deem the mass slaughter of the citizens of another community to be desirable.

(ii) *That the Use of Force is not Always Wrong.*

Again, I do not believe that the use of force is always and necessarily wrong. While I was writing the foregoing paragraph, a small child was thumping the piano in the next room with his fist. I saw no harm in restraining him, though the restraint involved the use of a certain amount of force. In fact I had to carry him out of the room. If I saw a boy tormenting a kitten, I should not hesitate to stop him with whatever force I could command. I should find no difficulty, therefore, in answering the historic question put by military personages on tribunals to those who appeared before them pleading conscientious objection to military service in the last war: "What would you do if you saw a German coming at your wife, mother, daughter, sister, cousin, aunt, or what-not, with intent to rape her?" My answer is that I should quite certainly try to stop him with whatever means were at my disposal, and with whatever means were at my disposal I should, in similar circumstances, try to defend myself. What I should not do, is to regard the aggression of the hypothetical German as a ground for proceeding to drop bombs on *his* wife, mother, daughter, sister, cousin, aunt, or what-not.

I have dealt with the point light-heartedly—it was, after all, such a comic question—yet it has a certain importance because it illustrates the fallacy of the analogy so often drawn between the individual and the State. With this analogy I deal in greater detail on a later page.<sup>1</sup> For the present I content myself with pointing out (a) that war between States involves the use of force against *innocent* persons, which the use of force in self-defence by the individual victim of an aggressor does not; and (b) that there has been estab-

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 129-131.

lished for the purpose of restraining the aggression of individuals, a system of law which is backed by a force which is disinterested and public, but that there is no disinterested public law to govern the relations between States, and that, even if there were, there is no impartial police force to back it. This important difference might at first sight be supposed to justify the use of force by States, but not the use of force by individuals. My reasons for thinking this conclusion mistaken are given in a later discussion.<sup>1</sup>

*In What Sense and on Which Ground it is Claimed that Wars Between States are Never Justified.*

If general principles are not to be invoked or are to be invoked only with circumspection, on what, it may be asked, is the argument developed in the following pages based? On the principle of Utilitarianism. I propose to assess the rightness of a course of action by reference to its effects on people's happiness. If it conduces to their happiness more than any other alternative course of action which it is open to the individual or the community to take, then I should hold that the course of action is right and ought to be followed; if not, not. Now when you are considering whether a course of action does or does not conduce to the general happiness, each case, or rather, each class of case must be considered on merits. It is, then, as a result of a consideration on merits that I hope to show that wars between States are, under modern conditions, never justified, since they are likely to prove more destructive of happiness, to engender more misery and suffering and to engender them in more human beings than any alternative course which it was open to the war-making nation to pursue. This, I should hold, is true under modern conditions even of so-called wars of self-defence.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 150-152.

*General Principles Assumed by the Author.*

Having said so much, I perceive that I have, after all, assumed two general principles, and that my case, supposing that I were successful in establishing it, stands or falls with these assumptions. The first is that happiness is a good. I do not know how to prove this principle, or to defend it if it be questioned. I can only say that I just see it to be so, just as I see beauty to be preferable to ugliness and truth telling to be better than lying. I do not wish to suggest that happiness is the only good. I do not think that it is, but I think that it is the only one of which the State can take cognisance. Indeed, I should say that it is the business of the State, in the last resort it is the sole business of the State, to promote the happiness of its members. To some extent this can be done directly by Act of Parliament, but so far as the more important kinds of happiness are concerned, the State's rôle as promoter is indirect. In respect of these more important kinds of happiness, all that we are entitled to ask of the State is that it should establish the conditions in which, and in which alone, its members can pursue happiness in the ways which seem good to them. One of the most important of these ways is through the development of their personalities. I should agree, then, with Lord Halifax that "government is the instrument to secure the conditions favourable to the fullest possible development of personality". It is because war not only does not promote these conditions but, on the contrary, destroys them, that I consider wars between States to be wrong.

And here I see that I have assumed the truth of another general principle. This is not a principle which I should have thought it worth while to enunciate twenty years ago, for twenty years ago its truth would have seemed

so obvious that one might safely have taken it for granted. But it is widely questioned on the continent to-day, and I judge it right explicitly to mention it. The principle is that whatever is good or bad is embodied in individuals and not in the State. Some philosophies, notably that of Hegel, invest communities, and particularly the State, with ethical qualities—"The State," said Hegel, "is the ultimate end which has absolute rights against the individual. . . . It is the movement of God in the world." If these philosophies are true, a State may be ethically admirable, even though most of its citizens are wicked or unhappy. All such philosophies I reject. The reasons for this rejection cannot be given here.<sup>1</sup> Some of them will appear by implication in Chapter VIII which contains a brief analysis of the relation of the State to the individual.

So much having been said by way of statement of principles, I proceed to the reasons for the contention with which the last chapter concluded, namely, that wars between States are, under modern circumstances, always wrong and that among the courses of action which it is open to statesmen to take, they are never justified in taking that course which is a declaration of war.

<sup>1</sup> I have given them at length in my *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, Ch. XVIII.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CASE AGAINST WAR

#### *Summary of the Argument*

IF you are not proposing to fight a war, it is foolish to prepare for it, since your preparations will be interpreted by your neighbours as a threat. Therefore the arguments which, in the discussion that follows, are used to establish the case against war are, with unimportant exceptions, equally relevant to the case against armaments. In this chapter and the next, I shall treat the two cases as if they were the same. I shall argue:

(I) That preparedness for fighting and willingness to fight do not give security to the nation which is prepared and willing. Armaments, in fact, do not give safety in the short run.

(II) That the disposition to achieve its ends by violence is not a characteristic that promotes survival either in an organism or in a community. Belligerence, in fact, has no survival value in the long run.

(III) That nations who go to war do not, even if victorious, succeed under modern conditions in achieving the aims for which they were ostensibly fighting, and that the effects of war are in general other than those which are either wished or intended.

(IV) That this generalization is convincingly illustrated by the results of the last war.

(V) That it will be illustrated even more convincingly by the results of the next.

Finally, I shall try to show that war is irrational and amoral; that it promotes stupidity, puts a premium upon vice, discourages intelligence and diminishes virtue; that,



in short, it leaves men intellectually and morally worse, thicker in the head and harder in the heart than it found them. I shall add that wars waged for idealistic ends do not constitute an exception to this generalization.

(I) THAT PREPAREDNESS FOR FIGHTING AND WILLINGNESS TO FIGHT DO NOT GIVE SECURITY TO THE NATION WHICH IS PREPARED AND WILLING

It is often maintained that it is only by being prepared to fight that you can avoid the necessity, only by being equipped for war that you can ensure peace. This doctrine is particularly popular at the moment. *Si vis pacem bellum para*, write schoolboys in their essays, and our statesmen agree with the schoolboys to the tune of an expenditure of 580 million pounds a year on preparations for killing and maiming other human beings. (They are called preparations for defence, but it is after all by the method of killing and maiming that they will endeavour to defend.)

For the belief that preparedness for war brings security, I can find little warrant in history. Glance for a moment at the history of Europe during the last few hundred years, and ask yourself the question, which are the nations who have been so apprehensive as to their safety that they have consistently devoted a large part of their savings to accumulating the means for their defence. They are France, Prussia, Russia, Austria, Italy, England. Which are the nations whose continuous wars are recorded *ad nauseam* in the pages of European histories? They are precisely these same elaborately defended nations, France, Prussia, Russia, Austria, Italy and England. And because these nations were more or less continuously at war, their territories were more or less continuously overrun, their men killed, their cities

plundered, their women violated, their houses burnt, their fields laid waste. . . .

I conclude that, although the possession of great armaments may redound to a nation's glory, they do not promote its safety. If the history of the last few hundred years is to be trusted, one might almost be justified in supposing that the more arms one accumulates for one's security, the more wars one fights; and the more wars one fights, the less security one seems to have.

*The Example of the Small and Undefended Nations. The Case of Denmark.*

Let us now take a look at the other side of the picture. Which are the nations of Europe who, throughout the history of the last 400 years, have been comparatively free from war and the fear of war, and who have fought rarely and at long intervals? They are the northern European countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland. Which are the nations who to-day are, comparatively speaking, without the means of fighting and, therefore, without the means of defence? They are precisely these same nations, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland.

In this connection, the case of Denmark is highly instructive. The Danes have a population of some three and a half million; so far from withstanding, they could not even delay for more than a few hours an army of invasion. As the Danes have neither the numbers nor the means to defend themselves, they are not obliged to cripple themselves to the extent of paying a quarter of their incomes to the State, in order that it may equip itself with armaments. They are, accordingly, enabled to devote large sums of money to their social services; to produce cities that are spacious and houses that are beautiful; to exhibit the lowest figures for crime and disease of any country in Europe; to delight the visitor

with a walk through the pleasant streets of a capital city in the course of which he will see not a single ill-clad or ill-nourished person.

What is more, the Danes manage to give free university education to all those whose talents enable them to profit by it, and to maintain a general standard of living which is higher than I have seen in any country in Europe. Yet they have no empire; they are not a "great" nation, and they are to all intents and purposes without means of defence against invasion. Notwithstanding this fact, Copenhagen is the only city I have visited in Europe where the horizon of men's minds is not clouded by the nightmare fear of war.

The political opinions of the Danes—they have a Social Democratic majority in their Parliament—must, I imagine, be anathema to Hitler, but, as they have no military power, they are permitted to retain their political system. Why, oh why, have we made ourselves so insecure by our prodigious "defendedness"? Why, oh why, have we made our position so precarious by becoming so great? If, wanting as a nervous philosopher, a nice, quiet life, free from alarms and excursions, I were asked before birth to what country I should like to belong, I should choose some undefended and portionless country, preferably Denmark.

It is sometimes maintained that the security of the Scandinavian countries is dependent upon the power and protection of France and England, especially England. It is only, it is said, because they know the English to be strong and know, too, that the English would come to their defence if they were attacked, that the Danes feel comparatively secure against attack. I doubt this, and I doubt whether the statesmen of these Scandinavian countries believe it. I have already referred to the remark of the President of the Norwegian Parliament,<sup>1</sup> to the effect that Mr. Chamberlain would not afford the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 21.

expense of an aeroplane trip to Berlin in order to save Norway. No, it is not upon the problematic support of England and France that the comparative security of the Scandinavian countries rests. It is upon their own defencelessness. Being weak, they do not provoke fear and they are not, therefore, regarded with hostility; nor would the conquest of those who are not in a position to defend themselves confer prestige upon their conquerors.

From this brief survey of the past history and present position of the strongly defended and of the comparatively undefended countries of Europe, I conclude that if peace and a quiet life are your objects; it is better to be an inhabitant of the latter than of the former.

#### *The Reason Why Armaments Fail to Give Security.*

For the failure of formidable armaments to give security, there is, I think, a good and sufficient reason. The arms of any particular nation—let us call it nation A—are always asserted by that nation to be defensive. They are, therefore, in its view, a guarantee of peace. There is not a single nation in contemporary Europe who does not assert that its arms are only for defensive purposes, that the might of its arms is, accordingly, a guarantee of peace, and that this is why its arms are mighty. The British Navy is a guarantee of peace; the German Army is a guarantee of peace; the Russian Air Force is a guarantee of peace, and so on. The heavily armed nations have even asserted that others share their view. Thus there have always been British patriots who were sure that “it is Britain’s care to watch o’er Europe’s fate”, and that the smaller nations “bless the wise conduct of her pious arms”. No doubt other nations own similar patriots animated by similar convictions. Now some of these assertions *may* be made in good faith. The nation which makes them *may*,

that is to say, really be intending to pursue peace—unless, of course, its vital interests are threatened—*may* really have determined—especially, if it has already got what it wanted—to use its armaments only in defence. Nevertheless, whether its assertions are made in good faith or not, its armaments are regarded with suspicion by its neighbours. Their suspicion is that these allegedly defensive armaments may one day be used offensively and may therefore be used against them—though if, as they maintain, the best way to preserve peace is to prepare war, it is not altogether clear why all nations should regard the armaments of other nations as a menace to peace. However, they do so regard them and are accordingly stimulated to increase their armaments to overtop the armaments by which they conceive themselves to be threatened.

### *The Competition in Arms.*

These increased arms being in their turn regarded as a menace by nation A whose allegedly defensive armaments have provoked them, are used by nation A as a pretext for accumulating yet greater armaments wherewith to defend itself against the menace. These yet greater armaments are in their turn interpreted by neighbouring nations as constituting a menace to themselves and so on. . . . We need not continue to follow the process which, it is obvious, can be continued *ad infinitum*, until Europe becomes a vast powder magazine waiting for any chance spark of folly or wickedness to fire the train. As my aunt put it to me succinctly at the conclusion of her discourse on the need for a strong British navy “to keep the peace”, “we have got to build our fleet up to what they said they’d build theirs up to, if we built ours up.”

*Europe's Suicide Race.*

The process of out-arming your supposedly dangerous neighbour, and so provoking him to defend himself by out-arming you, has been the outstanding characteristic of the history of post-war Europe. We fought the last war because we believed ourselves to be threatened by the German army. We won and, having won, we proceeded to disarm Germany, sinking her navy and reducing her army to a mere hundred thousand men. Observing that the allies did not keep their promise to disarm, and finding her attempts to conciliate them unsuccessful, Germany starts to rearm herself, at first secretly and presently openly. She introduces conscription and builds an air force which is superior to that of any other power. Terrified by this resurgence of her old enemy, the English, who have never in any single year since the last war spent less than £100 million on preparations for the next, begin themselves to rearm in earnest. As the years pass, the pace grows hotter. A short time ago the British Prime Minister announced a programme of £1,500 million to be spent on armaments over a period of five years. In the year of writing (1938) we have spent £370 million, but it is now generally recognized that this is not enough. In 1939 we are to spend more, far more than we spent in 1938.

And, inevitably, our preparations start the sequence of cause and effect which I have described. During the week in which these paragraphs are being written, the accelerated pace of our rearmament has been unfavourably commented upon by Hitler. Why, he asks, if we are peacefully inclined, do we require these burdensome armaments? To him, at least, it is not clear. What is clear, is that Germany cannot allow herself to be out-done. She has had a start in the race and she must keep it. And so Germany is rearming more feverishly than

ever and, calling the foundries of the newly acquired Sudeten German territory and the chemical works at Aussig to her assistance, bends her back to the shouldering of new burdens.

*Mr. Churchill and Sir Norman Angell.*

The process, it is obvious, is not one that makes for security. One does not, if one is wise, insure oneself against fire by devoting all one's savings to the storing up of explosives. Apart from the vested interest in war of the armament makers, the professional interest in war of young men trained in the use of modern weapons and anxious to exhibit their technical skill, is it not obvious that those nations which possess great armaments will, sooner or later, use them as surely as children will use elaborate and exciting toys? The most convincing comment that I have heard on the whole lunatic business was made at a meeting which I attended as an undergraduate at Oxford in the year before the war. The meeting was addressed by a Cabinet Minister. "There is," he said, "just one way in which you can make your country secure and have peace, and that is to be so much stronger than any prospective enemy that he dare not attack you, and this is, I submit to you, gentlemen, a self-evident proposition." A small man got up at the back of the hall and asked him whether the advice he had just given was the advice he would give to Germany. A faint titter ran through the meeting—the audience was, I suppose, above the average in political intelligence—but there was no applause. Presently, the time came for speeches by the audience. In a speech equally devastating to the Cabinet Minister, and convincing to me, the questioner proceeded to drive home the moral which his question had implied. "Here," he pointed out, "are two nations or groups of nations likely to quarrel. How shall each be secure and keep

the peace? Our Cabinet Minister tells us in the profundity of his wisdom, that both will be secure, both will keep the peace when each is stronger than the other. And this, he thinks, is a self-evident proposition." This time there was loud applause. It remains to add that the Cabinet Minister was Winston Churchill, his questioner Sir Norman Angell.

### *The Gapers at the Guns.*

And what of the peoples who not only rely upon the possession of the instruments of destruction to protect them from their neighbours, but even appear to take a pride in their possession?

Four-fifths of the news-reels visited by me on the day on which these words were written were devoted to an exhibition of the activities of instruments of slaughter, to cannons firing, mines exploding, torpedoes torpedoing, tanks breaking through hedges and knocking down houses, aeroplanes bombing. At the end the announcer, thinking, perhaps, that this display might have disquieted those members of the audience who were not entirely destitute of the power to connect, delivered himself as follows: "If, as seems to be the case, we are all going to be bombed in the next war, we may as well be bombed by first-class bombers which can fly at over 400 miles per hour."

In H. G. Wells's *The Shape of Things to Come* there is an account of the future destruction of the penguins. As the guns mowed lines of dead in the serried ranks of birds standing on the beach, observers noted with interest that the penguins showed no sign either of fright or of resistance. With a mild and unsuspecting curiosity they watched the preparations for their own destruction, watched the slaughter of their fellows, went on watching until their own end came. Foolish imbecile birds, defective in intelligence? Certainly! But what of



the human penguins who, in the fourth decade of the twentieth century, watch, with equal equanimity, the preparations for their own destruction, hurrying in their sleek thousands to see battle-ships launched, to rejoice over reviews and parades, to gape at the army aeroplanes stunting in the sky, to applaud pictures of artillery and bombing practice on the news-reel, to subscribe to the shares of armament firms? Surely it is not by nourishing these ideals, boasting of these powers, pursuing these methods, that we shall achieve security?

(II) THAT FEROCITY IN ORGANISMS AND BELLIGERENCE IN NATIONS DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE SURVIVAL OF FIERCE ORGANISMS AND WARLIKE NATIONS

I have just contended that war does not give security in the short run to the nations that engage in it. What I have now to consider are its long-term effects. If military preparedness does not give security, what of the military virtues? What effect, in other words, does a readiness on the part of a people to fight, combined with efficiency in fighting, have upon its present greatness and future security? Since peoples are composed of living organisms, we may put an equivalent question in a biological form: is ferocity in an organism a characteristic which has survival value for the organism? The answer seems to be that belligerence in peoples and ferocity in organisms does not contribute to the security of the former, or to the survival of the latter.

To substantiate this answer, we must transfer the argument for the moment to a biological plane.

*Man the Hunter and Man the Co-operator.*

It is frequently urged that readiness on the part of an organism, or a species, or a community to fight,

combined with the possession of those qualities that lead to success in fighting, promote the survival of the organism, the species, or the community that exhibits them. Is this true?

I venture at this point to recommend to the reader a perusal of Mr. Alfred Machin's book, *Darwin's Theory Applied to Mankind*. In this book the reader will learn of the two conflicting sets of instincts inherited from man's past and still operating in his present.

The first men were solitary and silent; they exhibited the qualities of all carnivorous animals—ferocity, wariness, suspiciousness, aggressiveness—the qualities of the lone hunter. In due course, the lone hunters were superseded; they had no chance against the hunting pack. When men began to hunt in packs, when, that is to say, the family became the social unit, to be later superseded by a group of families, the tribe, a new set of qualities came to be endowed with survival value, such qualities as obedience, loyalty, discipline and self-sacrifice, which promoted the cohesion and solidarity of the tribe. Now these, it is obvious, are totally opposed to the qualities which distinguished and assisted man the solitary hunter.

All through his history, man has been pulled in two different directions by his inheritance of two sets of primitive but opposed qualities, the qualities of the solitary hunter and the qualities of the social animal. Sometimes one, sometimes the other set has dominated his behaviour. The first set makes for war and competitive aggression; the second for peace and co-operation. Now it is obvious that the qualities which have greater survival value in some circumstances may, given a change of circumstances, have less. Which set in the modern world has the greater survival value? Clearly the second.

Consider, first, the animals! Not only have the various species of solitary hunting creatures—the

tyrannosaur, the mammoth, and the sabre-toothed tiger—disappeared or nearly disappeared from the earth; such predatory animals as survive are being everywhere destroyed because they have become a nuisance. It is the meek, co-operating animals—the cows, the sheep, and the pigs—which inherit the earth.

*Praises of War, the Stimulant, the Regenerator and the Pruning Hook.*

Now let us consider the case of human communities. It is often maintained that belligerence is a sign of vigour, and that the possession of military qualities assists their possessors to survive. "Our people," writes Herr Hauser,<sup>1</sup> a contemporary Nazi writer, "must be regenerated, must recapture that light-hearted bearing which laughs at danger and fears only to die in bed instead of on the battle-field." "War," says Professor Banse,<sup>2</sup> "is the greatest stimulant and uplifter." But of the peacelover, the Professor tells us that "his dim lustreless eye betokens servility (which does not rule out impertinence), his clumsy body is obviously built for toiling and stooping, his movements are slow and deliberate. This type is the born stay-at-home, small-minded, hopelessly bewildered by the smallest interruption of the normal course of events, looking at the whole world from the standpoint of his little ego and judging it accordingly." "For nations that are growing weak and contemptible," said Nietzsche, "war may be prescribed as a remedy, if indeed they really want to go on living. National consumption, as well as individual, admits of a brutal cure. The eternal will to live and inability to die is, however, in itself already a sign of senility of emotion. The more fully and thoroughly we live, the more ready

<sup>1</sup> In a book entitled *Once Your Enemy*, by Herr Hauser, translated by Norman Gullich.

<sup>2</sup> In a book entitled, *Germany Prepares for War*, by Professor Ewald Banse, translated by Alan Harris.

we are to sacrifice life for a single pleasurable emotion. A people that lives and feels in this wise has no need of war." "War," Bernhardi asserted,<sup>1</sup> "*is a biological necessity*, an indispensable regulator in the life of mankind, failing which would result a course of evolution deleterious to the species and, too, utterly antagonistic to all culture. War, said Heraclitus, is the father of all things. Without war, inferior or demoralised races would swamp healthy and vital ones, and a general decadence would be the consequence. War is one of the essential factors of morality. If circumstances require, it is not only the right but the moral and political duty of a statesman to bring about a war."

"War alone," Mussolini confirms,<sup>2</sup> "brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it." "Though," he adds, "words are very beautiful things, rifles, machine-guns, ships, aeroplanes and cannons are more beautiful things still."

And lest it be said that these writings in praise of the virtues and value of war are, with the exception of Mussolini's lyrical utterance, all by Germans, that Germans are like that, and that *we* know better, let me add the following from the Rectorial Address delivered to the students of Aberdeen University in 1931 by Sir Arthur Keith. "Nature keeps her human orchard healthy by pruning; war is her pruning hook. We cannot dispense with her services." And so and so on. . . . Panegyrics of war more varied, lyrical and enthusiastic even than the foregoing will be found on a later page.<sup>3</sup> For the present, I am concerned with one strain only in the hymn of war's praises, that one, namely, which acclaims war

<sup>1</sup> In a book entitled, *Germany and the Next War*, published in 1913, and much denounced in England during the first year of the Great War.

<sup>2</sup> *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*, by Benito Mussolini.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 103-105.

as the giver of vigour, the promoter of survival, the eliminator of weakness, as, in fact, nature's pruning hook.

*In What Terms are Vigour and Robustness to be Conceived?*

That the willingness to kill and to be killed is a sign of vigour may be true; whether it is to be so regarded or not, depends upon the terms in which we conceive the quality of vigour. My own interpretation of vigour is in terms of spiritual and intellectual qualities. I consider Mozart, Shakespeare and Aristotle to be among the most vigorous individuals who ever lived. My judgment may seem odd to a generation which counts in terms of brawn rather than of brain, and yet I can produce what seems to me to be not a bad reason in its favour. If we are to assess a creature's value in terms of its physical vigour, then human beings must rank low in the scale of organisms. Bulls have more sexual vigour than Hercules; bears more muscular vigour than men. Even the strongest Nordic Aryan who was ever eugenically conceived, whose sinews have never been weakened by the slightest admixture of thought, whose ferocity has never been enfeebled by the least infusion of culture, who has been exercised and disciplined and controlled through all his boyhood and who as a consequence has hated and beaten and bullied and broken through all his manhood—even such a one, considered as a physical specimen, is a very poor substitute for a panther, a wolf, or a tiger.

For my part, then, I should not define human vigour and robustness in terms of those qualities which we share with the animals. I should conceive of them rather in terms of those qualities which are distinctive of ourselves, of our reason, for example, of our creative ability or of our spiritual sensibility. That is why I

should give the palm to Mozart, to Shakespeare, and to Aristotle. . . .

*That Successful War Eventually Destroys the Successful Nation.*

But whatever view we may take of the ability of war to induce vigour in fighting organisms, and whatever definition we may feel disposed to give of the vigour so induced, that war promotes the survival of the fighting nation is simply not true. History shows that aggressive militarism has always ruined sooner or later the nation that practised it. Unable to control their incurably mischievous aggressiveness, the Greek States decimated themselves and their neighbours in a continuously recurrent series of wars until, through failure to unite before a common foe, they fell under the domination of Macedon. Belligerent African tribes have been wiped out by the conquering whites, while their less belligerent neighbours have survived. The most militarily successful phases of Carthaginian history preceded the utter destruction of Carthage, and Hannibal, the greatest military genius that Carthage produced, was the architect of that destruction. All through history, militarily successful and energetically aggressive peoples, especially if led by men of genius, have underestimated their enemies, have deluded themselves with myths of short, decisive wars ending in victory, have failed to make due allowance for the factor of time, have, indeed, gone from blunder to blunder with such persistence and unanimity that, if history is read realistically, the production of a military genius is one of the greatest disasters that can happen to a people.

There is, of course, a reason for all this. War tends to destroy the best and most efficient members of a nation, and leaves the feeble and inefficient to live. Thus, as a result of war, a nation becomes not robust but

decadent. If the nation keeps up its wars long enough, they will ensure first its impotence and then its suicide. Thus Christianity, which lays stress upon co-ordination as against aggression, is not only sound morals but sound biology. The characteristics of which it disapproves—pugnacity, acquisitiveness, brutality, predatoriness and reckless courage—are not only anti-social and misery promoting, they are also biologically disastrous. If mankind is to survive, it must succeed in producing a more social type, better fitted to adjust itself to the highly artificial conditions of the modern world. This new social type will have eliminated the instincts of the carnivores, and have substituted for them those of the co-operators. It is, indeed, a biological truth that the meek shall inherit the earth.

*That the Qualities whose Survival War Promotes are not such as are Valuable.*

Biology suggests another point. Let us suppose that that is true which, if the immediately preceding argument is correct, is not in fact true. Let us suppose, that is to say, that ferocity and aggressiveness do in fact possess survival value. What meaning are we to assign to the word "value"? There is a familiar criticism of those Victorian moralists who insisted that Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection must be a form of progress; was not evolution, they asked, "the survival of the fittest"? The criticism is that they failed altogether to assign any meaning to the word "fittest", and that, in the absence of such a meaning, "the survival of the fittest" meant merely the survival of those who are "fittest to survive". This, indeed, is all that Darwin maintained.

"We dine as a rule off each other.  
What matter, the toughest survive."

Very possibly! But what relation has toughness to "valuableness"? We can imagine a process of evolution of which the conditions were such that all those who were unable to lift objects above a certain weight were eliminated. In such a world, only those who possessed strong biceps would survive. But are the biceps-possessors necessarily the "best"? Are they even, in any tolerable sense of the word, "the fittest"? Yes, if weight-lifting is to be regarded as the sole activity proper to and worthy of human beings.

But to regard strength of biceps as a criterion of human value is to take a somewhat limited view of the possibilities of human nature.

Similarly, if all nations were to devote the whole of their energies to fighting for supremacy, it might well be the case that only those who possessed the most ingenious chemists, the most skilled manipulators of heavier-than-air machines, and the largest number of young men who were prepared to drop the productions of the chemists from the machines upon totally defenceless persons, would emerge victorious from the contest. But there is no reason why skill in the preparation of gas and thermite and readiness to slaughter human beings by dropping the bombs that contain them should be regarded as the chief criteria of national virtue. In general, those qualities which are thought by militarists to conduce to survival are, when they are virtues, the virtues which distinguish barbarians, the endurance of pain, courage in the face of danger and physical hardihood, when they are vices, those which history has taught us to be the most destructive of human happiness, cruelty, callousness, ferocity, and greed of power. Hence even if militarism promoted survival, it is upon such qualities as these that it would put a premium in those who survived. My argument, then, is two-fold. (a) War has not in fact assisted the survival of those who practised it. (b) Even if it did so, which it does not, the



qualities which would persist in those who survived would not be such as can be considered admirable.

(III) THAT NATIONS WHO GO TO WAR DO NOT, UNDER MODERN CONDITIONS, SUCCEED IN REALIZING THE AIMS FOR WHICH THEY OSTENSIBLY FOUGHT

Although war may not in the long run promote survival, it might be urged that in the short run it secures objectives which are important to the combatant nations. Is this true? So far as wars between nations armed with modern weapons are concerned, I do not think that it is. What is more, I believe that wars between heavily armed nations not only do not, but cannot, achieve even the limited ends for the sake of which they are embarked upon. That they cannot, was, I should say, convincingly demonstrated by the last war.

It is difficult to resist the temptation to suppose that some ironical deity, having listened to the professions of statesmen in the summer of 1914, jotted down one by one the aims for the sake of which they announced their willingness to go to war, with a view to ensuring not only that these aims were not achieved by victory, but that their precise opposite was achieved. He may have wished to demonstrate the impotence of human beings; He may have wished to warn us against securing our ends by slaughtering our fellow men, or He may have wanted merely to make fun of our statesmen. To facilitate a comparison between what occurred and what it was proposed and promised should occur, let us consider the war aims professed by this country. We fought and won the war to make England a land fit for heroes to live in, with the result that, once peace was concluded, heroes by the thousand started to rot in idleness on the dole; we fought and won the war to protect the rights of small nations, with the result that

portions of nations were lopped off the parent stem to which they belonged, and arbitrarily grafted on to the bodies of other nations, the stresses and strains, grievances and resentments, engendered by this arbitrary operation, having bedevilled Europe ever since; we fought and won the war to make the world safe for democracy, with the result that democracy is to-day everywhere in eclipse, and in Germany, in Italy, in Russia, in Rumania, in Yugoslavia, in Hungary, in Poland and two thirds of Spain, three-quarters of the inhabitants of Europe are living under the rule of more or less open dictatorships; finally, we fought and won the war to put an end to war, with the result that, in the year of writing, Great Britain alone has spent £370 million on preparations for the next war, which is some £270 million more than she spent in any single year before she finally put an end to war by winning the war to end it.

(IV) THAT THE RESULTS OF THE PAST WAR FULLY BEAR OUT THE FOREGOING GENERALIZATION: THE ALLIES AND GERMANY

But the most convincing demonstration of the futility of seeking to achieve one's ends by fighting is afforded by the post-war history of Germany. If one factor rather than another may be said to have dominated the policy of British statesmen before the war and finally induced us to take up arms, it was our fear of Germany. In 1914 Germany was manifestly bidding for the hegemony of Europe, overawing small nations, identifying might with right and threatening, or so it was thought, the security of Britain. Faced by this situation, we said in effect, that this was a state of affairs that we could not tolerate, and decided that Germany must at any cost be stopped. Accordingly, we went to war to humble

the might of Germany, to show her that force did not pay, and to establish the rule of right in the world. After four and a quarter years of prodigious efforts and appalling suffering we won, and, remembering the ordeal through which we had passed, "This," we said, "must never happen again." In order to prevent it from happening again, we weakened and humiliated Germany to the full extent of our power. We sank the German navy to the bottom of the sea; we reduced the great German army to a police force of some 100,000 men; we lopped off parts of the German Reich and established them as independent States under the League or attached them to other States; we effectually separated Germany from Austria. 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 in the young Nazis of to-day. 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,—so that there could be no future generations to plan revenge,—short, I say, of doing these things, it is difficult to see what further steps we could have taken to weaken and to humiliate our late enemy. When the war was over, the allies continued to hold Germany down. The French encircled her with a network of satellite powers, established the Saar as an

independent State under the auspices of the League, occupied the Rhineland and invaded the Ruhr. Germany was for years excluded from the League of Nations; her middle class was ruined by the inflation of the mark; her unemployment rose to appalling proportions.

Twenty years after, Germany is again strong, again bidding for the hegemony of Europe, again proclaiming might to be right, again overawing and threatening to crush small nations. The parts which we lopped off she has reattached, or is threatening to reattach; Austria she has absorbed. And the moral! That you cannot keep down a vigorous and aggressive nation by the use of force; that, if you try, although you may obtain a temporary victory, your success will be sooner or later wiped out by the determination of the vanquished to build up a force superior to that by means of which your victory was won. You cannot in fact cast out Satan by Satan; you cannot overcome force by force, except the force be that of law. That you cannot, the pacifist contends, is both the conclusion of history and the teaching of morals; and the events of the last twenty years, culminating in the occupation of Austria and the absorption of the Sudeten parts of Czechoslovakia constitute, he affirms, a convincing dotting of the i's and crossing of the t's of his contention.

*That the Peace Necessarily Reflects the Spirit of the War.*

But, it will be said, these things were not inevitable. What they prove is not that it is not right to "down" a bully, but that it is not right to hit him when he is down. In other words, it was not the war against Germany, but the peace with which the war was concluded, the iniquitous Versailles Treaty, which was the source of all subsequent evils. Very likely, but you cannot, I maintain, separate the peace from the war. Means, as Aldous Huxley has convincingly demonstrated, condition

ends, and, if you invoke the hatred and the militarism which are necessary to win a war, you cannot suddenly cast aside your hatred and your militarism, when you come to make peace. Thus the spirit in which you make war will inform the spirit in which you make peace, and your peace will sow the seeds of future wars.

Nobody realized the truth of these contentions more vividly than Mr. Lloyd George, himself one of the architects of the Versailles Treaty. In a Memorandum which he addressed to Clemenceau, during the negotiations which preceded the Treaty, a memorandum which is printed in his book, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, he wrote as follows:—

“You may strip Germany of her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force and her navy to that of a fifth-rate Power; all the same in the end, if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the peace of 1919, she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors. The impression, the deep impression, made upon the human heart by four years of unexampled slaughter, will disappear with the years upon which it has been marked by the terrible sword of the great war. The maintenance of peace will then depend upon there being no causes of exasperation constantly stirring up the spirit of patriotism, of justice or of fair play. To achieve redress our terms may be severe, they may be stern and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain. But injustice, arrogance, displayed in the hour of triumph, will never be forgotten or forgiven.”

Lloyd George's warning was ignored. The passions left by the war were too bitter, the desire for vengeance too strong, and we proceeded to sow in Germany the devil's crop whose harvest we are now reaping. The mood in which we were led to make this disastrous peace was, I repeat, the direct result of the war which the peace ended, a result so direct and, in history, so

unfailing in its regularity, that one is almost tempted to regard it as inevitable.

This is one of the strongest arguments against war. Wars, under modern conditions, end in bad peaces, bad if only because they sow the seeds of future wars.

### *Contrast with Versailles. A Model Settlement.*

It is instructive to contrast the attitude of the allies at Versailles with that of the Danes. In 1920 the allies offered to Denmark the territories which Germany had taken from her in 1864, the territories of Schleswig-Holstein. The Danes refused the offer. Their reasons were as follows. First, the repressive measures taken by the Germans in Schleswig-Holstein during the preceding 56 years had driven many Danish malcontents over the border into Denmark, with the result that in this territory, which had formerly been Danish, there was now a considerable German minority. Secondly, the Danes, not having fought a war, had no desire for vengeance. They did not, therefore, wish to impose their Government upon an unwilling people. Thirdly, they were sympathetic to the young German Republic, and felt that to seize part of its territory, notwithstanding the fact that it had formerly belonged to themselves, was a dubious method of showing their sympathy. Fourthly, unlike the Allies, they did not wish to give the Germans a grievance which might subsequently be used as a pretext for agitation and disturbance of the peace. In a word, preferring security to greatness, the Danes, instead of incorporating unwilling peoples in their territory, contented themselves with the request for a plebiscite, with the object of drawing the new frontier line in accordance with the predominant wishes of the inhabitants. It was to be south of the point at which most of the inhabitants were found to desire to belong to Denmark, north of that at which they desired to belong

to Germany. With what result? There is to-day, broadly speaking, no German problem in Denmark which is remotely comparable with the Sudeten German problem which produced the crisis over Czechoslovakia, and Nazi propaganda, which admittedly exists in South Jutland, as it does in almost all the countries bordering upon Germany, finds little support among the inhabitants. There is a German minority of 30,000 within the frontiers of Denmark, but in no direction has the Nazi appetite for aggression found less promising material for its consumption. Both in respect of its wisdom and its justice, the Danish policy after the war stands in favourable contrast to that of the allies. But then, the Danes took no part in the war. . . .

*That it is Impossible to Assign a Limit to the Evil Effects Produced by War.*

I return from my digression to dot the i's and cross the t's of the moral to which it points. Lasting settlements may be achieved by negotiation; they are rarely achieved by war. Indeed, with the case of Germany so vividly present to our minds, it is impossible to resist the temptation of asking those who, in certain circumstances, advocate war, on what grounds they believe a war under modern conditions will achieve the ends for which it is fought. War, and in particular modern war, is like a forest fire; once it is started, none can set bounds to the resultant conflagration. As when one throws a stone into a pond, ripples spread out in all directions and areas of the surface are affected beyond the knowledge and the vision of the thrower, so in war the professed war aims, for the sake of which men were induced to take up arms, are submerged in the waves of fear and ferocity by which the minds of the belligerents are swept, and in which, presently, reason and humanity are engulfed.

These truths are again vividly exemplified by the effects of the last war, effects to which it seems equally impossible to assign a termination in point of time or a limit in point of evil. Surveying the contemporary European and Asiatic scene, it is difficult to discern a single undesirable feature which cannot be plausibly regarded as a long-term product of the last war. Arabs are fighting with Jews in Palestine, a country claimed by both. Why? In war statesmen make promises to whomsoever they think may be induced to support them. Sometimes these promises are inconsistent. Thus Lord Balfour promised Palestine as a national home for the Jews; but in order to obtain their support against the Turks, Colonel Lawrence made promises to the Arabs, the implications of which were inconsistent with those of Balfour's promise to the Jews.

Italy is an aggressive nation and aims at the hegemony of the Mediterranean. Why? In order to induce Italy to "come in" on their side, the allies made promises involving the cession to Italy of German and Austrian territory. These promises were insufficiently fulfilled, and Italy, finding that she had done badly out of the war, has entertained a grievance ever since. Her sense of grievance has induced a mood of aggressive belligerence, and has led her to seek compensation by obtaining an empire in Africa and achieving the hegemony of the Mediterranean. The desire for empire in Africa was responsible for the Abyssinian affair and the collapse of the League; the ambition to achieve the hegemony of the Mediterranean, for the constant friction with England.

But the clearest illustration of the impossibility of setting bounds to the evil generated by war is once again afforded by the case of Germany. I have already referred to the treatment meted out to Germany at the end of the war; let us follow the course of events a little further.



*The Post-War Generation in Germany.*

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. In 1929 the economic blizzard descended with such force upon Germany that it was the exception and not the rule for a young man of the middle class to find work. Unemployment stalked the streets and presently broke out into the political brawling which became continuous in the three years preceding the Nazi revolution. What a chapter of misery and suffering! What an atmosphere in which to bring up the rising generation!

Oppressed by guilt, overcome with shame, poor and without hope of careers, the war-born generation in Germany came to maturity. The results are visibly before us in a brutality and savagery which have made the contemporary Nazi a by-word among the nations. Demanding a scape-goat for Germany's supposed guilt, he persecutes and tortures the Jews; seeking compensa-

tion for her supposed inferiority, he boasts of her ruthlessness and prates of her power; determined to remedy the weakness which he deems responsible for her humiliation, he has helped her to build a military force so prodigious that his country has become the terror of Europe and a menace to the world. The horrors that have disgraced Nazi Germany have been perpetrated very largely by young men. It is the young men of the post-war generation, the young men born of suffering and shame, who have baited and flogged and tortured the men who went through the war. No, it is not possible to assign a limit to the evils which the war has wrought.

*The Special Nemesis that Overtakes Wars for Ideal Ends.*

It seems scarcely necessary to add that wars for ideal ends are not, under modern conditions, even if they are victorious, more successful in their results than wars for power, wealth or territory. Whatever the motives of the governments who declare them, the motives of the men who fight wars are often honourable. It was impossible for those who knew the men who volunteered to fight Germany in 1914 not to recognize that they were good men doing what they believed to be the right thing. It is one of the tragedies of war, as Sir Norman Angell has well said, that it is fought not by bad men knowing themselves to be wrong, but by good men passionately convinced that they are right. Many of the 1914 volunteers were animated by high ideals. It was not merely that they wished to protect hearth and home, to defend their country, to fight for freedom, to preserve democracy. These ends no doubt were admirable. But for some the response to the call was even more disinterested. They sought to establish the rule of right in the world and to free men once and for all from the domination of force. It was the belief

fostered by press, platform and pulpit, encouraged in the home and the school, engendered by a thousand speeches, instilled by a hundred sermons, the belief that they were to free the world from the rule of force, that gave men strength and hope, the strength to endure, the hope which sustained, during the appalling suffering and boredom of those four years.

Never again, was the exclamation of the men who won the war. Never again! It was not so much a cry wrung from them by their agony, as an assertion based upon their conviction that by winning the war they would put an end to war for ever. And now, it turns out that the belief was false, the hope a delusion, the conviction without foundation.

If we ask why the sufferings of the war were wasted, why the hopes of the sufferers were betrayed, we are often told that it was because of the wickedness of politicians, who after the soldiers had won the war, betrayed the peace. The explanation is, I suggest, totally inadequate.

### *Why The Fruits of War are Bitter.*

The reason lies deeper, and is to be found in the character of war itself which determines also the character of its results. It has happened before in history that wars have been begun for the sake of ideals; it has happened before that they have been succeeded by disillusion and frustration. Why is this? War engenders an atmosphere in which hatred and bitterness flourish and ideals are forgotten. It throws into prominence and elevates to positions of power a managing and executive type of man very different from the young idealists who, in the early days, flock so eagerly to the standards to fight for honourable ends. When the end of the war is reached, the executives are found to be in control and the idealists, if any survive, are derided and ignored. Moreover, the fruits of victory are not

those which the idealists desired and for which they fought. They are such as appeal to the hard-faced men by whose efforts victory has been won. They are power, wealth, pride of place and humiliation of the enemy by revenge. Can anyone doubt that another war fought in defence of democracy, to arrest Fascist aggression, to re-establish the authority of the League, to preserve liberty, to introduce Socialism, or in response to any one of the appeals to idealism by which good men are induced to further the schemes of cynical statesmen, would fail in its object as lamentably as the wars of the past? Reflecting on this past record of war, one is driven to the conclusion that it cannot be right to use human beings as food for cannon, even if the motives which lead to the declaration of war are good. But, as I have tried to show, however good the motives from which war springs, the ends which war achieves are not good, but bad. Men have hoped to get many things by war, power and wealth for themselves, glory and honour for their country, and freedom and happiness for mankind. All that they have succeeded in getting are, to quote an eighteenth-century wit, "widows, taxes, wooden legs and debt".

(V) THAT THE RESULTS OF THE NEXT WAR WILL NOT BE DIFFERENT EXCEPT IN SO FAR AS THEY ARE WORSE THAN THE RESULTS OF PAST WARS

In the light of the results achieved by wars in the recent past, it is difficult to deny oneself the pleasure of asking those who would have us wage another, why it is that they imagine that its results will be different. As we saw in Chapter II, there was, in September, 1938, a strong body of opinion in favour of "standing up" to Hitler, even at the risk of war. This same opinion would now have us increase our armaments, in order that we may "stand up" to Hitler with greater effect

at some future date. "Standing up" to Hitler means being prepared to fight a war whose object would, presumably, be to preserve liberty and democracy, to overthrow Fascism and—we must, I suppose, add—to lay the foundations of a lasting peace. History, as I have tried to show, affords no warrant for supposing that the war would have any such results. But while it is impossible to predict the *ultimate* results of a modern war, those which seem reasonably probable include the destruction of most of what goes by the name of civilization in the contemporary world.

### *The Character of the Next War.*

The horrors with which the invention of the bombing aeroplane has invested war are by now familiar, but few of us, in spite of the crisis through which we lived in September, 1938, have any conception of the nature and effects of the large-scale bombing of London. It is not merely that gas and explosive bombs will kill civilians and destroy houses; it is not merely the horror of the direct hit upon the hospital full of wounded, or of the thermite bomb that sets fire to the asylum. Scarcely less harrowing, though I think, less generally regarded, is the prospect of the destruction of the lighting and heating systems of London with the resultant dark streets and unwarmed houses, of the ventilating apparatus that operates in the tubes by the bombing of the power stations with the resultant suffocation of those who have taken refuge in the tunnels, of the smashing of the drains to let loose into the streets their burden of sewage laden with the germs of disease to complete the destruction wrought by men, of the jamming of the roads leading from London to the country by hordes of panic-stricken fugitives, fleeing from the terror in the air, without petrol for their cars, without food, without shelter, of the crowds of starving men

who, presently, will spread over the countryside, looting and plundering. . . . I have read a number of books on this subject and the weight of opinion seems to be decisively in favour of the view that whatever protection we may devise for civilians, we cannot preserve the fabric of the civilization in which we live. Water, gas and light mains, sewers, roads, transport offices, factories, homes, railway stations, telephone exchanges, standing crops, cattle—all are vulnerable.

We must, then, it is clear, face the possibility of the breakdown of the social services, the cutting of the nerves which keep our social system alive, and the relapse of society into a chaos of panic-stricken individuals fighting each for his own hand, save on one condition, the establishment of a military dictatorship which imposes upon the country an iron discipline, suppresses the right of criticism, stifles grievances and shoots grumblers and dissidents at sight. Such is the most probable result of a war fought under modern conditions for idealistic ends. In a word, all the liberties that we now cherish and would be fighting to preserve would disappear. Through sheer pressure of circumstances, the war to save democracy would kill democracy within twenty-four hours of its declaration.

### *The Necessity to Maintain Civilian Morale.*

It is, of course, maintained that the suppression of liberty which would follow the outbreak of war would be temporary only. We should be deprived of our liberty only "for the duration of the war". "After all," it is said, "our liberties were restored to us after the last war."

Were they restored wholly and fully? I think that they were not. Even in England, the history of the last twenty years has been a history of the continual erosion of liberty, the Official Secrets Act and the Incitement to Disaffection Act being only two of the more out-

standing straws to show which way the wind is blowing.<sup>1</sup> On the continent, the effects of the last war for liberty have been so disastrous that a nineteenth century Victorian dropped from the womb of time into contemporary Germany would inevitably suppose that it was into the fifteenth and not into the twentieth century that he had strayed. A more serious objection to the view that the loss of liberty would be temporary is that it fails to take fully into account the distinctive character of the next war. I have argued that because the target of attack will be the civilian population, because, in other words, the great cities will be in the front line, a dictatorship will be necessary in order to prevent panic. If civilians are so unfortunate as to find themselves in the positions of danger and discomfort hitherto occupied only by armies, they will have to be disciplined as armies are disciplined, or else they will run away, "rat", revolt, lynch the members of the government, do anything and everything to put an end to their intolerable sufferings. Hence the stress which is already beginning to be laid upon civilian morale, which may be defined as the willingness to die and to suffer quietly *without* lynching the government.

With a view to the establishment of such morale, the activities of the government will be all-pervasive and all-embracing. It will regulate the individual's actions and control his utterances. Nothing will be permitted in speech, writing or act, which will tend to the discouragement of fellow citizens or to the discrediting of the government, or in any way hasten the end of the war. For in war time nothing can be permitted to hasten the end of the war. In the middle of the last war two men were fined £100 or two months' imprisonment for publishing a leaflet demanding peace by

<sup>1</sup> I would recommend those who wish to know how far the loss of liberty has gone to read Kingsley Martin's admirably informative pamphlet, *Fascism, Democracy and the Press*.

negotiation. At the trial the Crown Prosecutor (Mr. Bodkin) said that "war would become impossible if the view that war was wrong and it was wrong to support the carrying on of war was held generally". "War would become impossible!" What a terrible thought! To prevent such an appalling consummation, the government, to use the language of its own politicians, would leave "no stone unturned". Assuredly it would not hesitate to assume dictatorial powers extending over the whole civilian population.

*No Warrant in History for Supposing that Dictatorial Powers will be Voluntarily Abandoned.*

Now what warrant does history give for supposing that such powers once assumed will be voluntarily abandoned? Of all human appetites, the appetite for power grows most with what it feeds on. The contention which we are examining would have us suppose that after a dictatorial government has during a period of years made the deliberate suppression of liberty part of its policy, it will, at a given point in time, deliberately reverse its policy and restore the liberty which has hitherto been withheld, with the result that views distasteful to the government will suddenly obtain publicity, and those who have been hitherto immune from criticism will suddenly find themselves assailed. Is this likely? Does history afford a single example which would permit us to regard it as likely? Have those who have won power by violence ever been known voluntarily to relinquish power, those who have been above criticism voluntarily to permit criticism? Yet the view we are considering asks us to believe that those whom power has placed above criticism will by their voluntary and deliberate action suddenly permit the criticism which may lead to their relinquishment of power.

On an earlier page,<sup>1</sup> I gave reasons for the view that

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 17-20.



dictatorships tend as they grow older to become not less but more extreme, not less but more sensitive to and impatient of criticism. History supports this view. Yet the argument which we are here considering maintains, and asks us to believe, the opposite—namely, that at a given moment a dictatorial government can reverse the engines, relinquish power, declare itself superfluous, and, having denied liberty, concede it.

### *Gangsters and Troglodytes.*

There is one further possibility. If, as may well be the case, the next war, or the next war but one, brings about the destruction of our civilization, it will be succeeded by a series of governments of the gangster type envisaged in Mr. Wells's *Shape of Things to Come*. In a half-starved world gangs will fight for food and plunder, and the most successful will become the government. What sort of end is this to a war for liberty, for democracy, and for civilization? And what sort of life will our descendants be living after a series of such wars? The question shall be answered by Mr. Eden:—

“Unless something can be done, the people of this world in the latter part of this century are going to live as troglodytes and go back to the days of cave-dwelling. I sometimes wonder how the world to-day would strike a visitor from another planet who would find us preparing means for our own destruction and even exchanging information on how we are to do it.”

Such in brief is the case against a war arising out of the present international situation and fought in pursuance of certain concrete objectives. I will call it the case against war by a European nation in the contemporary situation. I now come to the more general case, the case against war waged by any nation at any time, the case against war as such. This demands a chapter to itself.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE DENUNCIATION OF WAR

IN this chapter I shall try to exhibit some of the many beastlinesses of war. The subject is one upon which it is difficult to write with restraint, but that I may keep my head as cool and my statement as moderate as I can, I shall begin quietly with some of the minor beastlinesses, and only approach the more repulsive aspects of war gradually and with circumspection.

#### (A) THE LOST GLAMOUR OF WAR

In the years that have succeeded the Great War, war has been "debunked". In war plays, war books and war films, in the stories of soldiers and refugees, in the contemporary reports of bombings and their results, the bubble of war's glory has been pricked and its glamour shorn utterly away. What, indeed, of glamour or romance, could survive such announcements as the following?

"Medals for sale—medals for acts of heroism by soldiers and sailors all over the world, to be auctioned on June 10th, at Glendining's, in Argyll Street, W.1." And what price does glory fetch? "When Bo'sun Shepherd put off in a punt to blow up Russian battle-ships sheltering at Sebastopol, his grateful country awarded him the V.C. It was sold at Glendining's, London, yesterday, with other decorations he won, for £96, a little less than was realized when they first came under the hammer several years ago."

At the same auction a "V.C. won by Lance-Cpl. Goat, 9th Lancers, at Lucknow, brought £62; one gained by Gunner James Collis at Kandahar was sold for £50."

The auctioned medal of Bo'sun Shepherd is symbolical; symbolical of the fate of the thousand and one heroes who, having fought the last war to make England a land fit for heroes and others to live in, can now be seen at large in the streets, selling bootlaces, matches, white heather and violets, and performing inadequately upon musical instruments, in the hope of increasing the pittance with which the country rewards them for having preserved it as a residence worthy of their habitation.

As with the rewards, so with the processes of war. There was once the thrill of individual combat; there was valour in taking single-handed trenches in enemy occupation; there was the heroism that led the forlorn hope; there was the chivalry of the strong man extending clemency to the beaten but noble enemy. But such virtues as war may once have evoked have from modern warfare been stripped utterly away.

War, as we now know it, is a process whereby mechanisms mangle human flesh. To indulge in it is, at best, to perform a repulsive duty, in which men engage as they go underground to clean a dirty sewer; at worst, to enter a shambles in which all the resources of chemical science are concentrated upon blinding, burning, poisoning and mutilating living human bodies in order that all the resources of medical science may be expended upon patching them up, in order that they may be blinded, burned, poisoned and mutilated by chemical science all over again.

#### (B) THE IMPERSONALITY OF MODERN WAR

The beastliness of modern war is increased by its impersonality, a circumstance which makes it easier for

decent men to do beastly things. One of the achievements of modern military technique is to remove the victim from the sight and knowledge of his slayer. In the wars of the past men's savagery has been sometimes mitigated by pity; pity which has sometimes stayed the hand of the slaughterer from the weak and the old, pity, the one gift that Christianity has given to the world. You cannot after all continue indefinitely to outrage women, cut the throats of old men, and spit babies on the points of your bayonets.

But the man who drops bombs from an aeroplane sees nothing of the devastation that he causes. The human imagination is limited, and one cannot feel pity for sufferings which are neither visible nor audible. We all know the lady who, dissolving into a welter of tenderness over the dog which is run over in the streets, reads unmoved accounts of the death by famine of a hundred thousand Indian peasants on the other side of the world.

### *Machines Have Bred a New Human Type.*

There are many mechanically-minded young men in the world to-day who have allowed their interest in machines to rob them of their concern for mankind. Suggest to the average young airman that he should alight from his machine in enemy territory, proceed to the nearest infant school, and bash the heads of all the children into pulp, and he will recoil in horror from the suggestion. But he does not object to blowing the same infants into pieces with high explosive bombs. Dropping bombs from an aeroplane, he does not see what he does, and he has not the imagination to conceive what he does not see. It is a commonplace that the world below looks unreal from an aeroplane, and the appearance robs of reality what one does to that which looks unreal. This is the most charitable interpre-

tation to be placed upon the horrid gloatings with which such a man as Bruno Mussolini describes his exploits in the air in the Abyssinian war:—

“We had to set fire to the wooded hills, to the fields and little villages. . . . It was all most diverting. . . . The bombs hardly touched the earth before they burst into white smoke and an enormous flame and the dry grass began to burn. I thought of the animals: God, how they ran. . . . After the bomb racks were emptied, I began throwing bombs by hand. . . . It was most amusing: a big *zariba* surrounded by tall trees was not easy to hit. I had to aim carefully at the straw roof and only succeeded at the third shot. The wretches who were inside, seeing their roof burning, jumped out and ran off like mad.

“Surrounded by a circle of fire about 5,000 Abyssinians came to a sticky end. It was like Hell.”

Bruno Mussolini, I suppose, is not really much worse than other men, but, like other men, he has very little imagination. Thus pity disappears from warfare because of the lack of occasions for its exercise, and the tale of modern slaughter proceeds unmitigated by any trace of surviving humanity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following extract from an article in *The Aeroplane* of October 19th, 1938, indicates the kind of thing I mean. The writer, one C. G. G., is describing an air raid in Spain as seen from the Rebel side. He has just been writing of: “‘our hosts of the Fighter Command’ setting off to escort a bombing raid on loyalist troops in the neighbourhood of Almaden.” He proceeds: “By the time the last flight was up at a few thousand feet, twelve Junkers Ju 52 bombers came along, beautifully timed, from an aerodrome some miles away and then the whole lot set off towards Almaden. They came back about an hour afterwards intact. They had seen no enemy aeroplanes, and they had thoroughly plastered the troop-assembly. While they were away, I learnt a lot about fighter tactics with the Fiat biplane. It is not frightfully fast, but, with a dive of a few thousand feet to help it, the bombers cannot get away and it is so strong that nothing will pull the wings off.”

“I learnt,” he continues blandly, “that the pilots think highly of the Heinkel 70 as an escort for fast bombers, and of the Heinkel III and Dornier 17 as fast bombers. They like the Henschel as a flying machine, but they say that it is too slow for bomber escort. On the other hand, they say that it is very good for dive-bombing

Here is no combat between brave men, pitting against one another their skill, their endurance, or their courage. Here is a murdering of totally defenceless people by chemical agents set in motion by those who never see the results of their activities, so that, in the words of a contemporary novelist, "modern war has become a running away with one's children and a not being able to run fast enough". The depersonalizing tendency of modern warfare is likely to grow rather than to diminish. At the end of the passage along which modern developments are leading mankind there sits, alone in a room, a blind, deaf and crippled mute, who presses a button to destroy an army of millions of vigorous men. Such admirable qualities as war has in the past provided for itself a semblance of justification by its ability to call forth, courage and endurance, self-sacrifice, initiative and uncomplaining heroism, are increasingly at a discount. To-day, there is only the naked human flesh that feeds the machine, and the flesh of the coward is as good fodder as that of the brave man.

### (C) THE ABSURDITY AND ILLOGICALITY OF WAR

There are times when it seems to the present writer that not the least of the objections to war as an occupation for civilized men is its irrationality. Have we, one wonders, progressed so little that we must still resort to this silly, stupid way of settling our disputes? For consider what the resort to war entails. Here are two nations engaged in a dispute! Each is anxious to

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trenches, and for groundstrafing. It, like the Fiat, has the virtue that you cannot pull the wings off." C. G. G. writes as if he were describing the workings of a model engine, or the tactics of a game of football. Nowhere in his description is there a hint or a suggestion that the Junkers, Fiats and Heinkels are employed in raining death in its most horrible forms on helpless human beings.

establish the superior justice of its claim; and the only method which apparently occurs to either nation of doing this is to kill off as many members of the opposing nation as it possibly can. If the number which it succeeds in killing of the "enemy nation" is greater than the number which the "enemy nation" has killed of its own members, it is held in some mysterious way to have demonstrated its superior right. In fact it has succeeded only in demonstrating its superior might. Bad as the world has grown, we are still not so blind to virtue as to make *no* distinction between might and right, between power and goodness. "I have the power to do this" is not yet equated with "I have the right to do this" —at least, it is not equated among individuals. Yet it is precisely such an equation that is implied and admitted by the arguments with which nations seek to rationalize their will to war.

#### (D) THE EFFECTS OF WAR ON PUBLIC MORALS

##### *The Alleged Moral Effects of War.*

I have argued above that the virtues traditionally associated with war have been rendered obsolete by its mechanization; but while its virtues are doubtful and diminishing, its vices are many and great. Nor, as war develops, do they grow less.

There are those who maintain that war has a salutary effect upon a nation's morals. "War," said Moltke, "is an integral part of God's universe, developing man's noblest attributes." "War," added Wilke, "is a divine institution and a work of love." It may be said that Moltke and Wilke are only Germans, and that this is the kind of thing one expects from Germans. Here, then, is an English sage for your Moltke, an English bishop for your Wilke. "War," said Ruskin, "is the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of men."

“War,” the Bishop of London confirmed, “brings out all that is best in our men.”

It cannot, I fear, be said that we have been behind other nations in the praise which we have bestowed upon and the pleasure which we have taken in war. Listen, for example, to Ruskin: “I thought in brief, that all great nations realised their truth and strength of thought in war, that they were nourished in war, and wasted by peace, taught by war and deceived by peace, trained in war and betrayed by peace; in a word, they were born in war and expired in peace.” Could any German do better than that? Even that great man Bacon was asserting, in the seventeenth century, that “it makes without all question for greatness to be for the most part in arms”. Even the gentle Wordsworth invokes angels to celebrate the victory of Waterloo with a choral shout and proclaim that “Carnage is God’s daughter”.

Here is a political journalist praying “that we shall go to war often enough to prevent degeneracy”. Here, again, is Ruskin expressing joy in the purple blood that stains the cross on English breast-plates, and happily fancying war-bereaved parents sobbing “the old Seyton war-cry, set on”. And here, above all, is that incorrigible ass De Quincey writing of war’s “ineffable relation to hidden grandeurs in man. . . . The idea of mixed crusade and martyrdom, doing and suffering, that finds its realization in a battle such as that of Waterloo . . . so that the tutelary angels of man, when he traverses such a dreadful field . . .” And so on, and so on. . . .

In our own day the view that war does people and nations good is a commonplace of popular thinking. We are asked to believe that it is by following the royal road of war that a nation can realize itself, fulfil its destiny, achieve its historic mission, release its dynamic force, confirm its manhood, maintain its place in the struggle for existence, enhance its being. . . . And,



inevitably, efficiency in the pursuit of war comes to be regarded as the chief end of education. "The purpose of university education"—it is a lecturer of Frankfurt University speaking—"is not objective science but the heroic science of the soldier, the militant and fighting science."

"With the bells in the tower  
Let us arise,  
And fan the fires,  
Which to heaven shall rise,  
And bear our weapons—  
For the year is new;  
War is the watchword!  
Make the watchword true!"

Such are the words of a New Year carol sung, I am informed, by practically every child between the ages of 10 and 18 in Germany.

Quotations could be multiplied indefinitely. In all ages there have existed writers who have been duped by their own moral or physical weakness into a romantic admiration for men of energy and will. In all ages there have been thinkers who have been betrayed by their own incompetence in action into praising the life of action in others. It is such men who are responsible for the belief that war is virtuous and encourages virtue.

*The Allegation Refuted. The Varied Viciousness of War.*

There is no belief more wickedly false. War provides an outlet for every evil element in man's nature. It is not merely that cruelty and ferocity, the deliberate infliction of pain, the wanton delight in destruction, human traits which every creed and code have condemned, are erected by war into honourable duties. There is scarcely a crime in the moral calendar, from cruelty to vulgarity, from lust to corruption, to which war does not give a licence, upon which it does not

place a premium. War enfranchises cupidity and greed, gives a charter to petty tyranny, makes predatoriness a virtue, and places in positions of power the vulgar and the base.

Those whose only passport to popular favour lies in the strength of their lungs, the blatancy of their self-advertisement, or the arrogance of their demeanour, win the attention of the nation, and, staking out a claim upon the public ear, close it to the counsels of reason and justice.

A visit to the Grill Room of a West End Hotel during the last war would have opened the eyes of those who still maintain that war has a moral, a cleansing, or a purifying effect upon a nation. There were visible for all to see the men to whom the war had brought power, prominence and wealth. Profiteers rank and lush, and uniformed jacks in office guzzled and swilled and chattered of the profits the war had brought them. "If this war goes on much longer," I remember hearing one of them say, "I shall be able to retire." The daughters of the aristocratic poor paraded their attractions before the fishy eyes of the newly enriched. . . .

Nor was it only to the greedy and the vulgar that war gave a charter for the indulgence of their appetites; mere silliness had the time of its life. The idle and frivolous, supported and encouraged by the sense of public duty born of hospital visiting, flag-selling, entertainment organizing and unstinted patronage of the bereaved and the wounded, indulged in an orgy of pleasurable excitement. Young women "gave" themselves as a public duty to those who were fighting to preserve their virtue, and to many who were not, and the London stage was visited by a series of farces whose unashamed pornography made it impossible to doubt the "liberating" effects of the war on public morals.

That the state of London was in no way exceptional, accounts of society in other war-time cities abundantly

testify. The books of Bruce Lockhart and Negley Farson vividly describe how—I am quoting from Douglas Reed's *Insanity Fair*—"in Moscow and St. Petersburg profiteers and swindlers and trollops and all the other poisonous scum that comes to the top in war time wallowed in champagne and furs, while Russian soldiers were being driven on to the barbed wire without decent boots". Douglas Reed adds by way of comment that "the equanimity with which many people of large possessions regard war seems due to the fact that war has never yet spread to the Riviera".

### *The Disintegration of the Mind.*

Lower only than the physical suffering entailed by war, and lower only because I consider physical pain to be the greatest of all evils, would I rate the degradation of the human mind that war involves. In war time no lie is too foolish to be believed, no atrocity too unspeakable to be laid to the charge of the enemy. To sustain the lust for killing which fails and falters in decent men, factories are established for the manufacture of hate. To maintain the fires which hate had lit, there poured forth, from pulpit and press during the four and a quarter years of the last war, a perpetual stream of hypocrisy and cant, the old assuring the young of their nobility in letting themselves be murdered to protect the old, and the professional journalists who spoke for the young, informing the old that the young found the war as amusing as their fathers found it morally edifying.

Meanwhile public lying was at a premium. Northcliffe, while arranging for millions of leaflets to be dropped behind the German lines assuring the German people that the victory of the Allies would not mean the destruction of Germany, but only the dethronement of the Hohenzollerns and their own welcome into the

comity of nations, was simultaneously instigating his papers to inflame the public mind by his repeated declarations that the Germans were fiends, who tortured babies and made meals of the corpses of their dead, and insisting that there should be no peace until their country was dismembered and its inhabitants utterly destroyed. Anyone who favoured a milder peace was denounced as a defeatist, a pacifist and a traitor. Popular journalism has still to recover from the inundation of moral bilge with which the war-time Press was flooded; indeed, it is doubtful if, in the lifetime of those now living, it ever will.

As for public morality, its level is lower in all belligerent countries than before the cleansing process of war was applied to it. Crimes of violence are more common, there is less respect for human life and, according to the judges, less trust in human veracity.

The cruelty of war and the brutalisation of humanity that cruelty engenders are dreary themes. Nor do I propose to dilate upon them. As I write, I have before me an article which appeared in the latter part of 1918 in an English newspaper which commanded one of the largest circulations in the country, which advocated the killing of German women in order that fewer little Huns might be born in the future. The propaganda had its effect and British delegates went to the Peace Conference with a mandate conferred upon them by a delirious electorate to squeeze the German orange "until the pips squeaked".

### *The Demoralization of the Masses.*

And when in high places ostentation flourishes, greed is rampant, and vulgarity enthroned, when public life is pervaded by nepotism and corruption, it is not to be wondered at if the people themselves succumb to the infection. In the last war masses of mankind were

reduced to a condition which was indistinguishable from savagery, while among those who were subjected only to war's indirect effects, credulity, intolerance, uncharitableness, bitterness, anger and every kind of childish superstition from the grosser forms of spiritualism to palmistry, astrology and the belief in the second coming and the imminent end of the world grew and flourished. In very truth war enthrones the mob.

*Examples from the Journalism of the Time.*

Those who cannot remember the last war may regard these statements as exaggerated. I cannot, of course, give chapter and verse for all the wickedness and silliness with which I have charged the war. I append, however, a few examples, culled from the literature and journalism of the time, to indicate the effect of war upon the mentality of a nation. Here, as an example of silliness pure and simple, is an extract from a public letter to Mr. Bottomley, which appeared in his paper, *John Bull*, towards the end of the war:—

“There are two kinds of boil, one that comes to a head and one that simmers below the surface and is called a blind boil. For God's sake, Mr. Bottomley, come to a head now and relieve the situation.”

I quote next from a letter which appeared in the *Morning Post* signed by W. H. D. Rouse, in reprobation of those societies which were thought rightly or wrongly to be desirous of peace:—

“Union of Democratic Control, No-Conscription Fellowship, Freedom of the Seas, League of Nations. . . . These titles are false every one, and the men who are working behind them are false as hell, although they work through innocent and honest people who are their dupes. They are like the outward appearance of the educated

German himself. Those blue eyes seem to be full of candour: that unwrinkled and smooth countenance shows no sign of care; the ingratiating smile must please; yet behind them lurks the mind of a devil and the personal predilections of a herd of swine."

The following is an extract from the editorial comments on the dreaded possibility of peace from the paper of the parish in which I was living at the time, St. Jude's-on-the-Hill (Hampstead Garden Suburb):—

"To me last Sunday was—what shall I term it?—a peculiarly distressing day. I mean to see the eagerness and the hope expressed in so many people's faces and voices at the prospect of an immediate peace. Well, it was painful. I tell you that *any* parley with the enemy at this moment is a crime before God, and an armistice a cruel mockery of the dead—and of the living. America fights by our side. And on the shoulder-straps of her men are three letters. Those three letters must be America's only answer to Germany as they are ours—Unconditional Surrender—Absolutely. Let Hindenburg and Ludendorff publicly surrender their swords and the Allies occupy Berlin and Vienna. If this be refused, then, by all that is holy, Fight on! Fight on!"

The editorial continues:—

"When the other day people of this country chuckled over Bulgaria's retirement from the war they little knew! That act was Germany's latest triumph. Bulgaria . . . has been permitted to extricate herself with ease from her precarious position. Instead of being annihilated as she deserved, she has been granted an Asquith peace, i.e. a peace which does not leave the victim sore! Well, we may thank God that this Empire still has a few—precious few—men whose eyes are not quite blinded by German dust. Two of them are going to speak at the Albert Hall on Nov. 5th, at 7.30 p.m.—Mr. W. H. Hughes and Dr. Ellis Powell."

I proceed to a speech by Mr. Bonar Law, which was given headlines in all the papers. The purpose of the speech is to convince people that we must win the war, in order to prove that war does not pay. The demonstration is as follows:—

“MR. BONAR LAW’S REPLY TO LORD LANSDOWNE.

“WAR AIMS LETTER DESCRIBED AS A ‘NATIONAL MISFORTUNE’.

“NO SECURITY BY A PEACE GOT NOW.

“‘We have got to show the German nation in the only way in which they can be made to realise it, that war does not pay, that their military machine cannot get the results which they want; *and that will only be obtained by victory* (my italics).’—Mr. Bonar Law.”

This is what a lord, who was also an admiral, did when he found that he was dining off German plates:—

“‘We have actually been dining off German plates!’ said Lord Beresford. A succession of crashes followed, a number of guests hurling their plates to the floor. The manager of the Savoy remarked after the luncheon. . . . ‘I at once gave instructions to the staff to search among the plates, and only one has been found bearing the German stamp.’”

And now for a few typical extracts from a book, *Women and Soldiers*, by Mrs. E. Alec Tweedie, which enjoyed enormous popularity towards the end of the war, deservedly, since it faithfully represented the views and outlook of many women of my acquaintance, and, I have no doubt, of masses of women, up and down the country:—

“Let us put the whole nation from sixteen to sixty under conscription—men and women alike, so that babies by dozens may be born into a better disciplined world.”

“It is a strange anomaly, by the way, that while men from overseas were flirting with typists, they were marrying domestics.”

“The question of butter for tea is not climacteric.”

“Alas ! some really nice girls are afflicted with an unintentional ‘glad eye’ that attracts the worst side of the worst men.”

“Bachelors from twenty to forty should be taxed 25 per cent on their incomes.”

“Let the Minister of Reconstruction start by putting all feeble-minded persons on farm lands, where there is no possibility of offspring.”

“Tawdry finery is the hall-mark of the usual working-class girl, while the factory hand has been known to pull out her mirror, puff-box and rouge in the middle of a twelve hours night shift on a fourteen consecutive nights job.”

It would be a pity to spoil these perfect things with comment !

The extracts I have given are not untypical of the thought of the period. Admittedly they are rather sillier than most public pronouncements, but the slight degree of added silliness is accidental and does not indicate any real departure from type. Anybody might have written and said such things, and many people did.

For the lowered level of public sense from which such utterances sprang and to which they appealed, the war was responsible.

(E) THAT WAR OUTRAGES RELIGION AND IS AN OFFENCE TO GOD, BUT NOT TO CLERGYMEN.

It is sometimes said that war assists religious revival, since suffering brings men nearer to God. Men have even defended war on religious grounds, and asserted that it is a cross which religion bids us bear.



There have never been wanting ecclesiastics to praise war and to justify killing. In the thirteenth century St. Thomas Aquinas exhorted the clergy to encourage troops for "it is the duty of clerics to dispose and counsel other men to engage in just wars". In the sixteenth century the celebrated theologian Bellarmine writes in approval of "those religious generals and commanders who teach their men by word and example how to shed the blood of the enemy without offence to God". In the twentieth century, the Archbishop of York announces that it is "sometimes a Christian duty to kill". In spite of this weight of clerical authority, I cannot avoid putting on record my own view, that war violates every principle of the religion in which Western civilization professes to believe. During the last war this became so obvious that every effort was made to suppress the teaching of Christ and to prevent it from becoming known. Persons who drew attention to the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount were persecuted, while conscientious objectors who endeavoured to act in accordance with them were abused, imprisoned and placed in solitary confinement. Meanwhile the Christian religion remained the official religion of all belligerent countries, the assistance of the Almighty was simultaneously invoked by all the combatants, and atheists were looked upon with disfavour as being likely to cause Him offence. Piety and professions of respect for the Almighty were, indeed, very marked during the war. Women were assiduous in their attendance at Communion, and heartfelt prayers were offered for success in the slaughter of Germans. It is a suggestive fact that nothing so effectively promotes the belief in the goodness of God as some large-scale calamity such as a war, a pestilence or a volcanic eruption, which brings death and suffering to thousands of people. For these and other reasons the Almighty's stock during the war was high except, perhaps, among the troops.

To decry or to denounce either Him or His Son was a crime, and people were actually in prison at the same time for offences under the Blasphemy Laws and as conscientious objectors.

Bertrand Russell has rightly concluded that in war time it is equally illegal to throw suspicion upon the divine source of Christ's teaching, and to say what that teaching is.

The uncompromising directness of this teaching upon the subject of non-resistance was less of a stumbling block than might have been expected, those who were paid to expound it overcoming the difficulty in which war placed them by the simple expedient of forgetting all about it. Alternatively, by cheerfully identifying the enemy with the devil or with anti-Christ, they converted his destruction into a Christian act and their pulpits into amateur recruiting offices.

"You ask: Is Christ a God of War?"

wrote a Welsh minister to one of my friends, a conscientious objector in prison.

"Look up Joshua v. 15, vi. 1-3, and you will see that Jesus Christ came to be the Field-Marshal of the armies of Israel; and the character of Jesus Christ has not changed even to-day."

As for the "Sermon on the Mount" with its inconvenient suggestion that Christ was partial to peace, it was summarily disposed of:—

"The Sermon on the Mount," continued the clergyman, "was for the new kingdom, but, since the world has rejected that kingdom, *God has been obliged to go back to Old Testament methods.*"<sup>1</sup>

The identification of the Germans with the devil miraculously multiplied for war-time purposes into

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

several million personages was sanctioned by the most formidable array of ecclesiastical organizations.

The following announcement embodies a number of the positions officially maintained by the Church at the time, including the spiritual nature of the war, its sanction by God, and the incarnation of the devil in the enemy:—

#### “DAY OF NATIONAL PRAYER

“At a meeting of united thanksgiving and intercession arranged by the World’s Evangelical Alliance yesterday the Organizing Secretary said the question of a national day of prayer had been under the consideration of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Free Church Council. In a few days there would be a deputation to Mr. Lloyd George to discuss the matter. What they desired to impress upon the Prime Minister was that throughout the Empire, not through fear or cowardice, or any such desire for peace, except peace through a victory over the devil incarnate, there was a feeling that until there has been an official acknowledgment of God on the part of the nation and of the spiritual element in this war, so long would the conflict continue.”

Presumably the acknowledgment was duly made, for presently we find bishops thanking God for the war.

#### “THE BISHOP PREDICTS A LONG WAR

“In dedicating at Ilford yesterday a motor ambulance for the use of wounded soldiers, the Bishop of Chelmsford predicted that the war would be a long one. He *thanked God*,<sup>1</sup> he said, that the war was going on, for it would be a folly and a crime to put aside the sword until the purposes for which we had drawn it had been secured.”

Inspired by their own teaching, clergymen did not hesitate to exhort their congregations to kill Germans directly, when they could, and vicariously by prayer and the “giving of sons”, when they could not. Thus

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

those who were prevented by sex or age from carrying out God's work themselves were asked to invoke God's assistance for those who were doing their killing for them. They took full advantage of the opportunity. The suburbs mewed for blood, spinsters spat at German prisoners, and the boarding-houses of the South Coast vied with each other in the ferocity of their sentiments.

As a further act of piety, clergymen proposed the tarring and feathering of such Pacifists and conscientious objectors as ventured to disagree with their interpretation of the divine will. In a remarkable speech delivered in Johannesburg on Saturday, April 14th, 1917, Dr. Furse, Bishop of Pretoria,<sup>1</sup> suggested that the Government should appoint two independent tribunals to deal with single men who were not doing their duty. "One should be composed of government officials, who would go through every business in the place, and say what business was essential to win the war, and what individuals were essential to that business, and when they had said that such and such a man should stay he would be dressed up in red and purple so that there should be no doubt that he should stay. Every man not so dressed, he would make his life such a burden to him that he would get out somehow or somewhere.

"The other tribunal should be composed of business men to go through every Government department, and say how many people in these departments were necessary and how many were not. Also he would paint the essential people red, and to every man who was not painted red he would give such a time of it that he would get out of the Government service, wherever he went to. (Laughter and cheers.) Get everybody exempted who is essential to stay, and as to anyone not essential give him a week to get to the front or to the

<sup>1</sup> What follows is a verbatim report from the Johannesburg *Sunday Times*.

Potch,<sup>1</sup> and if he did not get there in that period, tar and feather him." "Every man who kills a German is performing a Christian act," announced another patriotic bishop, and proceeded to confirm his announcement by explaining that God had decided temporarily to approve of murder, when the victim happened to be born in Germany.

The view that the killing of Germans was a noble and a necessary act was, indeed, regarded as so self-evident that those who disagreed with it were thought to be mad, and persons serving in the army who occasionally felt doubts about the necessity of continuing the war were treated as mental cases and placed in "homes". This, of course, applied only to those of good connections; the socially insignificant were doubtless shot out of hand.

*Summary and Invective. The Horror that is War.*

I have come to the end of the counts in my general indictment of war. I have tried to show that war does not protect a nation in the short run, and that it does not in the long run promote the survival of those who resort to it. I have argued that war does not achieve the aims for which it is fought. I have sought to illustrate this argument from the results of the last war, and to confirm it by an anticipation of the results of the next.

I then proceeded to a more general indictment of war, and showed by examples and illustrations that it not only does not promote virtue, but that it increases vice; that it degrades the mind in which it begets stupidity, silliness and lies, and debauches the spirit, from which its offspring are cruelty, vulgarity, ferocity and greed.

And bearing all these things in mind, remembering that war excommunicates good and enfranchises evil,

<sup>1</sup> Potchefstrom, a military training camp.

that it enthrones violent men and gives power to the greedy and the base, that it is contrary to our religion, that it achieves none of the ends which it is professedly fought to achieve, that it leaves all belligerent nations incalculably worse off than it found them, and bequeaths a legacy of humiliation, bitterness and desire for revenge which sows the seeds of future wars, it is impossible to resist the temptation of asking whether, whatever may be the nature of the goods that war is said to secure, they are really worth the horror that is war? In the last war some 10 million young men were killed and some 20 million permanently maimed and mutilated. In the plagues and famines that closely followed upon the war, more people lost their lives than in the war itself.<sup>1</sup> More terror and agony were experienced in the space of four years than in the hundred years that had preceded them. Men were burned and tortured; they were impaled, blinded, disembowelled,

<sup>1</sup> For precise computation of the loss in lives and money entailed in the last war, I recommend the reader to study the Carnegie Peace Endowment Pamphlet No. 343. The following extract gives some of the more important figures:—

“The World War took toll of 23 million lives—10 million soldiers and 13 million civilians. In addition, 23 million soldiers were wounded or missing, 9 million children were orphaned, and 10 million persons became refugees. This toll of lives was taken from the ablest and best of the world’s population. Among those killed and disabled were many whose ability and genius would have made great contributions to the civilization and progress of mankind.

“In money, the World War cost \$337,846,000,000, of which 189 billions were spent directly, and the remaining cost was in destruction of property and stoppage of industry. Of this amount, the cost to the United States for the war period was 32 billions of dollars. Continuing costs of the World War now total 19 billions of dollars, which, when added to the costs of the war period, make a staggering total of 51 billions of dollars.

“Comparing military expenditures of 1913, the year before the World War, with those of the current fiscal year, Great Britain’s has gone from \$385,000,000 to \$870,000,000; France’s from \$307,000,000 to \$653,000,000; Germany’s from \$281,000,000 to \$1,560,000,000; Italy’s from \$195,000,000 to \$291,000,000; and the United States’ from \$245,000,000 to \$962,000,000.”

blown to fragments; they hung shrieking for days and nights on barbed wire entanglements with their insides protruding, praying for a chance bullet to put an end to their agony; parts of their faces were blown away and they continued to live. . . .

But the appalling tale of sheer physical agony was only a part of the suffering the war involved. Discomfort of every kind was the lot of millions of men for four and a quarter years. There was the discomfort of ill-fitting clothes and boots, the discomfort of coarse food, the discomfort of never being alone, the discomforts of damp, of mud, of rats and lice. Above all, there was the discomfort of unspeakable boredom. Many men, looking back on the war, will tell you that the sheer boredom of it was its most terrible feature. I do not believe that they are right in this—there is a convention that it is discreditable to confess to fear or pain; but nobody minds admitting to feeling bored—yet, if the tale of all the varied miseries inflicted by the war could be told, the waiting, the lack of reasonable occupation, the being packed up and sent hither and thither as if one were a bale of merchandise, the appalling squandering of knowledge and skill, and the wasted talents of mind and body will be a heavy item in the account.

I have spoken thus far only of the combatants. What the war involved to those who suffered at home, to mothers and lovers and wives, the partings, the breaking-up of homes, the loneliness, the ever-present dread, the still ache of hope deferred, the sharp pain of hope extinguished . . . these things require a more eloquent pen than mine, and I do not propose to do less than justice to the theme by a treatment that falls short of what it deserves. And bearing in mind just how much of suffering and misery the war did involve, it is impossible to refrain from again putting the question I asked above, is war worth it?

*That the Price is always too High.*

It is difficult to believe that it is. Even if war achieved every single one of the aims which it professes to achieve, even if it conferred every one of the goods which its apologists claimed for it, if it settled disputes, cleansed the national life, left the world happier and more vigorous, restored manliness and courage, gave security and laid the foundations of a lasting peace—even if it did all these things, they would not be worth the price that must be paid for them. In fact, as we have seen, it does none of them, and the flood of human misery and boredom which the last war let loose flowed to no purpose; the men who won the war were betrayed by the peace, their ideals were derided, their hopes mocked, their sufferings wasted.

I would go further and maintain that, even if the suffering that war involves were enormously and incredibly diminished, so that it fined itself down to the sufferings of a few, a very few people, of one family even, that still those things for the sake of which the suffering was endured would not be worth the endurance.

*The Idol Who Exacts the Sacrifice.*

The ends for which wars are fought are not concrete but abstract; they are such ends as national prestige, national honour, national security, ends begotten of pride and born of fear. And the nations whose prestige must be flattered, whose honour must be safeguarded, whose security must be guaranteed, are not real things but figments. They are the embodiments of a philosophical theory which holds that the State is an entity possessed of a personality, and that its well-being is more important than that of its individual citizens.<sup>1</sup> To it individuals must be subordinated, and to its alleged welfare men and women sacrificed.

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. VII, pp. 126–132 for an account of this theory.



The growth in power of national States is one of the greatest menaces to man's happiness. Like the gods of old, they are jealous, violent and revengeful. They bear, indeed, a frightful resemblance to the Jehovah of the Old Testament, whom they have supplanted. To them belong the energies, the thoughts, the desires, the very lives of their citizens. They are the gods; the officers of the army and navy are their high priests, the people their sacrifice. In war-time they claim to be omnipotent and would make the same claim, if they dared, in peace. Yet in spite of their power and prestige, these States are figments, owning no reality except by virtue of men's belief in them. There is, in fact, no political reality except in the individual, and no good for the State other than the good of the living men and women who call themselves its citizens. And because States are figments, and because living human beings alone are real, the alleged good of the State as such, is not worth the suffering of a single individual. Those abstract ends of the State for which wars are fought are of less value than a single man's blood, or a single woman's tears. How long, one cannot help wondering, will men continue to sacrifice their lives and happiness on the altar of a nonentity? For one truth stands clear amid the chaos of our time: until mankind has outgrown the worship of these idols, curtailed their powers and transferred their jealously-guarded sovereignties to some supernational authority, there will be neither peace nor lasting progress in the world.

In the preceding pages I have tried to present war not only as the ultimate evil, but as the ultimate folly of mankind. Whatever the circumstances, whatever the pretext, whatever the danger which may have to be faced in the world to-day,<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to imagine anything that can possibly happen to a nation through

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is deliberate, for "the world to-day" is a world lacking even the beginnings of international government.

not going to war that would be of comparable evil with what will certainly happen to it once war is begun. Hence, of all possible alternatives war, given the existing anarchy of European States, is always the worst. War settles nothing, achieves nothing, creates nothing. And while the evils of war, the physical and mental agony of living human beings, are undeniably evil, the goods are at best problematically good. The evils which it involves are certain; the goods at which it professes to aim do not accrue.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL. THE POWER AND LIMITS OF NON-VIOLENCE.

HAVING soused the reader in the warm emotional springs of the last chapter, I feel that a douche or two of the cold water of argument will do neither of us any harm. I propose, then, in this chapter to pick up again the thread of argument and to say something about three highly controversial matters which are directly raised by the assertions of the last. These are, first, the relation of the individual to the State; secondly, the power of non-violence as a mode of resistance to aggression; and, thirdly, the extent to which every civilized community is based upon force, and needs in its internal economy a repository of force.

#### (1) THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

##### *The Fascist Theory of the Super-State.*

The relevance of the relation between State and individual to the theme of this book arises in the following way. A widely held theory of the State asserts that the State is a super individual pursuing ends and fulfilling purposes which are other than those of the individuals who compose it, and possessing rights which transcend the individual's rights. Therefore, it is concluded, it is the duty of the individual to place himself unreservedly at the disposal of the State. The practice of contemporary Fascist countries follows this theory.

It is further held that the ends and purposes of the State are chiefly realized in war. It follows that the

individual will find his supreme duty in serving the State in war. By such service he will develop his personality, fulfil his nature, and realize his higher self.

I have stated and examined this theory at length in other books,<sup>1</sup> and must content myself here with the briefest reference. Its basis is an assumed analogy between the body politic and the human body.

### *The Body Politic and the Human Body.*

The human body is composed of a number of organs, heart, lungs, liver, stomach, and so forth, and each organ is itself composed of millions of living cells. Now nobody would contend that the organs, still less the cells, possess rights and ends of their own other than and in addition to those of the body to which they belong. It would be absurd, for example, to maintain that, while the body as a whole wanted to do this, the heart wanted to do that; or to affirm that favouritism had been shown to the lungs as a result of which the pancreas had not had a fair deal. When, as occasionally happens, groups of cells assert a separate existence, take the bit between their teeth, and develop independently of the rest of the body, we call such development cancer, and think it a great calamity for the body that such a thing should have happened to it.

Again, we think of the body as being in some sense, which it is difficult to define, a whole which is more than the sum of its parts taken separately, and more important than the sum of its parts taken separately. For example, the body is not like a heap of stones, merely an accumulation of different bits and pieces; it constitutes, together with the personality which informs it, a unity, so that regarding the organism, body, mind and soul as a whole, we may justifiably ask what are *its* ends,

<sup>1</sup> See especially my *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, Chapters XV, XVI and XVIII.

what are *its* characteristics, what is *its* record in the past, what are *its* prospects for the future? It is, you will notice, to the organism as a whole that we refer when we use the word "*it*", and the different cells and organs are treated as merely subordinate parts and functions of the "*it*" in whose service lies their *raison d'être* and in the promotion of whose welfare is to be found their excellence. It would, indeed, be absurd to suppose that they had any function to perform or any excellence to realize, except in the service of the body and the promotion of its welfare.

Now it is maintained that precisely the same relation holds between the individual and the State as that which holds between the cells of the body and the body. The individual is the cell; the club, society, union, corporation, church, guild or company, the organ which is composed of the cells; the State, the sum total of the organs. The sum total, but also more than a sum total; since, just as the body is a whole which is more than the sum of its constituent parts, so that one can legitimately ask what is *it* doing, what are *its* ends, so the State is more than the sum total of its institutions and citizens, so that we may justifiably ask what are *its* functions, what are *its* interests, what *its* ends? "The State," as Mussolini puts it, "as conceived of and as created by Fascism, is a spiritual and moral fact in itself." It "is itself conscious, and has itself a will and a personality—thus it may be called the 'ethic' State". As the cell has no ends outside the body, no rights save such as are conferred upon it by the body, and no interests which are not the body's interests, so the individual has no ends, rights or interests save such as belong to him by virtue of the fact that he himself belongs to the State. "Fascism," to quote Mussolini again, "conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State."

Finally, the body, or rather the personality which animates the body, owns, pervades and animates each organ and feature, determining their nature and conferring upon them their distinctive characteristics. Thus a man's ill temper expresses itself in the drooping corners of his mouth, his happiness in the brightness of his eyes. In just the same way, the State is conceived to pervade the being of its members, to determine their natures and to bestow upon them their characteristics. To take a final quotation from Mussolini: "It is the State which educates its citizens in civic virtue, gives them a consciousness of their mission and welds them into unity."

*Some Important Consequences of the Fascist Theory of the Super State.*

Certain important consequences follow. Just as it is absurd to suppose that the body can fail to represent or to carry out the wishes of its constituent organs, so, it is said, it is absurd to suppose that the State can fail to represent or to express the wills of its members. Whatever its actions may be, they cannot help but express its members' wills that it should perform precisely those actions, since its members have no wills except such as they derive from the State. Thus the policeman who arrests the burglar, and the magistrate who locks him up, are really carrying out the burglar's real will to be arrested and locked up, the policeman and magistrate being the executive officials of a State which necessarily represents and expresses the real will of the burglar who is a member of it. It is on this pretext that the totalitarian States take obnoxious persons into protective custody "for their own good", and forcibly "heal" the "diseased minds" of communists, democrats and pacifists in concentration camps through the

ministrations of officers who claim to represent the victims' own will to be healed.

Secondly, though the individual can offend against the State, the State can no more commit a moral offence against the individual than the body can offend against its own nerves and sinews. For the moral relation implies two parties, and there can be no party outside the State which at once incorporates and transcends its members. Again, the individual has neither the right nor the liberty to pursue ends of his own which are inconsistent with those of the State, for the individual, being only a particular expression of the State's personality can have no ends save such as the State proposes to him.

### *Science, Art and Sport in the Totalitarian State.*

Thus the scientist is not to seek for truth where he may find it, "he is"—I am quoting from a writer sympathetic to Fascism—"only free to search for truth as the State sees it". The vision of the artist, or rather, all that is valuable in the vision of the artist, is the State's vision, and it must not be employed except in the State's interest. "So long as there remains in Germany any neutral or non-political art," Herr Goebbels has declared, "our task is not ended."

Even sport may be carried on only as an expression of the State's activity. Thus a football team in Italy is never merely a football team; it is an expression of the spirit, an extension of the being, of the State. Football matches with foreign teams are accordingly treated as matters of national prestige. Victory is hailed as a triumph over the enemy, a testimony to national virtue and a sign of racial superiority; defeat is attributed to foul play and regarded as a *casus belli*. The players are regarded as having the honour of the nation in their keeping. Thus when in 1936 the Naples Football Club

lost a European cup, it was perfectly logical on totalitarian principles for the State to punish the players by fining them £25 each. (The captain incidentally was fined £40.)

In a word, the State pervades the individual's nature through and through, and his interests, his activities and his ambitions must all be rooted in the State. Thus Herr Bohle, the head of the Organization of Germans Abroad, writes: "We recognize only one kind of German abroad—the total German who, a citizen of the Reich, always and everywhere is German and nothing but German, and therefore National Socialist."

In the German Civil Service all officials must either marry or give reasons why they are not married. Excuses for not marrying, arising from insufficient means, will not be recognized for, since the citizen belongs to the State, it is the citizen's business to produce children for the State.

The State, then, is a moral being with a personality to develop and a purpose to fulfil. Its members participate in its being and assist it to realize its purpose. In service to the State lies their duty, and in performing their duty they realize themselves, developing the full potentialities of their personalities and ascending to a higher plane of being than that which is attainable in a life devoted to personal ends.

### *The Purpose of the State Realized in War.*

What, then, it may be asked, is the purpose of the State as the Fascist theory conceives it? The answer is clear. It is the purpose of the State to be great and glorious, to increase its power, to enhance its being, to expand. In the words of Mussolini, the Fascist State is "an embodied will to power and government"; and it is in the interests of this "embodied will" that Fascism



considers itself entitled to subordinate the individual to the State.

Now power is obtained by war, and will is exercised in war. Therefore it is in war that the State finds its true end, in war that the being of the State receives its apotheosis. "The state of war," writes Hegel, who is the originator of the theory which Fascist practice embodies, "shows the omnipotence of the State in its individuality; country and Fatherland are then the power which convicts of nullity the independence of individuals". In war time the will of the individual is subordinated most completely to that of the State, the call upon his allegiance is most compelling, his duty of responding most absolute. When "need arises", says Dr. Bosanquet, an English philosopher who followed Hegel and anticipated some doctrines of Fascism, "of which it, through constitutional methods, is the sole judge, the State may call upon its citizens to place their lives at its disposal". It is from this basis of theory that the glorification of war of which I have cited examples on a previous page<sup>1</sup> derives. Fascist States prepare for war on principle; they praise death upon the battlefield as the supreme glory of men, and the production of men to provide the material for death upon the battlefield as the supreme glory of women. "There is no higher or finer privilege for a woman than that of sending her children to war," said Herr Hitler recently.

*Criticism of the Fascist Theory of the Super State. The Misleading Analogy between the Body Politic and the Human Body.*

As I have been unable to do more than sketch in the barest outlines the theory of the State which abolishes freedom, denies individuality and justifies war, I must

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 75-77, 103-105.

in fairness content myself with the briefest criticism. Criticism turns upon one fundamental point from which the rest of the theory follows. This is the alleged analogy between the State and the individual. The analogy is grossly misleading. In the first place, the organs of the human body have admittedly no rights of their own and no ends of their own. The individual members of the State have both individual rights and individual ends. Secondly, the organs of the human body have no purpose apart from the whole, for their sole purpose is to contribute to the well-being of the whole. But with society the position is reversed, for society has no purpose save such as is realized in the lives of its members.

Thirdly, while the organs of the human body have no life outside the human body, but derive their life from that to which they belong, the members of a society have a life apart from it, whereas society has no life apart from that of its members. Society, in fact, subsists in the wills, the desires, the sympathies and the thoughts of the men whom it knits together. It is constituted by comradeship in work, by fellowship in purpose and in hope, by general inheritance of thought; in other words, by a common life and by the social consciousness in and through which men become aware of the common life. Apart from these things, it is nothing.

Fourthly, society comes into being only through the association of its members, whose prior existence is a necessary condition of its existence. But there is no sense in saying that the organs of a human body precede the body.

The effect of these criticisms is to repudiate the whole Fascist conception of the relation of the individual to the State. Whereas the Fascist theory regards men as made for the State, I should urge that the State is made for man. The State is, indeed, in the last resort only

a contrivance for transacting public business and establishing those conditions of order and security in which individuals can develop their personalities and pursue the ends which seem good to them.

*That the Individual has Other Ties and Allegiances, and that the State's Claim is not Paramount.*

Of the many consequences which follow from this reversal of the Fascist standpoint, I will mention one only that bears distinctively upon the theme of this book. The Fascist theory claims that the State has the right to determine the ends of the individuals who belong to it, and to direct their activities and enlist their services in pursuit of the ends it determines. The ground for this claim is, as we have seen, that the State is a being with a personality of its own, and that individuals are integral and subordinate parts of this being. Let us suppose for a moment that we accept this claim. Now the State is not the only association to which the individual belongs. He is a member of clubs, churches, trade unions, and all kinds of voluntary societies; some of these societies fall within the boundaries of the Nation-States, others, like the Roman Catholic church, or the Third International cut right across them.

Now it is difficult to deny oneself the pleasure of putting the question—if the State incorporates and transcends the individuals who compose it and has the right to exert an absolute claim upon their allegiance, why do not these other associations similarly incorporate and transcend their members, and why have not they too the right to exert an absolute claim upon their allegiance? The State, after all, is the only organization to which we belong which we have not *voluntarily* joined. We do not, most of us, choose to be members of a State: we are pitchforked into it, whether we like it or no, by the accident of birth. The origin of the claim

which the State makes upon its members is, therefore, to be found in a topographical accident. But churches, clubs and trade unions are joined spontaneously, because, presumably, they minister to the needs of the spirit, or provide for the filling of the pocket. Why, then, should it be automatically assumed that, when a conflict of allegiances arises, a man must necessarily give heed only to his allegiance to the State ?

*The State and the Conscientious Objector.*

The case of the conscientious objector to military service in war-time brings the point to a practical issue. The conscientious objector says in effect: "I recognize that I am a member of a political association called the State, and that this association from which I derive my social consciousness has important claims upon me. At the same time I am a member of another and larger association, namely, the human race. In certain cases the claims of the State and the claims of humanity may conflict; such an occasion has now arisen, and I am bound to consider to which of the two I owe the greater allegiance. It is not a foregone conclusion that I should in all circumstances obey the claims of the State, and I must in any event retain the right to decide according to the dictates of my conscience."

Now on what grounds, it may be asked, does the State arrogate to itself the right to coerce such a man, denying by its attempt at coercion both the claims of other associations to which he may belong, and his own claim to decide such matters for himself. On what grounds, too, does it demand that he should surrender his right of decision to an organization which, being both judge and jury in its own cause, inevitably decides the issue in its own favour? It is, indeed, obvious that, in the last resort, the State cannot coerce such a man. It may imprison him, maltreat him or shoot him, but

it cannot make him concede to it the right which it claims, the right to compel him to murder human beings whom he has never seen and with whom he conceives himself to have no quarrel. Many conscientious objectors in the last war objected not so much to taking life as to taking life at the orders of the State. When the question at issue was to determine whether another human being should live or die by their hand, they insisted that the decision was one that only they themselves could take. Now if the number of conscientious objectors were sufficiently large, the State could not, it is obvious, imprison or shoot them all. Therefore a sufficient increase in the number of those human beings who denied the State's right to demand of its citizens the perpetration of the crime of murder in its assumed interests, would mean the end of war. It is, indeed, by no means impossible that it is through a sufficient increase in the number of war-refusers all over the world, that war will ultimately cease.

*That the Fascist Theory Overlooks the Right of Revolt.*

We are now in a position to suggest a further criticism of the Fascist theory of the absolute sovereignty of the State. The theory overlooks the fact, just as it denies the right, of revolt.

There are certain oppressions and interferences, rather than tolerate which, people, as history shows, have been prepared to die. When they are in this mood, they will revolt. Their revolt may be either against the imposition of the State's claims, or against the State's denial of their right to choose between conflicting claims.

It is this factor of revolt that renders it impossible for the State to be absolute in anything but name. So long as people have the will and the power to deny its jurisdiction on any particular issue, it is not, in fact, absolute;

and the fact that on occasion they have had both the will and the power convicts the theory of falsehood.

Were it not so, were the theory of the absolute, sovereign State founded on fact, the State would be entitled to inflict whatever arbitrary humiliation upon its members it chose, and they would be morally bound to acquiesce without demur. Were the State, for instance, to decree that every fifth citizen should be branded with the letter "T" on his left cheek, on the ground that this was for the State's good, or that a need had arisen "of which", in the words of the quotation, from Dr. Bosanquet cited above, "it through constitutional methods is the sole judge", there would be no logical ground for resistance to such a decree. The enormity of such a position provoked after the last war a reaction from the theory which contemplates it as possible. The countries of Europe had experience of the State's power in war-time, and the experience was neither pleasurable nor elevating.

### *The World as an Economic Unity.*

To-day the theory is again in the ascendancy on the continent of Europe, and another reaction is long overdue. Is it too much to hope that this reaction against the claims of the State will come in our time and, by its coming, rid the world of the nightmare fear of war? I suggest in the next chapter<sup>1</sup> that there is no reason for thinking that the State represents the final form of human community; there are, on the contrary, good reasons for believing that it will one day be superseded. Admittedly the State has never seemed stronger or better established than it does to-day. On the continent it is worshipped and is invested with an authority appropriate to the divine. Nevertheless, the miseries which the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of the

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 162, 163.

State is bringing upon mankind are so manifest, that it is hard to believe that men's good sense will not one day revolt against the monstrosity of its claims.

We live in a world which, to all intents and purposes, has achieved economic unity; economically and technologically the modern world is a single structure. Impinge upon that structure anywhere, and the effects of your impact will be felt everywhere. Thus a lady living in a Bournemouth boarding-house is unable to pay her bill because a strike in a Japanese silk factory has wiped out her dividends, while coal-miners in South Wales are thrown out of employment by the tapping of oil wells in Persia. To take another example, the waning of the Victorian taste for mahogany furniture has brought economic hardship to British Honduras, whose chief export was mahogany. Since mahogany went out of fashion, the white population of British Honduras has halved, while many of those who remain have fallen victims to consumption.

Because of the growing economic inter-dependence of mankind, the forces which determine events are increasingly set in motion by factors of which the national State has little cognizance. Thus the inability of nations to control the events which affect their destinies gives to much recent history a determinist appearance, and statesmen, as I have argued in an earlier chapter,<sup>1</sup> do not so much control events, as react to events which have occurred independently of their control.

### *Denunciation of the State as an Anachronism.*

A world which technical factors are welding increasingly into a single economic system requires, it is obvious, a single political organization to give effect to its underlying economic unity. Across this world run the frontiers of its national States. Many of these were

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 28, 29.

fixed in the distant past; even the more modern date for the most part from the eighteenth century. They represent an organization of the life of mankind very different from that which obtains to-day. It is only by means of artificial barriers, by tariffs and customs, by exchange and currency restrictions, by trade quotas and favoured nation clauses, that the modern Nation-State is enabled to maintain itself intact against the logic of an economic situation, which points increasingly in the direction of international, political organization. By its resort to such artificial devices, the state increasingly reveals itself as an anachronism. Meanwhile the stresses which these anachronistic national divisions of mankind increasingly engender visibly threaten with war the civilization which maintains them.

Upon the stage of an economically single world strut the symbolic figures of the Nation-States, Britannia and the Fatherland, La France and Uncle Sam, unaware that the foundations are shifting, that the supports are rotten, and that their convulsive movements, their nervous and agitated gesticulations, threaten to bring down the whole structure in ruins.

### *Men's Revolt Against the State.*

In spite of the apparent triumph of these anachronisms there germinates, I am convinced, in the minds and hearts of those now coming to maturity in the democratic countries a profound hatred of the State and a realization of its wickedness. They may hate it because, as Communists, they see in the division between classes the real division of mankind. They may hate it because, as scientists, they see in the Nation-State a contrivance for preventing mankind from reaping the fruits of the inventions by means of which science has brought plenty within the reach of all; or they may hate it, as I do, because it stands for a level of morality lower



than the average of its individual members and makes for the misery of man.

Can we not, the question is increasingly being asked, transcend this conception of the surface of our planet as a patchwork of patriotic little States, all complete in themselves, all cut to pattern, each with its tawdry nationalism, its touchiness about its honour, its mystery-making Foreign Office with its diplomatic mumbo jumbo, its swaggering army imitating all the other armies, its protected industries all exactly alike, its currency restrictions and tariffs for keeping the foreigners out, its special group of financiers ringing its exchanges, its history books each with its special national lie about history, its special collection of great men, its Dictionaries of National Biography claiming every discovery for its own nationals, its wonderful flag with its bars this way or that way or cross-wise for variety, its marvellous peasant costumes and folklore exactly like all the other peasant costumes and folklore, and its multitudes of young men training and drilling and arming in order to perfect themselves in the technique of slaughtering exactly similar groups of young men in the neighbouring States across the border? It is high time that we transcended the State's conception of national welfare which can be secured only by inflicting horrible sacrifices on hundreds of thousands of its own citizens, in order to harm those of an alleged enemy. It is high time that we transcended the ideals of power, pomp, greatness and glory which can be secured only by killing and being killed, by hating and being hated, and relapsing into savagery in order to squander the inheritance of the ages.

One of the few hopeful signs of our generally depressing times is the growth of the demand for the supersession of the State. In America, in England, in France, the movement for a union of States under some form of federal government grows apace. Clarence Streit has

shown in detail in his book *Union Now* how such a federation could be effected. I refer to his proposals on a later page;<sup>1</sup> I content myself here by putting the question, why should it be assumed that the Nation-State is the last word in the organization of human communities, that it represents the final form of human association? Of comparatively recent growth, the Nation-State can be observed by the student of history superseding other forms of political organization in the past. It is difficult to believe that it will not be itself superseded in the future. The movement of evolution presses forward to its supersession.

### *The Supersession of the Nation-State.*

The course of evolution, as Dr. Langdon Brown pointed out at a recent meeting of the British Association, consists in increasing not the size of the cell or of the individual, but of the unit of organization. Evolution, in fact, is a process by which ever more numerous and diverse units are integrated into ever richer and more comprehensive wholes. The earliest forms of life are unicellular. An advance takes place when numbers of unicellular units come together to constitute an individual who is a colony of cells. At a very early stage in the evolution of vertebrate mammals individual joins with individual to constitute the family. At an early stage in the evolution of human beings family integrates with family to form a larger whole, the tribe; later tribe joins with tribe to constitute a whole yet larger, the Nation-State.

Desire for security appears to have been the form in which the drive of life has chiefly expressed itself to effect these later integrations. Security was the motive which led to the alliance of king and people against the feudal nobility, as a result of which the Nation-State

was established in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. It is something of an historical accident that the tendency to larger integration inspired by this motive has not already proceeded to its logical conclusion in the construction of a world State. Rome nearly succeeded in paving the way for this further integration, and the beginnings of other attempts have subsequently been made. But always hitherto the factors which make for perpetuation at the existing level of the unit of integration actually reached have proved too strong for the drive of evolution in the direction of this further integration. For, whatever the unit which at any particular level of the evolutionary process happens to have been attained, whether family, tribe, or Nation-State, it becomes the focus of a number of influential human sentiments. Patriotism and enthusiasm are evoked on its behalf, self-sacrifice in its service, pugnacity in its defence, jealousy for its honour. These sentiments combine to resist its absorption into a larger unit, and such absorption has been achieved in the past only at an appalling price in terms of human suffering. Nevertheless, it cannot, I think, be reasonably doubted that a further stage of integration lies before mankind, and that State must eventually combine with State to constitute the final unit of integration, which is world State. This step will have to be taken sooner or later by our civilization if it is to survive, and it involves the surrender of the claims to sovereignty and absoluteness by the Nation-State.

## (II) THE POWER AND LIMITS OF NON-VIOLENCE

I see that my reason has again surrendered the control of my pen to my emotions. Let me, then, hasten to pull myself up—for this was to be a severely unemotional chapter of hard and close reasoning—and address myself

to the other matters with which I proposed to deal at the beginning, the place of force in a community and the power and limits of non-violence.

*That the Power of Passive Resistance is Greater than is Commonly Supposed.*

Many of my pacifist friends hold not only that the use of force is always wrong, but that it is unnecessary. Here I cannot follow them. I agree that the occasions on which men resort to force could be enormously diminished, and that very frequently when it has been used in the past, (and is used in the present) its use has been dictated not by necessity, but by the pleasure which human beings derive from it. I agree, too, that the evils which the successful use of force brings in its train are usually greater than the benefits which attend its success.

Pacifist books contain many examples of the successful practice of non-violence. I select a few typical examples from Aldous Huxley's *Encyclopaedia of Pacifism* :—

“During the American Civil War no consideration was shown to those who objected to war on religious grounds. After being cruelly tortured, Seth Loffin, a Quaker, was offered a gun. In spite of threats and abuse, he refused to take it; whereupon he was court-martialled, and condemned to be shot out of hand. In the presence of the firing squad Loffin, who was absolutely calm, asked time for prayer, saying, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ The soldiers were so much impressed that they lowered their guns and, braving the penalty for disobedience, refused to shoot on such a man.

“Dr. Theodore Pennell went to India in 1892, as a medical missionary. His work lay among the wild tribes on the North-West Frontier. Dressed as a Pathan and sharing the Pathans’ mode of living, he travelled about the country unarmed and unafraid, giving his services to all

who needed them. Hearing that a band of warriors had been ordered to take him alive or dead, Pennell made his way directly to the Mullah who had given the order. Astonished and deeply impressed by the doctor's courage, the Mullah gave him food, listened to his account of what he was doing, and, when night came, ordered that his bed should be placed between his own and that of his son, thus indicating that the stranger was under his protection.

"It is in the East that we find the most striking examples of non-violence practised by large groups. In South Africa, and later in India, Gandhi organized non-violent resistance to the Government. The South African experiment was remarkably successful. In India a number of very considerable successes were recorded, and it was shown that very large groups of men and women could be trained to respond to the most brutal treatment with a quiet courage and equanimity that profoundly impressed their opponents, the spectators in the immediate vicinity and, through press accounts, the public opinion of the whole civilized world."

Where non-violence has been attempted but has failed, its failure may be plausibly attributed to the fact that its practice has not been sufficiently universal or sufficiently sustained. This was the case, for example, in regard to the non-violent resistance of the Koreans to Japanese militarism in 1919. Again, it may plausibly be urged that the Civil Disobedience Campaign in India would have achieved its object, if a sufficient number of Indians could have been found with sufficient resolution to carry it through to its end.

### *That Christianity is Practical Politics.*

All this I am prepared to admit. There is, it is clear, no logical contradiction in a universal adoption of Christ's recommendation that we should turn the other cheek. For if all men turned the cheek, there would be none to smite them upon the cheeks that were turned.

I conclude that Christianity is practical politics in the sense that it would work in practice, if a sufficient number of people were prepared to work it. But no modern community has ever taken Christ seriously to the extent of conducting its affairs for five minutes on the assumption that He meant what He said, or that what He said was true. To take Christ seriously would mean disbanding our armies and navies, closing our law courts, sacking our judges, dismissing our executioners, and throwing open our prisons. Opposition to the universal practice of Christianity would, it is obvious, be forthcoming from a number of vested interests. . . .

Nevertheless, it is clear, that there is no logical contradiction in the universal practice of Christianity. Hence, if a sufficient number of people were willing to adopt its precepts and consistently to act in accordance with them, there is not the slightest doubt that the world would be not only a better but a happier place. It would also be a place in which the use of force was unnecessary.

*That Pacifism is a Prudent Policy Even in the World as it is.*

Even in the world as it is, I believe that the adoption of non-violent measures by nations threatened with aggression would entail less suffering in the end than the resort to force in so-called self-defence. If the Belgian Government had cared for the happiness and prosperity of the Belgian people, it would have let the Germans through in 1914 without resisting them. China, had she been wise, would not have sought to check Japan by force of arms; for a non-resisting China could absorb the Japanese, as she has absorbed so many of her "conquerors" in the past. I have already argued that, melancholy as the fate of the Czechs has been, it

would have been worse if war had been declared and Czechoslovakia become the cockpit of Europe. After a few weeks a large part of Prague would have been destroyed, thousands of Czechs would have been killed, thousands more maimed and wounded. Men would have seen their sweethearts gassed and burnt; women would have mourned their dead husbands and watched their children being dismembered. There would have been semi-starvation as there was later in Government Spain, and, when winter came in earnest, with temperatures ranging below zero, as they did in December, under-nourished bodies would have been exposed to the full rigours of the cold. To-day—I am writing in the week before Christmas—I am told, there is prosperity in Prague; unemployment has diminished; shops are doing a roaring trade; everywhere there are parties and Christmas reunions of happy families. No, it is not difficult to argue that what the Czechs would have suffered had war been declared, would almost certainly have been worse than what they have suffered as the result of their betrayal, coupled as it has been with the loss of prestige and power and a considerable suppression of individual liberty. There are no public worries, said Dr. Johnson; there are only private worries; no one ever lost two winks of sleep for the sake of a public worry. Dr. Johnson is not quite truthful; he rarely is. But it is difficult to deny that there is substance in his remark; for the pith of the objection to war as waged by states is that, of all public worries, it is the one which most insistently impinges upon our personal lives and becomes, therefore, a private worry.

### *A Hostile Invasion of a Non-Resisting England.*

Let me carry this line of thought a little further. I am not, be it noticed, suggesting that people suffer *no*

hardship by yielding to the threat of force, merely that they suffer less than they would do, if they resisted force by force. I propose, then, to imagine the most difficult case imaginable from the point of view of my contention. Let us suppose that a dispute has arisen between Germany and Britain, that Britain is disposed to be reasonable, makes concessions and yields the points in dispute, but that, nevertheless, Germany insists on making a display of force and on staging a triumph over the degenerate country which is too cowardly or too supine to resist. I am proposing, then, to imagine a German invasion of a non-resisting England. My case is by no means original: it has been imagined before by Bertrand Russell who, writing during the war of 1914-18, sought to describe in detail precisely what would happen to this country were we to adopt a policy of non-resistance to force, with the object of demonstrating that, bad as it might be, it would be infinitely less bad than the suffering that would be entailed by a decision to fight. As I cannot hope to better his account, I venture to transcribe it here.

*Bertrand Russell on a German Invasion of a Non-Resisting England.*

“Let us suppose all home opposition overcome, and a force despatched to England to take possession of the country. Such a force, since it would meet with no military opposition, would not need to be large, and would not be in the state of mingled fear and ferocity which characterises an invading army among a hostile population. There would be no difficulty in preserving military discipline, and no opportunity for the rape and rapine which have always been displayed by troops after victory in battle. There would be no glory to be won, not even enough to earn one iron cross. The Germans could not congratulate themselves upon their military prowess, or imagine that they were displaying the stern self-abnegation



believed to be shown by willingness to die in the fight. To the soldierly mind, the whole expedition would be ridiculous, causing a feeling of disgust instead of pride. Perhaps a few impudent street-boys might have to have their ears boxed, but otherwise there would be nothing to lend dignity to the expedition.

“However, we will suppose the invading army arrived in London, where they would evict the King from Buckingham Palace and the Members from the House of Commons. A few able bureaucrats would be brought over from Berlin to consult with the Civil Servants in Whitehall as to the new laws by which the reign of Kultur was to be inaugurated. No difficulty would be expected in managing so tame a nation, and at first almost all the existing officials would be confirmed in their offices. For the government of a large modern State is a complicated matter, and it would be thought well to facilitate the transition by the help of men familiar with the existing machinery.

“But at this point if the nation showed as much courage as it has always shown in fighting, difficulties would begin. All the existing officials would refuse to co-operate with the Germans. Some of the more prominent would be imprisoned, perhaps even shot, in order to encourage the others. But if the others held firm, if they refused to recognise or transmit any order given by Germans, if they continued to carry out the decrees previously made by the English Parliament and the English Government, the Germans would have to dismiss them all, even to the humblest postman, and call in German talent to fill the breach.

“The dismissed officials could not all be imprisoned or shot; since no fighting would have occurred, such wholesale brutality would be out of the question. And it would be very difficult for the Germans suddenly, out of nothing, to create an administrative machine. Whatever edicts they might issue would be quietly ignored by the population. If they ordered that German should be the language taught in schools, the schoolmasters would go on as if no such order had been issued; if the schoolmasters were dismissed, the parents would no longer send the children

to school. If they ordered that English young men should undergo military service, the young men would simply refuse; after shooting a few, the Germans would have to give up the attempt in despair. If they tried to raise revenue by customs duties at the ports, they would have to have German customs officers; this would lead to a strike of all the dock labourers, so that this way of raising revenue would become impossible. If they tried to take over the railways, there would be a strike of the railway servants. Whatever they touched would instantly become paralysed, and it would soon be evident, even to them, that nothing was to be made out of England unless the population could be conciliated.

“Such a method of dealing with invasion would, of course, require fortitude and discipline. But fortitude and discipline are required in war. For ages past, education has been largely directed to producing these qualities for the sake of war. They now exist so widely that in every civilised country almost every man is willing to die on the battlefield whenever his government thinks the moment suitable. The same courage and idealism which are now put into war could quite easily be directed by education into the channel of passive resistance. I do not know what losses England may suffer before the present war is ended, but if they amount to a million no one will be surprised. An immensely smaller number of losses, incurred in passive resistance, would prove to any invading army that the task of subjecting England to alien domination was an impossible one. And this proof would be made once for all, without dependence upon the doubtful accidents of war.”<sup>1</sup>

*Author's Avowal of Pacifism in Regard to Wars Between States.*

For my part, I do not think Russell's imaginary account is very far wide of the mark. I accept, too, his estimate of the comparative amounts of suffering which would be involved by taking his way and by

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Justice in Wartime*, by Bertrand Russell.

taking that of the militarists who would meet the threat of force with force. In fact, so far as relates to disputes between States, I would like to reiterate the view already expressed, that of all the courses which it is open to statesmen to follow, that course which is a declaration of war involves, under modern conditions, more suffering and involves more suffering for more people, than any other course which could have been taken. It is for this reason that, in the present situation, I advocate disarmament by this country and non-resistance to the threat of war.<sup>1</sup> Does this mean that I accept also the view that force is never necessary and can, therefore, be dispensed with in human communities? Not necessarily.

### (III) IN WHAT SENSE SOCIETY IS BASED UPON FORCE.

What I have argued is that, given the present world situation, resistance by a State to the aggression of another State is likely to be injurious to human happiness and would not, therefore, be attempted by statesmen who acted in accordance with the general principle, that the object of government is to promote the happiness of the governed. The operative phrase in the preceding sentence is "given the present world situation". This phrase takes cognisance of two facts: (1) that most people do not now and are not likely in the future to adopt in practice the Christian ethic of non-violence; (2) that there is no law governing the relations between States to whose decisions States are prepared to submit themselves.

*That there is no Certainty that the Practice of Non-Resistance will Prevent Aggression.*

(1) Because of the first fact, there is not and cannot be an *absolute* assurance that the practice of non-

<sup>1</sup> A constructive peace policy based on disarmament is sketched in Ch. IX, pp. 194-205.

violence will be successful in preventing aggression. There have been only too many occasions in history in which the meeting of violence by non-violence has led not to the taming of the violent, but to the extinction of the non-violent. The Incas did not, in the early stages of invasion, seek to resist Pizarro, but the fact that they did not, did not prevent their chiefs from being tortured, their women from being raped, and their civilization from being destroyed. The natives of the South Sea Islands did not resist the white man, but the fact that they did not, did not prevent them from being transformed from noble savages into fifth-rate imitation Europeans, sodden with gin and rotten with syphilis. Many religious sects, for example the Doukhobors in Russia, have been uprooted by violence. First persecuted, then ruined, then killed, they were finally exiled and forcibly transferred to Canada. Defencelessness did not save the victims of the Inquisition from the rack and the stake; it did not save the Jews of the Middle Ages, and it does not save the Jews of Germany to-day.

It cannot, then, be said that the refusal to resist force guarantees the safety of the non-resister. It would do so in a Christian world; but so long as the many abstain from the practice of Christianity, it cannot be said that its practice will *ensure* the safety of the few. It is only when most men behave like Christians, that to behave like a Christian will conform to the dictates of prudence. All, then, that I am prepared to urge is (a) that in the great majority of cases in which violence is resorted to, the motive is not self-defence; (b) that even when this is its motive, the resort to violence does not in many cases succeed in defending; (c) that even when it does succeed in defending, the evils produced by the use of violence are very often greater than the evils which men resort to violence in order to avert; (d) that, so far as wars between States under modern conditions are concerned, conclusion (c) is *always* applicable.

*That where there is Public Law it may be Justifiably Backed by Force.*

(2) Since there is no public law governing the relations between States, States in practice acknowledge no law except that of the strongest who takes what he wants when he can. This is the law of the jungle. It means that the State's force is used always and only in the State's interest. Within the State, however, the case is different. So far as the relations between the citizens of a civilized State are concerned, the first of my two facts is still a fact; citizens do not, it is obvious, act always, or even often, in accordance with the Christian ethic. The second, however, is not, for the relations of citizens who are members of the same State are governed by law. Within the State—or more precisely, within the democratic States—there is a public law administered with reasonable impartiality. Now such a law, I should urge—and here I differ from many of my pacifist friends—may be justifiably backed by force. In order to justify my statement, I must say a word about the extent to which and the sense in which any organized society is based on force.

*Why Force in the State is Necessary.*

Every society contains a number of anti-social individuals who do not obey its laws willingly. Now evil is parasitic upon good; that is to say, it flourishes by preying upon what is good, in the sense that it is worth while for some people to do wrong only *because* most people do right. Thus the burglar is parasitic upon the householder, since, if all were burglars, there would be nothing to burgle. It is the many honest men who make dishonesty profitable, just as it is the many truthful men who make lying fruitful, since, if all men

were dishonest, there would be no prizes to be gained by dishonesty, while, if all told lies, nobody would believe anybody else and lying would lose its point. Since it is the existence of law-abiding citizens that calls into being the law-breaking thug, it is clearly the business of the citizen to restrain the thug. The philosopher cannot philosophize while his neighbour is abducting his wife, nor can the artist paint while the burglar is running off with his canvases. In this sense all civilized activity is dependent upon a minimum background of ordered security, and the maintenance of this background is a condition of its continuance. The presence of force, in other words, is required in society, not against the normal, social citizen, but against the anti-social, exceptional citizen whom the activities of the normal citizens call into existence, that he may be restrained from rendering those activities impossible.

In this sense the retention of force in the background is a condition of the existence and continued functioning of any ordered and civilized society. Unless men can feel secure in their environment, they can neither create nor reflect; they can neither make things that are beautiful, nor explore the secrets of the universe. The creative artist demands a quiet background if he is to produce his best work. He also requires an audience whose release from the more primitive preoccupations of the savage and the gangster enables them to turn their attention to the products of the spirit. He demands, in fact, a civilized environment, alert, interested, and reasonably secure; and, that such an environment may exist, it is necessary that those who are by nature anti-social and predatory, should be restrained from destroying the order upon which civilization depends.

*That the Use of Force Demands and is Justified only by the Existence of Law.*

My deduction is that, though the use of force is always

an evil, until such time as we are all of us prepared to act in accordance with the ethic of Christ, it is a necessary evil; necessary, in order to prevent the bad from preying upon the good, and the savage from inhibiting the pursuits of the civilized. A background of force within the State is, then, I should say, not only necessary but beneficial. It is beneficial only on one condition, that its use is governed by law; that the law is such as most men wish to obey; and that it is administered disinterestedly by impartial persons in the common interest. Now as between States there is no such law, there are no such impartial persons, and there is no general concern for the common interest. Therefore the conditions for the beneficent use of force do not apply. Hence, although I am prepared to support the use of the police force, my support does not extend to the army. If and when there is public law between States, I should be prepared to back it by force, as I am to-day prepared to back the State's law by force, for then the armies of the States would become the police force of the world State.

Is this contingency likely to be realized, and if so, by what methods? The answer brings me to the question of international government and to the position and prospects of the League, which demand a chapter to themselves.

*That the Innocent Suffer when States are Punished.*

Before I come to it, however, there is one further distinction between the use of force to restrain the wrong-doer within the State and the use of force to restrain the wrong-doing State which requires to be mentioned, since, even if the condition was satisfied which is not satisfied, and there was in existence a system of international law backed by a world police

force, the fact of this distinction would, nevertheless, make the use of force against a recalcitrant State more blameworthy and less justifiable, to be adopted, therefore, with greater circumspection and resorted to in fewer eventualities, than the use of force against a recalcitrant individual.

The distinction is this. When an individual does wrong and the law punishes him, it is, generally speaking, only the individual who suffers. If a State aggresses against the public law of nations and it is decided to coerce that State, and if the government of that State decides to resist coercion, the measures which are taken to overcome the resistance of the government involve the suffering and may involve the death of totally innocent people who are not only not responsible for what their government does, but may have used every effort to prevent it from embarking upon the course which is responsible for the situation. The distinction is not, of course, absolute, for *some* innocent people may suffer from the punishment of the wrong-doing individual; it is a distinction only of degree. Nevertheless it is important, important enough to confirm me in my belief that, short of the existence of an international government disinterestedly administering a law which is impartial, it can never be right to make war upon another nation. It confirms, in short, my belief that wars between nations are never, under modern circumstances, justified.

It does *not* shake my view that an international government responsible for the administration of inter-State law would require to be backed by force in the same way and for the same reasons as national governments administering intra-State laws are backed by force. This again raises the questions, does the League show promise of becoming such a government, and if it does not, how can such a government be established ?



*Summary of the Argument.*

The foregoing argument has rambled over a considerable area, and a brief summary may help to bring out the essential points. I have argued (1) that though the State has a right to exercise claims over its members, it has no right to assume that these claims are paramount over all other claims; (2) that when a conflict of claims arises, the individual has a right to decide for himself to which he shall give his allegiance; (3) that the fact that he has this right does not mean that the State is not based upon force and has not a right in certain circumstances to use its force. On the contrary, there is an important sense in which every community, which is a civilized community, is based upon force and is entitled to use its force to protect its law-abiding against its anti-social citizens, provided always that the community in question is based on law, that the law is one to which the majority of its members consent, that it is administered by impartial persons not themselves parties to the dispute they are judging, and that the force is used only in accordance with the law to enforce its decisions; (4) that when these conditions are not satisfied, the use of force is not legitimate, and, when force is met with force, the effects are worse than the effects of the refusal to use force by those against whom force is threatened; (5) that these conditions are *not* satisfied in their bearing upon the relations between States. Until, therefore, there is a super-national authority backed by law, the effects of forcible resistance by a State which is the victim of aggression by another State are likely to be worse than the effects of non-resistance to aggressive action; (6) that the conclusion reached in (3), in regard to the community of individuals within the State, may be extended to embrace a community of nations acknowledging a common law administered by

an impartial international authority. If conclusion (3) is correct, such an authority would be entitled to back its decisions by force. It is, indeed, on this foundation that, I am convinced, the assured peace of the world will ultimately be built; (7) that when and only when everybody accepts the Christian ethic, and tries to act in accordance with it, the use of force to restrain aggressors and back the law will become unnecessary.

## CHAPTER VIII

### INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE GHOST OF THE LEAGUE

*The Doctrine of the Absolute Sovereignty of the State.*  
IN the last chapter I concluded that force is necessary to the maintenance of an ordered society, and tried to define the sense in which every society is based on force. What is true of the relations between individuals within the State is, I submit, also true of the relations between States. Just as the individual in a civilized State is restrained by an impartial law backed by the public force of the nation from aggressing against other individuals, just as the existence of this force prevents him in the case of dispute from acting as both judge and jury in his own cause, so I believe that war will cease only when nations, like individuals, are restrained by an impartial law backed by the public force of all nations from aggressing against other nations, and are prevented in the case of dispute by the existence of this law and the presence of this force from acting as both judge and jury in their own cause. It is only under such a system that the world of States will ever enjoy peace and security, just as it has only been under a similar system that individuals within States have ever enjoyed peace and security.

Now in order that such a system may be established, it is necessary that the absolute sovereignty of national States should be superseded. The doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of States is one which entitles each State, undeterred by considerations of morality, to pursue whatever ends seem to it to be to its advantage.

“Where the safety of the country is at stake,” wrote Machiavelli, “no consideration of justice or injustice, of honour and dishonour, can find a place. Every scruple must be set aside.” “What scoundrels we should be,” said Cavour, “if we did for ourselves what we are doing for Italy.” The doctrine is popular to-day. “Any means,” a Nazi speaker recently remarked, “however immoral, can legitimately be resorted to for the seizure and preservation of sovereign authority.” If morality enters into the State’s consideration, it does so only in so far as it can be identified with the State’s interests. “Whatever,” Herr Wagner, Minister of the Interior in Nazi Germany, has announced, “is useful to the German people is right. Whatever is harmful is wrong.”

#### *Its Necessary Issue in War.*

Now this doctrine is, it is obvious, tantamount to the assertion in the international sphere of the necessity of anarchy. If the State is an absolute authority, if it is to pursue its advantage wherever it may happen to find it, without reference to the principles of morality or the rights of other States, if self-expression and expansion are necessities of its nature, if it owns no public law beyond the expression of its own will, then peace, it is obvious, depends upon no other State venturing to thwart its ambitions. Yet other States will, on the basis of the same doctrine, demand similar rights of self-expression and self-realization to be fulfilled by similar policies of expansion. Between such States a clash sooner or later will inevitably occur. Meanwhile, no State will be able to trust the word of another, and each State will be ready to attack its neighbour, whenever it thinks to gain an advantage by doing so. Fichte’s remark “Pronounce peace, so that you may begin war with an advantage in your favour” admirably sums up the morality by which the doctrine is inspired.

States, then, are to make war whenever they think that they can wage it with advantage. Now since, under the existing system, there will always be some State which, whether rightly or wrongly, thinks it can wage war with advantage, war will succeed until the structure of civilization is destroyed and the bright heritage of the ages utterly dissipated. So far from this conclusion being disavowed, advocates of the absoluteness of the State explicitly recommend war as a means of enhancing its individuality. This is, indeed, one of the commonest of the grounds on which war is praised. "The state of war," writes Hegel, "shows the omnipotence of the State in its individuality." The State is then revealed as "the absolute power on earth; its own end and object".

*That War is a Luxury we can no longer Afford.*

Now whatever may have been the case in the past, war is to-day a form of self-indulgence which man can no longer afford; he has become too powerful and, therefore, too dangerous. Give a schoolboy an airgun and he may shoot a few sparrows or break a window or two, but that is the extent of the damage; give him a modern revolver and he becomes a public danger. One does not, after all, present one's children with dangerous toys; until they are old enough to play with them without harming themselves. One does not press upon the baby a box of matches. Yet these precisely are the gifts with which science has dowered modern man, with the result that he is in measurable distance of destroying himself through his inability to devise the political machinery which is necessary to canalize and direct for the public safety the powers with which science has invested him.

Unless he can devise this machinery before it is too late, our civilization will follow its predecessors to

destruction, and man himself may be superseded and sent to join the mesozoic reptiles upon the evolutionary scrap-heap of life's discarded experiments, while some being better adapted to carry forward the process of life's development replaces him upon the evolutionary stage.

Hence it is not necessary to show that man is worse than he ever was, merely that he has a need to be very much better, if he is to escape destruction. He must learn to transcend the morals of the jungle and the nursery, that is, he must learn to advance beyond the present anarchy of rival sovereign States, and this he must do, not merely as a condition of advancement, but as a condition of survival. Such, then, is the task which awaits this and the immediately succeeding generations.

### *Epitaph upon Man.*

Let us suppose that the task is not performed. How is the course of man's future to be envisaged? To answer, I will take a glance at the end of man's career upon the earth, as seen through the eyes of a Martian historian writing in the year 10,000 P.M.I.<sup>1</sup> (It will be evident in a moment why no earthly history will be available to serve our purpose).

“On our neighbouring planet the Earth the age of the greater reptiles was succeeded by that of the vertebrate mammals. Of these the Hominidae, though physically a comparatively feeble species, who were forced to cover themselves with the skins of other animals in order to protect themselves against the vagaries of the climate, were nevertheless enabled, in virtue of their possession of a low cunning in which pessimistic writers have seen some likeness to our Martian intelligence, to establish a complete domination over the whole of the rest of the planet. This they used for the

<sup>1</sup> *Post Martem Incarnatum.*

purpose of preying upon all the other forms of life which the planet contained, for food, the species being carnivorous, in the interests of sport, since its males identified the good life with the depriving of other creatures of life, or in those of vanity, since its females sought to increase their sexual attractiveness by wearing about their persons the skins and heads of dead animals. So destructive were the Hominidae, that they would speedily have succeeded in denuding the whole planet of other forms of life, were it not that their attention was distracted and their energies wasted by their internecine feuds upon which their quarrelsome nature led them to indulge among themselves. The domination of the Hominidae was finally terminated by their discovery of how to release the forces locked up in the atom, a discovery which they speedily used for the purpose of exterminating themselves altogether. The destruction of this noxious species by virtue of their own unaided mischievousness has always been acclaimed by Martian theologians as affording one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the providential government of the universe."

If this fate is to be avoided, we must, I repeat, learn to discover some method of putting an end to the present anarchy of competing and conflicting sovereign States. How is this to be done? There are, broadly speaking, two methods.

*The Two Methods: (1) The World Domination of a Single Power.*

The first is by the world domination of a single power. If one power were to become sufficiently strong to reduce all the others to subjection, the world would no doubt enjoy such peace as obtained under the Roman Empire. It is even possible that the circumstance that modern civilization is nearly world-wide in its scope and may shortly be universal—the world, as I

have already pointed out, is already, from the economic standpoint, a single unit, and standardized mass production, standardized creation-saving amusements, the radio, the telephone, the cinema, the motor-bus, are spreading a common way of life and common standards of value over large areas of the world, so that a visitor to this planet a hundred years hence may well find life in Baghdad indistinguishable from life in Balham—it is even possible, I say, that this circumstance may prove to be an important factor in enabling the political domination of a single power to become world-wide.

Such a system would, it must be admitted, be infinitely superior to the existing international anarchy. I doubt, however, whether it would be lasting,<sup>1</sup> and for two reasons. (i) So long as the doctrine of absolute State sovereignty survived, each State that was brought under the rule of the dominant State would regard its subjection as a disgrace, and would bide its time until it believed itself to have found a suitable opportunity, in combination with other subject States, for throwing off the yoke. Thus the rule of the dominant State would be at best precarious, and its government, aware of the latent disaffection among subject nations, would be forced to maintain a prodigious armament in order to keep them in subjection. Ultimately, it would be caught off its guard, revolt would break out, and the world would again be plunged into a series of wars. It is significant that no great Power has ever succeeded in maintaining an empire for more than a certain length of time. The fact that, under modern circumstances, the empire might well become world-wide, would, I think, diminish the dangers with which the imperial Power would be faced, but it would not remove them.

(ii) It is probable that, especially at first, the government of the dominant Power would be forced to adopt a policy of repression. It would be necessary, for

<sup>1</sup> Except only in the contingency mentioned on the next page.



example, to repress all propaganda in favour of a return to the era of independent national States, and there would be the usual restrictions upon liberty of speech and writing. Would men tolerate indefinitely this curtailment of their liberties? I do not know. Upon the answer to this question the future of our species for a long time to come largely turns. If the answer is in the affirmative, we may expect the ultimate establishment of a society of reasonably contented Robots, such as is envisaged in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Such a society, however profoundly the surviving free minds of to-day may feel repelled by the prospect, would at least be a peaceful one, and on this basis the rule of a single dominant Power might ultimately become permanent.

It may well be that this is the most probable of all the foreseeable futures that await mankind.

If the answer is in the negative, the régime would, sooner or later, be faced with disaffection from within. For the reasons given in an earlier chapter,<sup>1</sup> the rule of the dominant Power would, when challenged by disaffection, become more repressive and not less. The greater repression would provoke more disaffection, which might at last break out into open revolt. For these reasons, I doubt if a permanent solution of the existing international anarchy will be found in the domination of a single State, except on the assumption that man's future condition is that of a social automaton.

### *The Two Methods: (2) The Establishment of an International Government.*

The second method of ending the present anarchy is to build up some form of federal organization leading ultimately to the establishment of a super-national State.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 17-19.

It is difficult, as one surveys the course of evolution, to believe that the national State will be permanent, or that it will constitute the last word in the organization of mankind. On the contrary, there is every reason to suppose that the process which has evolved the national State will drive forward until it finds expression in a wider form of organization.

*Evolution Through and Beyond the State.*

Let me once again refer to the nature of the process by which the evolution appears to advance. I cannot do better both of individuals and communities than recall Dr. Langdon Browne's arguments. Evolution, it seems, is a process by which ever more numerous and diverse units are integrated into ever richer and more comprehensive wholes. The earliest forms of life are unicellular. An advance takes place when numbers of unicellular units come together to constitute an individual who is a colony of cells. At a very early stage in the evolution of vertebrate mammals individual joins with individual to constitute the family. At an early stage in the evolution of human beings family integrates with family to form a larger whole, the tribe; later, tribe joins with tribe to constitute a whole yet larger, the Nation-State.

Thus in the history of England, the men of Dover are superseded by the men of Kent, the men of Kent by the men of Wessex, the men of Wessex by the men of Southern England, the men of Southern England by the men of England, the men of England by the inhabitants of the British Isles.

Desire for security appears to have been the form in which the drive of life has chiefly expressed itself to effect these later integrations. Security was the motive which led to the alliance of king and people against the feudal nobility, as a result of which the Nation-State

was established in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. It is something of an historical accident that the tendency to larger integration inspired by this motive has not already proceeded to its logical conclusion in the construction of a world State. Rome nearly succeeded in paving the way for this further integration, and there have been the beginnings of other attempts. But always hitherto the factors which make for perpetuation at the existing level of the unit of integration actually reached, have proved too strong for the drive of evolution in the direction of this further integration. For, whatever the unit which at any particular level of the evolutionary process happens to have been attained, whether family, tribe, or Nation-State, it becomes the focus of a number of influential human sentiments. Patriotism and enthusiasm are evoked on its behalf, self-sacrifice in its service, pugnacity in its defence, jealousy for its honour. These sentiments combine to resist its absorption into a larger unit, and such absorption has been achieved in the past only at an appalling price in terms of human suffering. Nevertheless, it cannot, I think, be reasonably doubted that a further stage of integration lies before mankind, and that State must eventually combine with State to constitute the final unit of integration, which is world State. This step will have to be taken sooner or later by our civilization if it is to survive, and it must involve the surrender of the claims to sovereignty and absoluteness by the Nation-State.

*The Establishment of the League: A Hopeful Analogy.*

Looking forward to the future evolution of human institutions beyond the Nation-State, I welcomed the formation of the League as an important advance in human affairs. If peace was to be secured, the amoral pretensions of the sovereign States must somehow, I felt, be superseded. By what method? By precisely

the same method as the amoral pretensions of sovereign individuals had been superseded, namely, by subordinating them to a common authority which was strong enough to command respect for its authority.

England, I knew, had once been a chaos of conflicting barons, lords and dukes, living in uneasy alliance with one another in order that they might overcome their neighbours and set at nought the authority of the king. These feudal lords knew no law but their own will, recognized no motive to conduct except self-interest, and preferred personal aggrandisement to the happiness of their subjects. How like the national States of to-day ! And how closely the countries which, in the Middle Ages, were torn and ravaged by the disputes of the feudal lords resemble the continent of Europe to-day, reduced as it is to a condition of insecurity and apprehension by the mischievous ambitions of incurably quarrelsome nations. Between the feudal lords of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the law of the jungle prevailed ; between the nations of the twentieth century the law of the jungle alone is recognized, or rather, alone was recognized prior to the formation of the League. The parallel seemed exact.

How then, one asked oneself, as one followed it out, was the internal anarchy which prevailed in the States of the Middle Ages ended ? By the accumulation of such strength on the part of the king as reduced to a minimum the chances of successful resistance to his will. After a time defiance simply ceased to be practical politics. Many have seen in the invention of gunpowder the key to the king's ultimate victory over the barons. In England and in France the kings, who contrived to obtain a virtual monopoly of muskets and cannons, gained as a result such a vast preponderance of strength that they were able to bring their dissident barons and dukes into subjection. Was it possible to entertain a hope that a similar invention might end the international

anarchy of the twentieth century? Was it fanciful to see in the aeroplane an instrument of war which gave such an advantage to the attack, that the nations would be compelled by the instinct of self-preservation to concentrate this new power in the hands of a single authority, so that, just as the invention of gunpowder brought the nation into effective existence, and put an end to the intolerable conflicts of feudal lords, so the invention of the aeroplane would bring an international government into effective existence, and put an end to the intolerable wars of the anarchic Nation-States.

### *The Original Intention of the League.*

For this precisely was the hope by which the founders of the League were inspired. They wanted to establish an arbiter between the nations which was both impartial and overwhelmingly strong. This arbiter was to be the master of the world; it was to sit in judgment upon any nation who broke the peace, and its decision was to have the authority of law. In establishing such an arbiter, the intention was to withdraw from each nation the right to determine its own cause in its own interest by pooling the force of all in order to restrain the aggression of any, by arming the law—the phrase is Sir Norman Angell's—and not the litigant.

The League as originally conceived was, then, to be a congress of all nations, pledged to supersede war as an instrument of policy between the nations. It was hoped that the existence of such a congress representing the pooled forces of all its members would save the world from war. The intention of the League was not, it is important to remember, to wage another “war to end war”, not even to rally a group of nations to defend what they considered to be just against another group inspired by a different idea of justice. It was to bring together such an assemblage of powers, namely, the

powers composing the League, that "aggressors" would be helpless or, if they tried to resist, be defeated by economic sanctions without resort to war. This, then, was the meaning originally attached to collective security. It was to be security for all against war, and for each against aggression.

In this connection it is interesting to record a remark made by President Wilson at the Peace Conference in justification of his abandonment of that one of his Fourteen Points which proclaimed the doctrine of the Freedom of the Seas, interesting because it clearly indicates the intention in the mind of the chief begetter of the League. "Gentlemen," he is reported to have said, "in the next war there will be no neutrals".

But these were long term objects. They were in the nature of ideals. The immediate object of the League was reconciliation. It was to heal the wounds of the war. To effect reconciliation two measures were necessary; the first, disarmament, the second, Treaty revision. Neither was taken. Why were these measures not taken? Because, as time passed, it became increasingly evident that the League was in effect an instrument of Franco-British policy. From the first, the Versailles Treaty was a millstone round its neck.

### *The Failures of the League.*

From the first, the interests of the victorious Powers were mistakenly thought to require that the settlement effected at Versailles should be indefinitely perpetuated, that the frontiers laid down, the limitations of armaments prescribed, the balance of power which was struck in 1918, should become permanent features of the European landscape.

Now some of the arrangements included in the Versailles settlement were manifestly unjust. Being unjust, they required the maintenance of force to uphold

them, and provoked the recovery of force to redress the grievances they embodied. The inclusion of the Sudeten German lands in Czechoslovakia was, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> an injustice of precisely this kind. Fully cognisant of the resentment which the newly-drawn map of Europe aroused, deeply apprehensive of the recovery of force which the grievances stimulated, the Allies found themselves unable to disarm. The realization that the Allies did not propose to disarm and that the Versailles settlement was accordingly to be maintained, if necessary by force, led the dissatisfied Powers to begin to accumulate in secret the forces necessary to overturn it. Presently, this secret rearmament became known to the Allied Powers and reinforced their determination to retain and even increase the forces which they had failed to disband. Thus were sown from the first the seeds of a future resort to arms, in anticipation of which the nations presently began to perambulate the circumference of the vicious circle of armament provoking ever greater armament, to which I referred in a previous chapter.<sup>2</sup>

*The League as an Instrument of Franco-British Policy.*

Meanwhile, what was happening to the League? It was, as I have already hinted, busily engaged in promoting the interests of the victorious Versailles powers. As the years passed and first Japan and then Germany left it, it came to look less and less like the first sketch of a world government, and more and more like a group of Powers concerned to bolster up the Versailles settlement. To-day, as I have tried to show,<sup>3</sup> it has become little more than an alliance of two ex-burglars, England and France, who, having grown respectable on the proceeds of past loot, have set up an institution to regularize their position and are doing their best to discourage new recruits to their old profession.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 68-70.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 34-36.

As for the policy of collective security for which the League was in theory supposed to stand, it is dead. Although we may not endorse the description of Geneva as a thieves' kitchen, it is difficult not to conclude that, as one surveys the post-war history of the League, the object of the assemblage of Powers at Geneva has been only too often to concert a crime which every member had an equal interest in committing. Let me state this conclusion in the politer language of M. Herriot, addressing the Radical Congress at Marseilles, in October, 1938: "Collective security is now completely bankrupt and the League of Nations ineffective. In the case of Abyssinia it has sunk to the depth of lending its individual authority to the aggressor instead of to the victim. There has been a complete collapse of international morals."

What is the inference? That the League is to-day simply an alliance of Powers engaged in the old game of Power politics. By the accident of victory in war this alliance has been enabled to present itself in the light of a blue print of the world government of the future, and so to appeal to the idealism of those who look to world government to save the world. But this pretension can no longer deceive anybody. You do not begin the task of forming an international government by dividing Europe into two halves and calling one of them the League. The theory of collective security may have been sound; it may even be that there was a time when its practice would have been effective, but it is folly to continue to demand its application when the essential condition of its success, the command by a substantially inclusive League of overwhelming force, is lacking.

This folly is abundantly illustrated in contemporary political life by the expressions of those who are duped by their desire to fight Fascism into the belief that they are defending collective security. Reducing their attitude to its absurdity, they even bid us go to war to keep the



peace. Listen, for example, to Lord Cecil speaking in the House of Lords, at the end of 1938, urging us in so many words to "fight for peace":—

"We are told—the noble Lord, Lord Newton, said it with very great strength—that you will not get anybody to fight except for their own interests. Of course not, but their interest is peace. Peace is the greatest interest we have, and we have sought it for decades, if not for centuries. It is far more important for us that peace should be preserved than that we should maintain every yard or every inch of our territory or even every pound of our trade. The thing that matters is peace, and that is the only thing worth fighting for."<sup>1</sup>

As the League declines, substitute Leagues are proposed in its stead.

There is, for example, the League or United Front of Democratic Powers, the goal of the policy which has for some time past been advocated by the Left.

*The United Front of Democratic Powers: The Policy Stated and Criticized.*

I will briefly summarize this policy as presented by Mr. Brailsford, one of its most persuasive advocates. What he suggests is the formation of a Federalist Group of Powers with like social philosophies, like forms of government, and a like determination to keep the peace as an Inner League within the League. To it would belong France, Russia, the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain, so soon as "a victory of the Left in our own country made it possible to group Britain with France and the Soviet Union".

The members of this Federalist Group would pledge all their resources, both military and economic, to the defence of each. The Group would of its own initiative

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, House of Lords' official report.

exclude no States although, we are told, "some States exclude themselves."

In the eyes of those who are prepared in certain contingencies to precipitate another war between the nations, this policy has much to commend it. But let us not delude ourselves into thinking that such a war would be in essence different from the balance of power wars which have disgraced Europe for the last three hundred years, that the motives that inspired it would be such as internationalists could approve, or that the ends which it achieved such as are valuable. When the war was done and the suffering over, the world would be in no better case than it was before it began. Mr. Brailsford's scheme proceeds from an oversimple morality. It lays it down that certain Powers are good, and suggests that these should band together under the auspices of the old League, or under the title of a new one, to defeat the machinations of those Powers who are bad. But the comparatively virtuous Powers, who might be expected to subscribe to the scheme, are also those same sated Powers whose insistence upon the retention of the pound of flesh which they allotted to themselves under the Versailles Treaty has brought Europe to its present pass. The trenches which run across Europe to-day are not only the trenches which separate the Fascist (wicked) from the democratic and Socialist (virtuous) Powers, but those between the Have-not Powers and the Haves. As to whether the Have-not Powers are to be censured in respect of their determination to remedy their insufficiency, there may be two opinions; but there can, I think, be only one in regard to the past blunders of the Haves. These have recently been admitted in the House of Commons by Mr. Chamberlain himself. Is, then, the new League's alignment of United Front Powers to tie itself to the Versailles settlement or to permit revision? But how negotiate peaceful revision, if there is no all inclusive

League? And what United Front Power will be prepared to cede territory or subjects to a Fascist country?

But the final argument against Brailsford's proposal is that it involves a reversion to balance of power alliances in a disguised form, the "Powers" that "exclude themselves"—presumably Germany, Italy, Japan and Hungary—facing the United Front Powers across trenches that the proposal would only the more clearly define. Such alliances between hostile groups of Powers have always made for war in the past; I think that they would continue to do so in the future.

### *The Moral for the Pacifist.*

What is the moral of this analysis? Pacifists fall, broadly speaking, into two groups. There are those who would not be willing to subscribe to the use of force in any circumstances or for any purpose, and those who would describe themselves, as I do, as utilitarian pacifists. The utilitarian pacifist objects to wars between nations, because he thinks that they will produce more misery than any alternative course which it is open to statesmen to follow. But he will not withhold his sanction from the force which is mobilized behind the law. The more extreme pacifist was unable to bring himself to support the League because of the implications of Article XVI of the Covenant which, pledging the member States to take sanctions against an aggressor, obviously envisaged in some circumstances the possibility of the use of force. Required to subscribe to this doctrine, the extreme pacifist was apt to point out that, to the individual men and women who actually suffer force's effects, it affords little consolation to reflect that the gas which is asphyxiating and flaying, the shells which are blowing to pieces themselves and their children, are being dropped by League aeroplanes and

fired by League guns in defence of the world's peace and in restraint of the aggressor.

While I see its force, I cannot myself take this view. As I explained in the last chapter, I think that the use of force may sometimes be justified, even if the innocent suffer. For example, I should not refuse to imprison or even to execute a man who first raped and then cut the throats of small girls, merely for the reason that the imprisonment and execution were known to be likely to cause suffering to his innocent and loving wife. Moreover, as I have explained, I am an internationalist who believes that, just as the use of force is necessary to restrain anti-social offenders against the civil peace, so, granted the existence of an international government, the use of force would be necessary to restrain anti-social offenders against the world's peace.

#### *Past Support of the League of Nations.*

Holding these views, I was from the first a supporter of the League of Nations, and regarded it as the seed from which the world government of the future might someday spring. As long as the League gave indications that it might one day fulfil the promise of its birth, I was prepared to support it, however manifest its imperfections. As it developed and failed to attract the United States, first refused to admit and then failed to retain Germany, as it approximated less and less to the international ideal, and wore diminishingly the aspect of the first tentative organization of the future government of the world, and increasingly that of an alliance of Powers directed against another alliance of Powers, it seemed to me that, as a utilitarian pacifist, my support must be withdrawn, since any war which such a League might wage would be merely an old balance of power war in a new guise. It was, I suppose, through its conduct over the Abyssinian affair that the League

finally succeeded in shaking off my support, for the Abyssinian affair made it difficult to believe that the League policy of collective security could, in the light of what the League had now become, ever be a reality.

### *The End of Collective Security.*

What were the reasons for this conclusion to which many of the early supporters of the League reluctantly came? They were, I think, broadly, as follows. Since the League was not and seemed unlikely to become all-inclusive, there was no certainty of its being able to enforce its will without war. Hence the question from 1931 onwards was whether, in the event of aggression, the League Powers would be willing and strong enough to take the risk of war against an aggressor? When this question was raised in an acute form by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, the risk was declined. But the fact that it was declined did not constitute a departure from the policy of collective security, for had the risk been taken and a war waged, it would not have been a war of all Powers against an aggressor, but of one group of Powers against another. Since Manchuria, it has become increasingly evident that the phrase "collective security" no longer covers the coercion of recalcitrants by all; it stands for the security of one group of powers, namely, those who are in the League and are reasonably satisfied with the world as it exists, against another group who are outside it and dissatisfied. Hence, when the League group contemplates making war or taking the risk of making it, it is no longer an international force proposing to coerce breakers of the public peace, but a participant in the game of power politics which is compelled to consider not only whether it has a good cause, but whether it has sufficient power behind it to make its cause good. Opposed to this group is another which, dissatisfied with the *status quo*,

regard the League merely as a hypocritical device for investing with the appearance of right and the majesty of law a fundamentally inequitable distribution of the world's territories and raw materials. In short, to revert to the metaphor used above, the League is to-day little more than a trade union of ex-burglars, grown respectable on the proceeds of their loot and resolved to deter new recruits from taking up their former profession. More precisely, it is England, France, and Russia, trying to maintain the existing territorial and economic map of the world, and confronted by Germany, Italy and Japan who want to redraw it in their own favour.

Now force used as the instrument of world authority is one thing; force used as the instrument of self-interest is another. When moral authority decays, force ceases to be its instrument and becomes its substitute.

In these circumstances, a war waged under League auspices would not be an act of international justice executed by a world police force for the restraint and punishment of aggressors; it would be a struggle between competing groups of powers, the one anxious to retain, the other anxious to acquire, a larger share of the world's economic and territorial goods. Such a war would be different only in name from the wars waged between groups of powers in the past, from the war of the Austrian Succession, from the Seven Years' War and the Napoleonic wars, from the war of 1914-1918. The fact that it was fought in defence of democracy and the League and against Fascism and aggression, and not in defence of public right and little Belgium against Germany and militarism, would make no difference to the realities of the situation. Collective security—however much we may deplore the circumstance—has broken down and been replaced by two armed alliances. Reflecting upon these considerations, I, in common with many other convinced international-

ists, have come reluctantly to feel that it is not through the existing League that our ideals can be realized.

### *Withdrawal of Support from the League.*

In the existing situation, then, I remain a pacifist, a pacifist whose objections to war between nations are not removed by the existence of the so-called League. If there were a *real* League, which could justifiably be regarded as containing the promise of developing into an international government, my view would be different.

Hence one of the immediate objectives of pacifist policy should be, in my view, to plan the preliminary steps for the formation of a new League. Such a League will not, it is obvious, be formed by fighting another war which will divide Europe again into two camps, and enable the victors to perpetuate the division by humiliating the vanquished. The first step to its formation is the calling of a world conference, which will embrace both the groups of Powers which are to-day ranged on either side of the trenches that run athwart Europe. The objectives of such a Conference are indicated in the next chapter.

### *Principles of a Reformed League.*

It is no part of my present purpose to enter into the question, how should such a League be envisaged? One or two points are, however, fairly obvious. If the foregoing arguments are correct, the failure of the present League has been due to the refusal of its member States to abrogate their national sovereignties. Each State has remained an absolute sovereign unity and its government, instead of pursuing a League policy, has used the League as an instrument for the pursuit of its own interests. Since the Assembly and the Council of the League have been composed of the nominees of

governments, they have not unnaturally carried out the instructions of their governments and been influenced by the representatives of the service departments of their own countries. Another weakness has lain in the fact that individual States have the right to secede from the obligations incurred by membership, and can refuse to carry out the decisions to which they object. As a consequence, every decision has had to be unanimous and, inevitably, compromise resolutions, which mean little or nothing, have taken the place of decisive action. In sum, the existing League of Nations has been an alliance of independent States rather than a true international organization administering international affairs in an international spirit, in accordance with the rules of international law.

In the light of the experience gained during the League's twenty years of history, and having regard to what it has now become, one may confidently assert that the first step in international government will be taken only when an assembly is appointed consisting of representatives of the peoples rather than of nominees of the governments. Let me suppose for a moment that the reader caring, as I do, above all things for peace believes, as I do, that it is only through the establishment of a super-national government that peace can ultimately be assured. On what lines would he tackle the apparently Herculean task to which his belief commits him ?

### *Federal Union.*

What is needed is not an assembly composed of representatives appointed by national governments, but a federal parliament composed of representatives directly elected by the peoples. This federal parliament should supersede the governments of the various Nation-States which are members of the Union in respect of certain specific functions, those, namely, which affect



and equally affect all States which are members of the Union. What are these functions? Broadly, they may be defined as follows. There are certain activities in which a State engages which necessarily produce effects upon the welfare of the inhabitants of other States; these take place notably in the spheres of defence, trade, population, money, and communications. In respect of these activities the powers of the State should be superseded and they should be taken over by the federal government. There are, however, other State activities which produce effects only upon the citizens of the State concerned; examples are local government, insurance against ill health and unemployment, and the penal code. In these spheres the member States of the Union should retain their present absolute control.

The Union would begin by incorporating the leading democracies of the world which, trained in the liberal tradition, have like-minded governments, similar laws, and roughly the same conception of the rights of the individual, the same conviction of the importance of individual liberty, and the same view of the relation of the individual to the State. Broadly speaking, the inhabitants of the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Scandinavian countries all want to live in the same kind of community and, broadly speaking, they do. But the Union should be a flexible and a growing concern, organized in such a way that it could be expanded to include other nations, so soon as the advantages of belonging to it became sufficiently manifest to induce them to make such changes in their political and financial structures as were necessary to enable them to fit in to the common political and monetary system of the Union. I cannot pause here even to summarize the details of this proposal, which are worked out at length in Clarence Streit's book *Union Now*. I confine myself to making two points.

(1) *The Advantages of Union.*

The modern world is oppressed by two fears: they are fear of the loss of liberty and fear of war. Because of these fears, the civilization which our ancestors slowly and laboriously achieved is being rapidly eroded and, should war come, may collapse. For both of them the State is responsible. It is the State which robs the individual of liberty; the State that threatens him with war. If the sovereignties of national States were superseded, both these fears would be vastly diminished, even if they were not wholly removed. For, in the first place, if the Union were armed with the pooled forces of all its members, it would be so strong that it need not go in fear of attack. I, for one, should not hesitate so to arm it. Granted that there existed in the world a body which had some pretensions to be international, I would be prepared, for the reasons given earlier in the chapter,<sup>1</sup> to arm it with force in order to enable it to maintain itself against aggression from outside the Union, and to enforce its decisions upon member States within the Union. It is only, I have argued, in the existing world of anarchic Nation-States, each of which is judge and jury in its own cause, each of which seeks to impose its will upon its neighbours by becoming more effective in the art of slaughter than its neighbours, that pacifism becomes a duty.

Secondly, the citizens of the Union would be free from the fear of the loss of their liberties. Their liberties would be guaranteed, in the first place, by the absence of the fear of war. It is the policy of the self-sufficient independent State that is responsible for the abolition of liberty over so large an area of the contemporary world. In order that States may be free, their members cannot be, since, in order to preserve their freedom, States find it necessary to impose an increasing measure

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 149-151.

of control upon their citizens. When the State goes to war in order to preserve its freedom, its citizens may rest assured that it will deprive them of theirs. But it is not merely that the Union, being free from the fear of war, would also be free from the incentive to encroach upon the liberty of its subjects; more important, perhaps, is the fact that their liberty would be guaranteed by the direct election of representatives to the federal parliament. Statesmen of the constituent governments who sought to encroach upon their people's freedom would be liable to impeachment before the federal parliament.

## (2) *The Appeal to America.*

The drawing up of the constitution of the federal government of the Union is, in my opinion—and here I come to my second point—one of the most pressing pieces of work now awaiting the efforts of those who, believe that it is only by taking this radical step that our civilisation can save itself from destruction. Who is to begin?

For a beginning we in Europe look expectantly to America in the hope that America will take the initiative in taking the step which alone can save us from ourselves. For it is from the United States that the initiative must come, and for the following reasons.

(1) America has given the world its most convincing object lesson in the possibilities and advantages of federation.

(2) America sponsored and then abandoned the League.

(3) America stands as yet outside and above the *mêlée*, and can approach the needs of the civilized world as a whole with a detachment which is not possible to the distracted and terrified nations of Europe.

(4) Because of this detachment, America is as yet comparatively free from the suspicion of interested

motives. If England or France were to take the initiative and invite America to form with them a common government, America, suspicious as she always is and has been of European wickedness, might justly complain that she was being asked by the democracies to take a share not in their governments because they wish her to co-operate in the function of government, but in their perils, because they feel themselves to be imperilled. 'They want us,' I can hear Americans saying, 'to enter into a Union because they know that they cannot get us into an alliance, and they are so desperately frightened that they must be sure of us somehow.' "When," in fact, "the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be . . ."

But if America took the lead, England and France could not harbour the same suspicions of America's intentions. American realists would have little to gain in the immediate future in the way of security, but American idealists could rejoice in the conviction that they were bringing the chance of peace to a distracted world.

In preparing a new edition of this little book for American publication—for these latter paragraphs have been written subsequently to the body of the book—I have asked myself what words could be most appropriately addressed to American readers. I came to the conclusion that if I could interest them in the idea of Federal Union, representing to them at once the urgency of our danger and the possibility of meeting it through Union and Union alone, I might help to dig a channel through which the generous waters of American idealism might flow in such abundance, that they became in the end a flood to bear to safety the ark of our threatened civilization.

## CHAPTER IX

### APPLICATIONS. A POSITIVE POLICY FOR PEACE

#### *Must it be Fighting or Truckling?*

It is time to apply the conclusions of the foregoing argument to the present situation. I have contended that, in existing circumstances, nothing justifies a war. It follows, if I am right, that nothing justifies a war to resist Fascism, to overthrow the dictators, or to preserve democracy. "What, then, are you proposing to do in face of the menace of Fascist aggression? Are you simply going to truckle to the dictators, giving way first here and then there, presenting them first with this and then with that, until you stand before the world a nation bankrupt of honour, bereft of allies, without resources, having lost the British Empire which your forefathers won and with it the means of resistance which they would not have hesitated to adopt?"

#### *The Psychology of Fascism and Its Causes.*

No, not necessarily. For, I should urge, war and truckling are not the only two alternatives. "What then, would you do?" First, I should begin by considering the psychology of Fascist aggression. What, I should want to know, are the conditions which have produced this psychology. What is the environment in which it thrives, and how can I modify that environment and so change the psychology which it has generated? If the argument of the preceding chapters is correct, the causes of the present mood of Germany are partly psychological and partly economic. The

psychological causes are the direct results of the humiliations imposed by the Allied Powers at the end of the war and during the years which succeeded it. They have produced a state of mind which is aptly described by the familiar catch-phrase, "inferiority complex". Not only did we defeat Germany in the war, not only did we impose humiliating terms, not only did we saddle her with a grossly unfair war-guilt clause, but, ever since, we and the French—and the French must bear a greater share of the guilt than ourselves—have pursued a policy of putting and keeping her in what a wit has so admirably described as "plaster of Paris". For fifteen years we pursued a policy whose object was to form a *bloc* of Powers for the encirclement and restraint of the beaten enemy. On the east there was Poland allied to France; behind Poland, Russia. To the south-east and south were the Little Entente Powers, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, allied to each other and allied also to France. When Germany sought to enter the League, her entry was delayed by the application of an elaborate judicial procedure. When Germany, still poor and comparatively helpless, pleaded for the right to form by voluntary and peaceful consent a customs union with Austria which was bankrupt, the plea was refused; refused, it is interesting to remember, by a Labour Government. And so on and so on. . . . From these frustrations and humiliations there was born the Nazi psychology, the psychology of the "inferiority complex". It boasted to assert its superiority, whistled to keep up its courage, praised war, worshipped force, and made aggressive parade of its military efficiency. Continuously it compared its humiliations with the arrogance of its enemies, its poverty with their wealth, its lack of possessions with their plenitude. The implied inference was: "How unjust are our enemies, how unfair the distribution of the world's good things, which enables *them* to monopolize what they cannot use, while

we are deprived by their monopoly of what we cannot do without.”

It is, I think, important that we should realize how much the humiliation and isolation of Germany have contributed to the present mood of German politicians. The realization suggests three morals. The first concerns ourselves. When we have deliberately maddened Germany for fifteen years, it is a little disingenuous of us to complain because we see foam upon her lips. The second concerns Germany. It suggests that the way to deal with the psychology of Fascism is to remove the causes which have produced it. It is only when Germany has been induced by the removal of grievances to re-enter the comity of nations, that the ideas of justice and freedom can be expected to assert themselves.

### *The Demand for Colonies.*

The third relates to the demand for colonies. What is the real origin of the complaints, the real nature of the claims, with which Germany to-day keeps the world in perpetual agitation?

Ostensibly they are economic, but their root cause lies deeper. It is impossible to read an authoritative and informed book such as Barbara Ward's *The International Share-Out*, without coming to the conclusion that Germany's demand for colonies and possessions is fundamentally psychological. Miss Ward shows conclusively that the value of colonies as outlets for growing populations is negligible, and the tangible economic benefits derived from colonial possessions non-existent. Why, then, the demand? Because of an all-consuming desire to “feel big”; because, in short of prestige. The following utterance by Dr. Ley, Head of the Labour Front, at a meeting in December, 1938, of the Strength through Joy organization typically expresses the German attitude:—

“As long as Germany is a nation without sufficient space, we are not free. While a small number of British and a small number of French rule over more people than their own population numbers, we Germans, who with 80 million people, are the largest racial unit in Europe, have no colonial territory whatsoever; without colonies we are not free. The French and British have small populations but large possessions. We have large populations and no possessions.”<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to deny the force of this demand, equally difficult at the moment to concede it. Recent German excesses have so hardened the hearts of the people of this country that, at the moment, the return of German colonies is impracticable. Such is the state of public feeling that it has become difficult to obtain calm and impartial consideration, even for the arguments for a *general* redistribution of the world's territories and raw materials.

*The Sense of Injustice Illustrated by the Case of Australia.*

Let me, then, try to present the issue, as I see it, by selecting in illustration of my thesis an example which lies at the moment outside the realm of aggressive demand on the one hand, and righteous indignation on the other. I will take the case of Australia. Australia is not a colony but a Dominion, and one to which Germany lays no claim. Nevertheless, it will serve to exemplify the considerations from which the German claims arise and on which they are based.

<sup>1</sup> Raymond Pearl gives some interesting figures in his book *The Natural History of Population* (published January, 1939), which lend colour to Dr. Ley's complaint. Four nations, Great Britain, France, Russia and the U.S.A., whose inhabitants number 16.5 per cent of the world's population, and whose area comprises 13 per cent of the land surface of the earth, control the political life of 43.6 per cent of the world's population, inhabiting 57 per cent of the land surface of the earth.



Australia contains some 6½ million white people; this number has not appreciably increased during the last twenty-five years. Most of the continent is not fit for habitation by the white races, but more could be inhabited by them than is in fact inhabited, and considerable stretches, particularly in the north, which are uninhabitable by whites, are habitable by the yellow races.

The case of Canada is in some respects similar. No doubt much of Canada is too cold, just as much of Australia is too dry for colonization. Nevertheless, when all allowances are made, the fact that the population of England should be 750 per square mile, while that of Canada should be 3 and Australia 2, implies a mal-distribution of population so outrageous as to be a standing danger to the equilibrium of the world. Unless we can learn to make better use than this of our possessions, the sooner we are dispossessed of them the better.

Some hundreds of miles from Australia across the Pacific Ocean are the islands of Japan, inhabited to the point of overcrowding by a population which is rapidly and continuously increasing. The Japanese, in fact, are living through a swarming period. As a consequence, Japan is an aggressive nation whose ambitions constitute a continuing danger to the peace of the world, and have already provoked one major war.

To concede to Japan a large slice of the Australian territory that the British are unable to populate would satisfy at once the demands of justice and the dictates of expediency. Nevertheless, the proposal is one which would be rejected by the average Englishman with scorn. The following story related by Dean Inge is significant: "Soon after the war a Japanese gentleman called upon me and asked me whether I was in favour of the League of Nations and universal disarmament. I said that I was. 'Well then,' he said, 'if we were to disarm and join the League, should we be allowed to

settle in California and Australia?' 'I am afraid you certainly would not.' 'We should be kept out by force, as we are now?' 'Yes.' 'Then why should we disarm and join the League?' I had no answer."

### *Disingenuousness of the British.*

Ignorant of the problems created by the mal-distribution of population, indifferent to the resentment of the "Have-not" nations, the average Englishman believes England to be a peaceful nation, and denounces the Japanese for being war-like.

The English no doubt are, at any rate at the moment, peacefully disposed. Inevitably; they have as much, in fact, they have more, territory than they can assimilate. But it is a little disingenuous of them to denounce the war-mindedness of those who wish to share it.

It is, I think, pride rather than greed that prompts the British ruling class to pursue policies which are inconsistent with their manifest desire for peace. Let it be proposed to surrender a square inch of sand in the most infertile of all the territories upon which "the sun that never sets" swelters, and Blimps burst in their baths, and the Press of the Right empurples with indignation. Now Blimps are not so much greedy as proud.

That the English are not unique in respect of their determination to hold fast at all costs to their colonial possession, may be deduced from the announcement made at the end of December, 1938, by M. Bonnet, French Foreign Minister, to the Moroccan Association. "A nation," he said, "is on its decline, as soon as it no longer considers as a sacred and inviolable trust the least important bit of earth over which its flag flies." In other words, colonies are to be retained, not because they are wanted, but because not to want them is a sign of decadence.

Reverting once more to the conception of England and France as reformed burglars turned respectable, their attitude to the colonial question may be interpreted as an attempt to buy off the new burglars with an offer of spoons, provided always that the spoons belong to somebody else; to Belgium, for example, to Holland, to Portugal, to anybody and everybody except to England and France.

The case of Australia may stand as a symbol of the injustice of which all the "Have-not" Powers, Italy, Japan and Germany, conceive themselves to be the victims. Until that sense of injustice is removed, the world will have no assurance of peace. Japan will aggress against China; Italy will clamour for Corsica and Tunis; Germany will penetrate south-eastern Europe and intensify her claim to colonies until, one day, the "Have-not" Powers will find that they have pushed the unstable applecart of post-war Europe too fast and too far; the applecart will upset, and will overwhelm Europe in war. How is this situation to be met?

*Fascist Psychology and How not to Deal with It. (1) The Policy of the Straitjacket.*

Broadly speaking, there are two policies in the field. The first is to continue to pursue the methods which we have followed since the war. Supporters of this policy urge us to build up against Germany a combination which is so strong that Germany dare not challenge it. To this I have three objections. The first is that, sooner or later, this method will lead to war; the second, that such a war, with Japan and Italy on Germany's side, and an absence of certainty as to the attitude of Russia, will be fought under less favourable conditions than that of 1914, and may well be lost; the third, that it perpetuates the conditions which produce Fascism and upon which Fascism thrives, by enabling Hitler to

continue to represent Germany as a persecuted Power, subjected to unwarrantable humiliation and frustrated in respect of her legitimate ambitions by the implacable enemies who seek to ring her round. It will thus not only confirm Hitler in power, but provide him with fuel with which to feed the flames of Nazi hatred. It is not, then, I suggest, by this method that we shall succeed in overthrowing Fascism.

*Fascist Psychology and How to Deal with It: (2) The Policy of Concession.*

The second method is to reverse the engines of post-war policy and so to alter the psychology which that policy has produced. Replacing the policy of intimidation by a policy of appeasement, for the tactic of frustration it would substitute a tactic of concession.

Let me admit at once the difficulty of pursuing such a policy and of adopting such a tactic. It is a difficulty which does not grow less as Munich recedes into the background. While to thwart and to hate Germany accords only too well with the emotions of the moment, the actions of the Nazis render it exceedingly difficult to do anything else. The savage persecution of the Jews produces an atmosphere in which friendliness becomes almost impossible, while Hitler's rhetorical methods pile up obstacles for all who in this country are working for conciliation. If the Nazis wanted at one and the same time to offend Liberals, Tories, Socialists and the great mass of ordinary men and women of no political party who hate persecution and cruelty, they could hardly, in the months which have succeeded Munich, have acted otherwise than they have done. Almost we have reached a point beyond the reach of argument. Reason is swamped by emotion, and men are swept off their feet by a wave of indignation which they cannot find it in their hearts to condemn

as unrighteous. Nevertheless, if war is to be avoided, we must use our heads to still the promptings of our hearts and consider how to make the best of a bad business. To make the best of a bad business is to adopt the method of concession, and for an obvious reason. If we wish to diminish the militancy of the Nazis by removing the causes which have produced it, we shall not achieve our object by threats. For one country to threaten another, is to rally all the citizens of the country which conceives itself to be threatened, behind their government. No doubt the present German Government is bad, as bad as it can well be, but we shall not induce the Germans to get rid of it by telling them so. When will our idealists learn that you cannot reform another country by reading its inhabitants moral lectures, or discredit its government by seeking to interfere with its internal affairs? After the last war, many Englishmen wished to attack Russia because Russia was governed by Bolsheviks. In fact, under the auspices of Mr. Churchill we instigated attacks upon Russia by Wrangel and Denikin. With what result? The Bolshevik Government triumphed over its enemies, while our ill-judged efforts sowed between two great nations the seeds of suspicion which bore fruit last September. Military despotism thrives on threats; it is only in times of tranquillity that liberty is contagious. I conclude that we should do well to cease both to threaten Germany and to read her moral lectures.

So much for the negative aspect of the policy of conciliation. On the positive side our object must be to make it impossible for her rulers to maintain the myth of the persecuted and the thwarted Germany, since it was from this myth that Nazi psychology took its rise, and upon it that it still thrives. We must make it plain, so plain that even the German people cannot help but see, that we are well-disposed and conciliatory, that we are sorry for the mistakes of the past, and are

anxious to do what we can to remedy them in the present. The way to deal with a man who suffers from an inferiority complex is not to humiliate him, still less is it to browbeat him; but, equally, it is not to truckle to him. It is to give him "face" without showing fear, to make him feel superior without yourself appearing inferior, to allow him triumphs which are not extorted from your weakness, but are conceded by your strength. Assured of his position, he will no longer feel impelled to bluster and to bully, in order to assert it; finding himself treated as an equal, he may consent to treat upon equal terms. These general considerations apply in a special degree to the case of Germany. At the moment, German ambitions go far beyond the conception of redress for the wrongs which were woven into the policy of Versailles, but with every fresh triumph there is bound to be a growing realization of the risk of endangering what has been won, if more is attempted. More than this, the fact that German diplomacy *has* triumphed will, in the long run, remove the sense of humiliation which still survives from the war, and as the sense of humiliation diminishes, so will the intensity of the desire for aggression. It is difficult not to suppose that these considerations were present in Mr. Chamberlain's mind when he was negotiating the Munich Agreement. Munich made concessions, many will think humiliating concessions, but they did not amount to complete surrender. Germany was allowed a triumph, but it was made clear that the triumph was allowed.

*That the Concessions must be Part of a Policy Planned in Advance.*

And so, I repeat, we must adopt a policy of conciliation and concession. But it must be planned concession. Hitherto we have missed chance after chance to resist aggression, we have failed again and again to put the

aggressor in the wrong, merely because we have not made up our minds in advance as to the policy which we were proposing to adopt. Every time advantage has been taken of us, we have made a fresh and a separate fuss. Hence we have given the impression that what we have conceded has been wrung from us by force, and that we have yielded not to the dictates of justice or to the logic of reason, but to the point of the pistol. As a consequence, our concessions have brought us no credit—nobody in Germany, for example, thinks that it was from *goodwill* that we yielded over Czechoslovakia—and have encouraged the Dictator States to believe that there is no limit to the concessions that we can be forced to make in the future. Moreover, our habit of holding up our hands in a renewed ecstasy of righteous but helpless indignation over each fresh act of aggression has led them to impute to us the psychology of the groom who ostentatiously bolts the door after each occasion on which a horse has been stolen. In sum, we have neither made the concessions that were reasonable, nor stood firm against the aggression that was not. On the contrary, by allowing concessions to be wrung from us by the threat of force, we have encouraged the aggressor in the belief that by force everything may be achieved. This is to make the worst of every world.

The remedy is, I suggest, clear. If concession is to be our object, it should form part of a planned policy to be carried out by planned stages. Let us announce in advance what the policy is, and as its various stages fall due, let us punctually observe them. Such an announcement would have the further advantage of not leading small nations to entertain justifiable expectations in regard to action to be taken by us on their behalf, if they are threatened, expectations which, as the case of Czechoslovakia showed, are not warranted by the event.

*The Special Position of the British Empire.*

Throughout the foregoing I have used the word "we" deliberately, for it is upon Great Britain that the chief responsibility for the making of concessions rests. We have already bought peace once at the expense of a smaller Power; it is time that we offered a contribution on our own account.

We are in a peculiarly favourable position to take the initiative in putting forward a new policy for peace. We have achieved what is, in comparison with the condition of other nations, domestic harmony among ourselves. We control one-quarter of the earth's surface, much of which remains unpopulated. It is between ourselves and the 80 million Germans that the profoundest conflict of interests lies. It is upon ourselves, then, that there is laid the obligation of offering in the interests of peace both economic and territorial readjustment.

How, in the light of these considerations, should we plan a policy for peace in the year 1939? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to consider very briefly the nature of the grievances which a peace policy must seek to remove. Ostensibly, I repeat, these are economic, but the economic grievances are, as I have tried to show, the effects of more deep-seated psychological resentments which in their turn they help to exacerbate. What precisely are these economic grievances? They will be revealed by a brief review of the present world situation.

*The Causes of the Present Impasse.*

The politically undeveloped territories of the world are controlled by comparatively few nations. These territories are rich in raw materials, in metals and rubber



and oil. Thus a few nations command a disproportionate number of the world's sources of wealth. Chief among these few is the British Empire. Restless and resentful under this inequitable distribution of the world's territories and raw materials, certain nations, whose share is small or non-existent, have developed a clamorous nationalism, which keeps the world in a state of agitation by its continually increasing claims, the object of which is to redraw the map of the world to the advantage of the "have-nots" and to the disadvantage of the "have-nations" which, by means of the Versailles Treaty, imposed upon the vanquished at the conclusion of the 1914-18 war terms in which no nation which, according to western standards, retained any vestige of self-respect could be expected indefinitely to acquiesce.

These terms were sanctified by the Covenant of the League of Nations which, drawn up with the intention of investing the Versailles settlement with the semblance of international justice, sought, under the pretence of restraining the aggressor and upholding international law, to mobilize the armed forces of the world against any attempt to mitigate the injustices which were perpetrated in 1914.

With the object of repairing the wrongs done at Versailles, the "have-not" nations have amassed enormous armaments whereby they propose to obtain by the threat of force what has been denied to the dictates of equity.

In the economic sphere this nationalism of the "have-not" nations results in a policy of self-sufficiency, which in due course infects their neighbours. By customs duties, by tariff barriers, by currency restrictions, by quotas and favoured nation clauses, each nation seeks to isolate itself from the rest of the world and to stand upon its own feet. Thus a world which the development of modern transport has made economically into a single unit, is cut across by a thousand and one artificial

barriers deliberately erected to impede the flow of international trade by the self-sufficient, nationalist States, whose jealousies and rivalries keep modern Europe in continuous agitation. These artificial barriers are like a spanner inserted into the wheels of international trade and intensify the economic difficulties which they are designed to remedy. Thus more intense economic stringency begets more intense nationalism, and more intense nationalism increases economic stringency.

Once again there comes into view one of those vicious circles which in the course of our analysis of the existing situation we have so frequently found ourselves perambulating.

The following passage from the German paper *Nachtausgabe*, published last December, in comment upon Mr. Chamberlain's complaint that Germany has made no contribution to peace, puts into a nutshell the causes, of the present situation, as I have tried to describe them:—

“If they” (the English) “had wanted to do something for peace, they would have done a thing which has not yet happened even to-day; that is, put an end to all the regulations hindering the full economic equality of rights of Germany including the handing back of colonies.”

#### *Proposals for a World Conference.*

Such, then, in brief is the situation within the framework of which a constructive peace policy must be put forward.

I would suggest (1) the immediate calling by Great Britain or by America of an international conference to deal with economic grievances. (2) At this conference I would announce my intention of readjusting the present inequitable distribution of territories and raw materials,

and would suggest that these should be administered by an international commission upon which all the major manufacturing nations should be represented. (3) Pending the establishment of such a commission, I should announce (a) that the British Empire would be thrown open to all the world as a free trading area, and that quotas, favoured nation clauses and tariffs would be abolished within that area; (b) that if the Empire were to be attacked, Great Britain would not be prepared to defend it by force, and that, as an earnest of my intentions, I proposed to begin to disarm here and now.

I should hope that once the example of disarmament was set, others would follow, but I should make it clear that I should continue my disarmament programme until England was as defenceless and, I should hope, as safe as Denmark, whether other nations followed my example or not.

(4) I should meanwhile put forward detailed proposals for a Federal Union with the other democracies on the lines indicated on pp. 176-180 and offer to extend the advantages of the Union to all European States, so soon as they were prepared to consent to such modifications of their political structure as would be necessary to bring them into line with the other member States.

(5) Part of the money accruing as a result of the cessation of expenditure on armaments I should spend in trying to remove the causes of war by establishing an atmosphere of goodwill based on generosity and co-operation between the peoples of the different countries. Expenditure would also be involved in the execution of the proposals for the transfer of British-owned colonies to an extended mandate system, and the reorganization of what remained of the British Empire under a free trade system pursuing the policy of the open door. Some part of the money saved would also be required to provide alternative employment, for example in slum

demolition and road construction, for those who would be thrown out of work by the cessation of the manufacture of armaments.

Such, in briefest outline, is the policy which, if I were Prime Minister of this country, I would pursue in the present situation. To elaborate it would take me far beyond the confines of this book. It embodies, however, four features upon which some further comment, however inadequate, must be made.

### (1) *The Conference Itself: Is it Practicable?*

It may be objected that the proposal for a world conference is, in existing circumstances, impracticable. In the first place, America, it is said, would refuse to participate. I doubt if this is so. America, I should answer, cannot very well refuse after the explicit announcements of President Roosevelt and Mr. Cordell Hull. Americans have long had an uneasy conscience over their desertion of the League. It would not be easy to resist a proposal which would have the double advantage of putting America right not only with the world, but with herself. If President Roosevelt himself could be induced to call the Conference, so much the better. America would assume the moral leadership of the world, and I do not believe that American public opinion would permit the rejection of such an opportunity. It may be said that the dictator nations would refuse to attend the Conference, or that, even if they did not, the Conference would nevertheless be unable to achieve concrete results since it would be impossible to trust the word of the dictators. Possibly, possibly not! But the existence of this very legitimate doubt does not constitute a reason for not calling the Conference. The duty of doing whatever is possible to promote peace remains, even if we feel distrust of the dictators' word. If they refused agreement at the

Conference, or if they subsequently broke the agreements they had made, their intransigence in the one case, their perfidy in the other, would range the moral opinion of the world against them.

It may be said that moral opinion no longer counts. It is not true; it counts, for example, in America. It may be said that moral opinion is helpless against guns and bayonets; again it is not true. Moral opinion, as the entry of America into the last war plainly demonstrated, is liable to transform itself into the guns and bayonets of those whose morality has been outraged. The play *Geneva* by Bernard Shaw is a reactionary play by an old man who has outlived the generous enthusiasms of his youth. Nevertheless, it contains one pregnant remark. In the play the dictators answer a summons to attend the World Court at The Hague. The Court has no authority except moral authority, and the dictators enjoy themselves by deriding and insulting it. Nevertheless, as the President of the Court points out—it is the last sentence of the play—"They came."

It may be objected that Hitler would refuse to sit at the same conference table as Russia. Again, I doubt it. Difficulties, of course, there would be, but I do not see why it should be assumed that they are insurmountable. If it were known that one of the objects of the Conference was to remedy precisely those grievances of which Germany has for so long complained, if it were made clear that Germany would attend as an equal, if the Conference were removed from the atmosphere and memories of Geneva, I do not believe that Germany could or would wish to keep away. Everything, I should say, depends on the way in which she is approached. When George Lansbury saw Hitler, he advocated the calling of a Peace Conference. "My dear man," said Hitler in effect, "there is no warmer advocate of peace than I am, but if you want your Conference to succeed, leave me out of it. Although I want peace as much as

any man in Europe, and have offered it again and again, my offers have been rejected and I have been treated as if I were a naughty schoolboy." It is difficult to deny that Hitler has some ground for the feelings attributed to him. It should be the task, and it should not be beyond the capacity, of statesmanship to remove it. It may, of course, be said, and on the basis of *Mein Kampf* it is said, that Hitler is incorrigibly aggressive and will be content with nothing short of war. It may be so, but if it is so, why, I should like to know, has not Hitler gone to war with us already? During the last five years, before the British rearmament programme really got under way, this country was far weaker in military strength in relation to Germany than it will ever be again. The fact was known in Germany. Why, then, if Hitler wants nothing but war, did he not take advantage of that opportunity?

(2) *The Proposals for Colonies and Undeveloped Territories.*

Secondly, there is the question of colonies. There is a double difficulty here; Great Britain has more than she can populate, Germany has none. Yet the transfer by this country of British colonies to Germany, the transfer even by the League of mandated territories to Germany, would, in the present state of public opinion, be impracticable. As Mr. MacDonald said in reference to such a proposal in the House of Commons on December 8th: "It is not now an issue of practical politics." There is the further consideration, that the native peoples would themselves in all probability oppose such a transfer.

Now native peoples are not parcels to be distributed here and redistributed there to suit the interests of European Powers. They are human beings with wills and desires of their own, endowed with the right of

every human being to be treated as ends and not as means, and entitled to claim the further right of governing themselves, as soon as they are ripe for self-government. The proposed establishment of an international commission to administer the territories of undeveloped peoples, until such time as they are fit to govern themselves, recognizes both the difficulties and the rights. That an extension of the mandate system is, from any point of view, desirable, a moment's consideration of the theory of mandates will show. The Powers who were entrusted with mandates under the system set up at the Versailles Conference accepted certain instructions and undertook certain obligations. They were made clearly to understand that they had not annexed the mandated territories; that they held them merely in trust. They were in fact to perform precisely the same office as the trustees under a will perform for a minor. Thus they were not to drill and arm native troops; they were not to set the natives to forced labour; and they were to administer the territories in the interests of the native populations.

### *The Theory of the Dual Mandate.*

This last clause led to the theory of the dual mandate subsequently elaborated by Lord Lugard and Sir Donald Cameron. Nations entrusted with a mandate were conceived under this theory to have a double obligation. First, to the world as a whole, to render the raw materials which the mandated territory possesses and the commodities which it produces available by the ordinary processes of free trading to all nations; secondly, to the natives, so to educate them, that they might reach as rapidly as possible a level of development at which they could take over the duty of governing themselves.

It would be idle to pretend that these obligations have

been wholly discharged. Nevertheless, this country has on the whole been served by able and enlightened governors, and may look back on its record in the mandated territories without shame. My suggestion is that a system inspired by these ideals should be extended to all undeveloped territories, but that the mandatory duties which have hitherto been discharged by two or three nations should be shared by a number. To effect this end, a mandatory commission should be established upon which European nations should be represented according to their populations and their interests. The proposal has a twofold advantage. First, in regard to Germany, it would go some way to meet the demand for colonies. We should not be returning her old colonies to Germany, but we should be offering her a share in the government of *all* colonies, including those which have hitherto belonged exclusively to ourselves and the French. Secondly, as regards ourselves, it would remove from us the reproach which many Englishmen feel, that we are monopolizing in our own interests and to the exclusion of other nations, large areas of the world's surface, and so maintaining a potent cause of war.

An international administration of colonies and undeveloped territories would be bound to maintain the policy of the open door. All would have access on equal terms to the raw materials and other sources of wealth which the colony contained. There is the further advantage that the day-to-day co-operation between nations which the joint administration of these mandated territories would entail, might help to generate the international spirit which is an indispensable condition of the success of any future world government. Indeed, the successful functioning of an international commission established on these lines might well prove to be the first essay in world government.



### (3) *The Disarmament Condition.*

There are, I imagine, many people who would be prepared to subscribe to a programme such as that which I have outlined. They see in it, and rightly, the only escape from the two alternatives of fighting or truckling to the dictators. To "stand firm" against Hitler means, as I have argued, being prepared to take the risk of war, and the circumstances under which the stand would now be made, with France, possibly Russia, and conceivably the United States on our side, and Italy and Japan on that of Germany, are such as to ensure that the war would be worldwide. In such a convulsion as would ensue civilization might well be destroyed.

### *Picture of England Under the Dictators.*

On the other hand, a refusal to "stand firm", based upon a known unwillingness to fight, might well mean concession after concession, until England had ceased to be an imperial Power and the world had fallen under the dominion of the dictators. That England should cease to be an imperial Power might be borne—it is the happiness of its citizens rather than the magnitude of its possessions which, as I have argued, makes a nation great—but the world dominion of the dictators would, it is pointed out with some justice, mean the end of free institutions. A subject England would no longer be permitted a free Press, her institutions would be suppressed, her intellectual leaders consigned to concentration camps, while her statesmen would become the mouthpieces of their rulers. What, it may be asked, does democracy primarily stand for? For a way of life and a standard of values. The individual in a democracy has rights of his own and is an end in himself. He

enjoys freedom of thought and of expression, while the State, instead of being an idol upon whose altar his freedom is sacrificed and at whose call his life must be surrendered, becomes ideally merely an organization for establishing those conditions in which he may develop his personality and realize all that he has it in him to be.

How much of this way of life, how many of these values, would survive the Nazi domination of the world ? The accepted answer is that little or nothing would survive. As has been indicated elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> I do not altogether accept this answer, but the danger is obvious enough, and the prospect which it opens seems to many so horrible, that they are prepared to fight to preserve the way of life that they regard as valuable. Yet to fight, as I have argued in a previous chapter and as many would agree, is to endanger the very institutions on behalf of which we should be fighting. The dilemma is a painful one, and the only chance of escape from it lies, I would suggest, in the policy I have outlined, the policy of a World Conference to discuss and remove grievances.

*The Campaign for the World Conference.* At the time of writing a nation-wide Petition is being organized by the National Peace Council in favour of such a Conference. Those who are conducting the campaign for the Conference rightly point out that, though the Munich Agreement has been signed, the fears of the world are not quietened. On the contrary, the armaments race is being intensified and apprehension grows lest what we have gained at Munich should be not a lasting peace, but merely a temporary respite from war. The question is accordingly put, cannot the Munich Agreement be widened into a comprehensive peace settlement which will remove the causes of war ?

What would be the objectives of the Conference

<sup>1</sup> See quotation from Bertrand Russell, pp. 146-149.

advocated by the Petition? Precisely such as I have described, and among them there is specifically included that of disarmament. But at this point the statement which has been drawn up by those responsible for the campaign in favour of the Conference is a little disingenuous. It demands disarmament, but it does not say who is to begin to disarm. There have been disarmament conferences in the past, but they have broken down precisely because nobody has been willing to begin. There have been world conferences since the war, but they have failed, precisely because nobody has taken the lead in offering concessions.

*The Need for a Gesture.* The point is of crucial importance. If the vicious circle of armaments is to be broken, somebody must take the first step. If a world conference is to succeed, somebody must make a gesture of generosity. If the mood of Fascism is to be altered, a new policy of sacrifice and concession must take the place of the past policy of intimidation and suppression.

The moment is ripe for a dramatic intervention on the stage of the world's affairs. If some nation could be induced to make a single generous gesture, it might well have the effect of reversing the psychology which, for the last twenty years, has been driving Europe to its destruction. Such a gesture would, and in my view should, take the form of a positive declaration by a great nation, that it does not propose any longer to use force to gain its ends and to protect its interests. For the lack of such a gesture, world conferences have failed in the past; for the lack of it, Mr. Chamberlain's policy of appeasement will, I fear, fail in the present. Unless we can bring ourselves to inaugurate it with a generous act, a world conference to-day is likely to prove as barren of results as its predecessors.

The reasons for such a gesture are strong. The discussions of a conference of statesmen who meet in the

consciousness that they are backed by large armaments take place in an atmosphere of wariness and suspicion. Each statesman is apt to suspect each other statesman of waiting for a chance to steal a march upon himself. Each statesman is prepared, and knows that his neighbour is prepared, to threaten force in support of the interests of his country, so soon as he sees an opportunity of doing so with advantage. And, inevitably, the conference fails. For these reasons, it does not seem to me to be enough to announce disarmament as one of the objects of a world conference; there must be a further announcement to the effect that somebody is prepared to take the lead in disarming.

*The Possibility of Introducing a New Era.* And so, if I were Britain's Prime Minister, I would open the Conference by stating that Great Britain intended to disarm. I would proceed to express the hope that every nation would follow Great Britain's example; but, even if other nations did not, my own country would, I should assure the Conference, persist in its intentions. The practical conclusion which I should proceed to emphasize would be that Great Britain no longer intended to defend the British Empire by force. In order, however, to prevent a scramble for the territory thus left undefended, I should propose the appointment of an international commission to administer on the mandate system the undeveloped territories which had previously belonged to the Empire, with special reference to those which were known to be rich in raw materials. I should then proceed to elaborate the policy which I have outlined above.

A policy conceived on such lines and introduced in such an atmosphere might, I think, succeed, and its success might well introduce a new era in international affairs. For success would mean that the present corner had been turned and that the world was temporarily freed from the fear of war. On any other basis, in any

other atmosphere and more particularly in such an atmosphere as is generated by the assemblage of the representatives of heavily-armed nations whose policy is to blackmail one another into making concessions by threat of force, I should despair of its success. Hence a willingness on the part of some one country to take the lead in disarmament is, in my view, an integral factor in a successful policy of world appeasement. Let us hope that some statesman will be found who is prepared to take his courage in both hands and give a lead to the world; otherwise, I can see before us nothing but a prospect of wars succeeding wars, until civilization is destroyed.

(5) *Expenditure of the Money Accruing from Disarmament.*

There is much to be said for the view that the money accruing from disarmament should be expended on measures of non-menacing defence, such as the provision of air raid shelters, underground tunnels, food stores, and so forth. It is pointed out that, in war time, even the most extreme of pacifists would rescue a child from a bombed and blazing house. Of course he would! With what logic, then, could he refuse in advance of war to build shelters to accommodate the children whose homes would be bombed if and when war came? And the necessary protection could, we are assured, be provided at a cost not so very much greater than what we now spend on preparations for offensive warfare. Professor Haldane has estimated that the cost of providing underground shelters and tunnels, complete with ventilation, sanitation and so forth, for the population of Great Britain would work out at not more than £11 per head, that is to say, at £484 million in all. We are already spending over £370 million a year in preparations for war. It is put to us, then, that by an expenditure of just under £500 million—in other words, of a sum

equivalent to one and a third years' expenditure on measures of offence—on measures of passive defence, we could make ourselves comparatively invulnerable. Such are the considerations which are urged in favour of the expenditure of large sums on measures of non-menacing defence.

The case is a strong one, and it is with considerable hesitation that I have come to reject it. My reasons for rejection are twofold:

(a) *That Measures of Non-Menacing Defence would not Deter the Enemy, but would Prolong the War.*

The first reason touches upon a technical matter where experts disagree, and I advance it with diffidence. It may most conveniently be stated by citing verbatim, a passage from John Langdon Davies's book, *Air Raids*:

“The fundamental error in most A.R.P. planning is that the city is regarded as made up of individuals who can be allowed to remain without working for a long time in conditions as near safety as possible. But if the attack brings London to a standstill, then the attack has won the war. Protection we must have, but only within limits which make it possible also for the city to keep moving. The attack hopes to keep the city from moving, both materially by tying up traffic amid destroyed thoroughfares and psychologically by tying up human nerves so that men do not know where to go. It cannot be too much emphasized that in ideal circumstances, with a bomb-proof shelter for everyone, the Defence will still lose the war, perhaps without suffering a casualty, if everyone sits in a shelter and does nothing for long enough on end. Therefore, A.R.P. must provide for individual safety and at the same time communal activity.”

These considerations appear to me to be convincing. If hospitals, houses, public offices and shops were destroyed, if the provisions for gas, water, light and

sanitation were destroyed, if the streets were destroyed, and if, as a result, people were unable to go about their daily business, the effect upon the psychology of the civilian population, who must be presumed to be sitting passively in underground shelters, waiting for the raids to stop, would be sufficiently disastrous to bring resistance to an end.

*The Alleged Efficacy of "Active Defence"*. But suppose that the measures for passive non-menacing defence were supplemented by measures of what is sometimes called "active defence"? Would it not *then* be possible to prevent the enemy from bringing the life of the community to a standstill? Active defence measures recommended by Professor Haldane include anti-aircraft artillery, balloon barrages, and fighter aeroplanes; and he accordingly advocates concentration of aircraft production upon fighters instead of upon bombers. Could a community equipped with this apparatus of defence prevent hostile aircraft from destroying its nerve centres? The answer is highly controversial, but the weight of opinion seems to incline to the negative. Earl Baldwin's famous statement in the House of Commons—"I think it is well also for the man in the street to realize that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell him, the bomber will always get through. The only defence is in offence, which means that you have to kill more women and children more quickly than the enemy, if you wish to save yourselves"—has never, so far as I know, been contradicted. Lord Arnold, in a recent speech in the House of Lords, quoted a statement by the Commander of the United States Air Force, to the effect that "air attacks cannot be stopped by any means now known". In the same speech Lord Arnold referred to a recent experiment in which, out of 250 bombers, 16 were successfully intercepted by the defence.

The weight of evidence, I repeat, is in favour of the view that measures of "active defence" would not *in themselves* be sufficient to protect our capital cities. Nor, if the contention of the militarists is to be believed, would they be sufficient to prevent war, for if fear, fear of retaliation by the potential victim, alone keeps the potential aggressor in check, then the absence of ability to strike back owing to the non-possession of means of offensive warfare would act as an encouragement to the aggressor, who—always assuming that the conventional militarist calculation is correct, and that would-be aggressors are deterred *only* by force—would proceed to commit aggression.

And this, I take it, is the government's answer to those who advocate concentration on means of passive and active defence. In effect, the answer is that passive defence measures, even when reinforced by active defence measures, would neither prevent war nor win it; they would simply prolong it. Protected by adequate air shelters, the population would run little risk in any *one* air attack, but there would be nothing to prevent the enemy from delivering an infinite number of air attacks. The war, then, would continue until the morale of the troglodytes was exhausted, and peace would be made upon the terms and conditions imposed by an enemy, exasperated to the maximum pitch of irritation by the expenditure of time, money and effort involved in bringing to its knees a nation which relied purely on measures of defence.

My conclusion is that an efficient as opposed to an inefficient system of air raid defence precautions, unless combined with the ordinary measures of offensive warfare against the attacker, would prolong resistance, but would not make resistance successful. Their long-term effect would be to increase suffering and loss of life, and to ensure the maximum destruction of the framework of civilization, without either deterring or defeating the



aggressor. In a word, they would prolong the war, but they would not alter its results. If they were combined with the ordinary measures of offensive warfare, they would become indistinguishable from warfare pure and simple, and the arguments against warfare pure and simple have already been given at length.

*For a Pacifist to Concentrate upon Measures of Defence is a Mistake in Tactics.* My further conclusion is that those who adopt in general the view put forward in this book, that war between nations is, in modern circumstances, never justified and should not, therefore, be prepared for, will not be well-advised to concentrate their advocacy upon the provision of measures of non-menacing defence, attractive as such a policy, on a first consideration, seems. If war is indeed inevitable, then, no doubt, the provision of adequate shelters is a duty that lies upon the Government, and co-operation, with a view to making such provision effective, a duty that lies upon us all. If it is not, we should devote our energies and spend our money not on providing against it if it comes, but on preventing it from coming. No doubt we could, by the provision of adequate air raid shelters, both mitigate the consequences of any single air raid and delay the inevitable loss of the war, but we should lose it all the same, while the admission that it *is* inevitable, which the provision of defensive measures implies, is in itself a factor which contributes to its inevitability.<sup>1</sup>

For my part, then, I should prefer to try to prevent the loss of a child's life by preventing the war which threatens it, rather than by providing the shelter to which it can run when threatened.

<sup>1</sup> For the substance of the above argument, I am indebted to the writings of Mr. Roy Walker, of the Peace Pledge Union.

(b) *That Defencelessness and Non-Resistance are Conditions for the Successful Pursuit of the Policy Advocated.*

My second reason against the provision of measures of non-menacing defence owes nothing to technical considerations, though much to the preceding argument of this chapter, and I advance it with confidence. It is my belief that, if the programme which I have suggested for a world conference were faithfully carried out, and if this country did in fact disarm and render itself defenceless, then we should never be bombed at all. We might be invaded; we might have to submit to an army of occupation,<sup>1</sup> but we should not be bombed. One cannot bomb those who have neither the means nor the will to resist; but if we are not to be bombed, why protect ourselves against the effects of bombing?

But that defencelessness may indeed defend, it must be complete. To render yourself defenceless is good policy, *only* if no resistance is attempted. If you are going to fight, you cannot be too strong, and those who intend to rely upon the sword will be well advised to see that it is sharp. But if you are not going to fight, it is foolish to excite the anger and provoke the fear of your potential aggressors by showing evidence of your determination to resist aggression. The worst course of all is to follow the example of little Belgium, or of Abyssinia, and to resolve to resist without the means to make your resistance effective. Thus it is only on the assumption that there is disarmament, combined with a determination not to resist, that I advocate the non-provision of effective anti-air-raid precautions.

(4) But let us suppose that Hitler is incorrigibly aggressive; that he is determined to expand; that he will

<sup>1</sup> See quotation from Bertrand Russell, pp. 144-146, on the consequences of such submission.

effect his arms without war if he can, but that he is prepared to take the risk of war if he finds that he cannot: and that all attempts to appease him by a policy of planned concession will, therefore, fail. What then? Then, no doubt, the conference that I have proposed is doomed to failure, even if, as is unlikely, it ever succeeded in meeting; and, as a result, we must face a continuance of the present deadlock between the Powers of Germany, Italy and Japan, on the one hand, and the democracies combined with Russia on the other. We must face, in other words, a continuance of a situation in which each side seeks to accumulate greater strength than the other, the Axis Powers in order to back their aggression by the threat of successful war; the democracies and Russia in the hope of deterring the aggressors from actually going to war, by convincing them that success is unlikely. Thus the two alliances which today line the trenches that run athwart the continent of Europe face one another like wary wrestlers, each seeking for an opportunity to catch his opponent at a disadvantage, as the shifting balance of power sways first to one side, then to the other. Such a deadlock, it would seem, can end only in one way, the way of war, save only on one condition: that we utilize the breathing space which the deadlock affords to embark upon a constructive policy for peace. Now that policy should, I suggest, be the policy of Federal Union. We must use the breathing space which we are given, to try to supersede the anarchic Nation-States whose jealousies and vanities and hostilities have brought us to our present pass. Even if we do not succeed—and it may well be that in the time at our disposal we shall not succeed—Federal Union provides us at least with an ideal to work for. The Peace movement, both in England and America, is sorely in need of such an ideal. Those who once believed in preventing war by collective security are disheartened by the failure of the League; it seems unlikely

that the League can ever again serve as a channel for the aspirations of mankind. Those, on the other hand, who take the purely pacifist position cannot but realize that it holds no recipe for the prevention of war. Pacifism may be a policy for the individual when war comes; it is not a policy, as the world stands today, to prevent war from coming. It is for this reason that many sincere pacifists are today finding that their pacifism is not enough: it is at once too negative and too personal a creed to satisfy the aspirations of the individual, and requires to be supplemented by a policy which is at once practical and constructive. Such a policy, I suggest, afforded by the proposal to form a Federal Union.

## CHAPTER X

### THE POLICY OF "STANDING FIRM" TO FASCISM AND WHAT IT MEANS

#### *An Allegory from Friends' House.*

I BEGAN this book with some account of the views of the Left; so far as the politics of the matter are concerned, I will end where I began. There is a chapter to follow, but this raises moral and personal issues, and I take leave of politics here. In its hatred of Fascism the Left is grown warlike. An experience which fell recently to my lot will serve to illustrate the belligerence of its mood, and so serving, may be taken as an allegory of the times. Of all unlikely places the experience occurred at Friends' House, the London Headquarters of the Society of Friends.

I had gone to Friends' House to speak at a meeting organised by the Peace Book Club, for which I have the honour to be a selector. Like other Book Clubs, the Peace Book Club for a subscription of 2s. 6d. a month distributes each month to its members a work dealing with some one or other of the innumerable variety of problems upon which those who wish to save the world from war must seek to inform themselves.

And since the warmth of the hearts of peace-lovers normally exceeds the strength of their heads, and since, too, I am a selector and there is nothing like leather, I have no hesitation in saying that it would be a good thing for everybody concerned, if all my readers were to join the Club.

Well, as I was saying, the Club was holding a meeting in Friends' House, an infinitely decorous and respectable

meeting, attended by about 100 people. Most of the audience were middle-aged; more than half were women. With infinite respect, but with no enthusiasm, they listened to the addresses which were delivered on the American peace movement, on conditions in Italy, on the need for the Peace Book Club, and so on.

As we sat listening in polite silence to the speakers, our repose was broken by the noise of cheering. Again and again in intermittent gusts the sounds of tumultuous cheers came sweeping into our quiet room. What, I wondered, could be happening?

Presently I took my chance and slipped out to see. The cheers came from the large meeting hall, where a packed audience of excited persons was welcoming with terrific enthusiasm the British members of the International Brigade, just home from Spain. This audience was composed almost entirely of young people, and the great majority were young men. In one corner sat the members of the International Brigade, surrounded by their banners. After the meeting was over, I saw them at close quarters and talked with one or two. They were in the highest degree formidable fellows, of the sort whom the Americans are accustomed to call "tough guys" With their great fists, husky voices, and truculently genial expressions they reminded me of a body of prize-fighters.

I have every sympathy with, and considerable admiration for, these men; they have faced danger, endured suffering, fought for a cause in which they believed. I cannot, however, say that I should feel comfortable in thinking that the government of this country was entrusted to their charge. But my doubts, it is clear, were not shared by the meeting. When I entered, it was being addressed by Professor J. B. S. Haldane, who was delivering a discourse in praise of the military virtues—courage, endeavour, belligerence, doggedness, "guts"—all of which, he was pointing out, had been exemplified in the

highest degree by the British members of the International Brigade. For 36 hours they had manned trenches, unrelieved; without machine-guns, tanks or aeroplanes, armed only with rifles, they had withstood the mechanical weight of large sections of the Italian army; in the retreat to the coast they had conducted themselves in a number of rearguard actions with the greatest heroism, had displayed astonishing feats of endurance. And so on and so on.

No doubt, and, no doubt, very admirable! But I could not help reflecting that the spirit that breathed through these remarks was indistinguishable from that which animates the addresses delivered by colonels to members of O.T.C.s and by sergeant-majors to common-or-garden soldiers. Indistinguishable, too, was their effect upon the audience. How they cheered as a standard bearing a tattered flag was waved aloft. . . .

And the point of all this? The point for me lay in the contrast between the mild and decorous meeting attended by the few who had come to consider ways of peace, and the uproarious multitude who had come to do honour to the acts of war. The contrast made me pensive. The facts that the multitude belonged to the Socialist Left, and that their meeting place was the headquarters of the Society of Friends, gave point of paradox to my meditations.

And their fruit was that this mood of new-found belligerence is not one that is fitting to the Left, and that the foreign policy to which it impels members of advanced parties and groups, the policy described in Chapter II, will not serve their cause in good stead. I will try to give reasons for this view.

### *The Policy of the Preventive War.*

(1) *What it entails in Preparation.* If we are to pursue this policy with effect, we must be prepared to wage a

preventive war, preventive in the sense that its object is to prevent the Fascist powers from dominating Europe. In order that we may be ready for such a war, we must continue to pile up prodigious armaments and, though we have solemnly renounced war as an instrument of policy, be prepared to use them.

Labour in the past has always been uneasy, and rightly so, when faced with the prospect of a vast expenditure upon rearmament with all that it entails in the way of the subordination of the industrial resources of the country to the manufacture of munitions of war, and the subjection of the workers to a control which may at any moment of emergency harden into a discipline. As recently as 1935, when the Government White Paper on Defence, envisaging an increase in armaments, was published, the Labour Party denounced it as "a complete betrayal of the cause of democracy and peace", while the Labour Opposition in Parliament moved a vote of censure on the Government for venturing to propose such expenditure. The National Liberal Federation also denounced the White Paper as "a betrayal of principles to which our national honour is pledged".

I find it difficult not to believe that the Labour and Liberal Parties were right in their attitude to rearmament three years ago, wrong in their attitude to rearmament to-day. For, if our present expenditure on rearmament is to be maintained, the social services will be starved and the social legislation which the Left exists to promote—such legislation, indeed, is their whole function and *raison d'être*—must be indefinitely suspended. In opposition to such a policy, I should urge that peace is not only the first interest of this country, but the necessary condition of any social advance. The fact is, I should have thought, sufficiently obvious, yet to admit it, involves also the admission of certain rather disagreeable corollaries. Let me state these as disagreeably as I can. We must admit that we shall not



be able to prevent the peoples of the Continent from living under governments which we believe to be bad, pursuing policies which we think to be dangerous, and perpetrating crimes which we consider to be iniquitous. This is an ugly corollary, but unless we are prepared to police the world as well as the British Empire, it is one which, granted always that we are making the preservation of peace our first objective, we must accept. We can, of course, make diplomatic protests and express just indignation, but when, as is only too likely to be the case, we are snubbed for our pains, when our protests are ignored and our indignation derided, we must swallow our anger as best we may.

(2) *What it Entails in Actuality.* Let us suppose that the policy of the Left is in fact followed by this country. At worst we shall be involved in war; at best, condemned to a condition of highly efficient preparedness for war. This being agreed, it becomes highly pertinent to put to the members of the Left the question, have they considered who will be their allies, who their leaders? Members of the Left, especially those who are young, often talk as if they believed that a war against Fascism would be conducted by the enemies of Fascism, would be conducted, that is to say, by themselves. Young Communists even go so far as to express the hope that they will be able to turn a war situation to their own advantage, and use it to overthrow the capitalist government which they deem to be only in a lesser degree their enemy than Fascism itself. Thus they would kill two birds with the stone of a single war, defeating Fascism abroad and overthrowing Capitalism at home. The logical conclusion of this line of thought is to bid welcome to war as the midwife whose ministrations will bring to birth the social revolution. (I doubt, however, whether many Communists will be found to have the hardihood of their logic.)

These beliefs are delusive. War, as I have pointed out

in a previous chapter,<sup>1</sup> assists movements of reaction, gives power to men of a dominant executive type, and drives the common citizen to look for guidance and leadership to those who, by tradition and training, are accustomed to rule.

When the war against Fascism is actually upon us, the ardent young Communist will find that his allies are not those who desire to refashion the world after his heart's desire, but those who are very well content with the world as it is. In war time, the leaders of the nation will, whether the young Communist likes it or not, be the rulers of the Left; and the leaders of the nation will be the chiefs of the army. In war time, the Left will find itself enrolled, whether it likes it or not, under Sergeant-Majors Chamberlain, Duff Cooper and Churchill. As the war proceeds, these may be replaced by more sinister figures. . . . In war time, we shall be required to surrender ourselves bound hand and foot to the behests of the military authorities. In war time, the aims of the Left will be forgotten, and the only aim that will appear important will be the defeat of the enemy. It is because I am convinced that one of the inevitable consequences of war will be the relegation to an infinitely remote future of all the ideals which I, in common with the Left, hold to be valuable, that I think that the Left is wrong to pursue the policy of the preventive war.

What is true of a nation, which is actually in the condition of war, is true in a lesser degree of a nation which is devoting all its resources to preparing itself for that condition. Sooner or later, we shall be faced with a demand for conscription.<sup>2</sup> "Unless the democracies are prepared to make the same sacrifices as the totalitarian States, the democracies will go down." It is Lord Baldwin speaking, and Mr. Churchill has dotted the i's

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 91, 92.

<sup>2</sup> It was "sooner" rather than "later". By May 1939 conscription was an accomplished fact.

and crossed the t's of his remark with emphasis. Should I be putting it too impolitely, if I were to say that to stand up to Nazism means, in the long run, adopting Nazi methods? I do not think so.

Such, then, are the results which the policy of “standing up” to Fascism, even if it does not end in war, will entail in peace. Now what measure of liberty, I should like to ask, do conscripts enjoy? Or what chance has Labour of gaining its ends if a threatened strike can always be frustrated, as it is in France, by calling workmen to the Colours?

(3) *What it Entails in Results.* Now let us suppose that the war to defeat Fascism is fought and won. What will be its results? I have argued in another chapter<sup>1</sup> that the long-term results of modern war are incalculable. We simply do not know what will happen in and after the next war. But if the precedent of the last war is any guide, we may expect that, while among the victors there will be a relaxation of tension, a lowering of the national consciousness and a profound desire for peace, among the vanquished there will be a sense of humiliation, and a heightened national consciousness issuing in a demand for preparations for a war of revenge. As I have already pointed out, the effect of a victory over aggression in the present is to sow the seeds of renewed aggression in the future. These things have happened before. I can see no reason why they should not happen again, and by their happening commit the world to an endless cycle of future wars.

### *The Difficulties Involved in Following a Peace Policy.*

Do these conclusions mean non-resistance to the aggressor? I have argued that they do not; but they do not, only if we are prepared to take the initiative in planning a policy of constructive peace on the lines

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 87, 88.

indicated in the last chapter.<sup>1</sup> To take such initiative demands courage, consistently to pursue the policy to which the initiative commits us, patience, carefulness, self-restraint, and tenacity. We must tolerate being snubbed, we must refuse to be rebuffed, and we must display as much determination and perseverance in the cause of peace as we have been so willing in the past to display in the cause of war.

The task admittedly is a hard one, harder than that to which the war-maker would summon us. The courage of war is a self-indulgent quality; one removes one's inhibitions and lets oneself go. The courage of peace is a self-restraining quality; one keeps oneself in hand and one's temper on the leash. This being so, I cannot refrain from pointing out that a peace policy will be easier to pursue, if we lack the means to make loss of temper effective. Those who have the means of resisting aggression find difficulty, when provoked, in refraining from their use. Hence, as an alternative to the policy of "standing up" to Fascism, I recommend to the Left the policy of planned and constructive peace-making described in Chapter X.

*What Hopes of a Better World are We Entitled to Entertain When the War is Over?*

Such are my reasons for thinking that the foreign policy at present advocated by the Left is dangerously mistaken. The danger is not so much that it may lead to war—for this, which I should regard as the greatest danger of all, appears to many in the light less of a danger than of a disagreeable necessity which circumstances and the dictators may force upon us—but—and here I am basing my argument on the premises of the Left, not upon my own—that the war will be fought under uncongenial auspices and for unworthy ends.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 194-205.

I have a number of Communist friends who did not see the last war, and who seem to labour under the delusion that a war against Fascist powers would be fought by a citizen army of free and equal comrades. They also appear to believe that the effects of a world war would be the overthrow of Fascism in Germany and of Capitalism in England.

It is difficult to imagine any beliefs which are further removed from the truth. But while the hope of a citizen army is in any event doomed to disillusionment, something could, I imagine, be done to transform the war into an instrument for inaugurating a better and more peaceful world. The loss of liberty and the strengthening of reaction during and after the war are certain, but it is not *absolutely* certain that the peace in which the war ended would reproduce the errors of Versailles.

*That the Left should Make a Statement of War Aims.*

I submit that those who think that war with Germany is coming sooner or later should give their consideration here and now to the question of the objectives for which it should be waged, and of the terms on which it should be concluded. I would suggest further that they would be well advised to publish these terms and objectives.

*Author's First Disclaimer.*

I have throughout argued against the policy of the Left, yet now I am proposing to consider how the Left's policy could be made, if not successful, at least less disastrous than it otherwise might be.

My position is admittedly equivocal, but I am anxious not to fall into the mistake of so many pacifists of making "the best" the enemy of "the good". I am no uncompromising extremist. I am—at least, I like to

think I am—a reasonable man who, if he cannot get what he wants, is prepared to make do with the next best to what he wants that he can get. And so, though I do not want a war on any terms, though I think that war is the worst of evils, I am, nevertheless, prepared to consider by what methods the war which the Left thinks to be inevitable might be made as little evil as possible. The result of such consideration is a statement of war aims. Granted that the Left is right in supposing war to be inevitable, with what objectives, I am asking, should it be fought? We are, I will assume, anxious at all costs to avoid a repetition of Versailles. We want to bring down Fascism, and we do not want to sow the seeds of future wars. Granted these suppositions, I would suggest that the basis of our consideration should be a distinction between the Nazi Party and the German people, and the object of our war aims to widen this distinction until it becomes a rupture.

Our effort, in fact, should be to induce the German people to rid themselves of the domination of the Nazi Party. Hence our aims should be designed to attract the German people while leading to the overthrow of the Nazi Government.

#### *Distinction between German People and Nazi Party.*

A number of considerations suggest that, in the event of war, the withdrawal of the support of a great mass of the people from the Nazi Government is not by any means unlikely. While the younger generation seems to be substantially solid in its support of the Government, the older, which remembers the last war, is pacific and, as the demonstrations in favour of Mr. Chamberlain at the time of the Munich settlement showed, is appalled at the prospect of another war. It supports Hitler's foreign policy as long as its objectives can be obtained by peaceful means, but this support may well be with-

drawn, if Hitler's Government precipitates a war. Assuming that war breaks out, the prestige of the Nazi Government would be bound up with early successes, and if early successes were not forthcoming, opinion in favour of peace on any reasonable terms would rapidly grow. Such a body of opinion might well form the nucleus of an alternative government.

*The Strategy of a Defensive War.*

With a view to preventing early successes, it would be important for Germany's enemies in the war to concentrate their efforts upon means of defence in the hope of producing strategic stalemate at an early stage. Propaganda would be their most important offensive weapon. It must be remembered in this connection that propaganda is subject to the law of diminishing returns. After a certain point of propaganda effort in the creation of opinion and the evocation of enthusiasm has been reached, it is not easy to go beyond it. The Germans have been subjected to a continuous stream of propaganda for six years past. It is not unplausible to suppose that their powers of reception are approaching saturation point. If so, a continuous stream of well-directed counter propaganda, devoted to the presentation of reasonable and attractive war aims which would be realizable directly the existing German Government was overthrown, might produce unexpectedly powerful results? What, then, should these aims be?

*Statement of War Aims.*

*First, Territorial:* These should be simple, and should be limited to a return to the *status quo* before the war, with the possible addition of a transfer to Germany of the South Tyrol which is now under Italian rule. If, as seems likely, Italy were Germany's ally, the value of

such a proposal from the tactical point of view is too obvious to require emphasis.

*Second, Economic:* If reparations of any kind are to be claimed—and it is highly doubtful whether it would not be better to forgo reparations altogether and to say so—they should be paid into a fund for the reconstruction of areas devastated by the war, such fund to be used equally for the benefit of all countries. Our aims might, in addition, include a promise of the floatation by the British, French and American Governments of an inter-allied loan to finance the re-establishment of German industry on a *peace* footing. There should also be proposals for the opening up of undeveloped territories to German enterprise, access to raw materials for German manufacturers, and a shared administration of colonies on the extended mandate system on the lines indicated in the last chapter.<sup>1</sup>

*Third, General:* The abolition of all national air forces and the establishment of an international police force, and the internationalization of civil aviation.

*Fourth, Treaty Revisions:* Assuming that the present League was still in existence, the introduction of more effective machinery for the peaceful revision of treaties and the effecting of territorial readjustments under Article XIX of the Covenant.

### *Propaganda Technique.*

From the very outset of the war, it would be essential to arrange a system of regular broadcasts delivered three or four times a day, reiterating that these and these alone were the aims for which the so-called enemies of Germany were fighting, and that not the defeat of Germany, but the overthrow of the Nazi Government was the sole condition of their realization. This intensive stream of propaganda and not armed attack, still less

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 198-200.



air reprisals, would constitute the chief offensive of a war inspired by the aims which I have indicated. Above all, it would be essential not to bomb cities, thus providing the fires of war with the fuel of indignation and desire for revenge, but it might be desirable to send a fleet of aeroplanes to drop into the streets of German cities packets of butter wrapped in leaflets containing statements of the war aims indicated above. Given that the overriding aim, namely, that of producing disaffection in Germany with a view to the supersession of the Nazi Government, is kept continually in mind, the details of its realization belong to the realm of technique, and those more competent than I will be able to suggest other and more ingenious means for peaceful propaganda.

*Author's Second Disclaimer.*

But now that I have said so much, I am conscious of a sense of disquietude. Who am I, after all, that I should be proposing aims for a war which, I consider, should never be fought? Who am I, that I should be suggesting a foreign policy to the Left? Foreign policy, as it is pursued to-day, still largely consists of a complex of diplomatic manœuvres which the Left will be well advised to leave to those who have been brought up to the time-honoured game and understand the rules.

My fear is lest, in concerning myself with the objectives of a possible war, even though my purpose in so concerning myself is merely to seek to mitigate the evils which war brings, I may, with the best intentions in the world, be playing the devil's game. Now it is better not to play the devil's game at all, than to try to beat him at it. Let me, then, here and now renounce the interest in war policy and war aims which I have just shown, and reaffirm my main position, which is that war destroys happiness, enthrones reaction, and puts an end

to progress, and that those whose concern it is to make the world a better place, will be well advised to keep clear of it.

Now it is the professed concern of the Left to make the world a better place. Its members want to abolish class privilege, to remove economic injustice, and to establish a society in which every man has an equal chance of developing his personality and receiving a fair share of such goods as society may have to offer. These, too, are my ideals. Like the Left, I think of the future in terms of social progress rather than of imperial greatness, and it is with reference to their ability to promote the happiness of individuals, rather than to enhance the prestige of nations, that I am accustomed to measure and to value political programmes and policies.

*That War Means the End of Social Progress.*

Such have been my ideals and standards of value. I learnt them when I went, as a young man, to school with the Fabians, and I have seen no good reason to revise them since. I believe that the business of politics is to promote the happiness of individual men and women, and, in the light of this belief, I cannot help but regard this pre-occupation on the part of the Left with national prestige, this readiness for war to preserve or to enhance it, as being no less saddening than they are surprising. Do not the Left know that war is the enemy of social progress; that in war it is the poor who suffer; that war does not make a poor man rich or an oppressed man free, but enriches only still further those who are already rich, and gives power to the oppressors; that war suppresses liberty and makes straight the way of dictators? The ends of the Left are good. They are to preserve democracy, to establish socialism and to overthrow Fascism. But are the men who are prepared to

fight for these ends ignorant of the fate that has overtaken those who have made war for good ends in the past? I repeat that one of the many tragedies of war is that it is made not by bad men knowing themselves to be wrong, but by good men passionately convinced that they are right; by good men whose goodness is betrayed by the event.

*The Figment of Prestige.*

And whence arises in my friends of the Left this new-found interest in our national greatness, this concern for the figure that Britain cuts in the world, for what is called our prestige? Do they not know upon what the "prestige" of a country rests? Upon its humanity, its truth-telling, its friendship for the weak, its care for its citizens, its fidelity to its alliances? Upon none of these things. It depends—here is Earl Baldwin's word for it—upon whether "a country has behind it the strength to command respect and attention"; it depends, that is to say, upon its possession of high explosives and incendiary bombs and the willingness of its young men to drop them upon unarmed human beings. Prestige, in fact, is nothing more than the power of the bully to impose his will upon others by threatening to destroy them unless they submit; it is, in a word, the power of blackmail. This being so, I am inclined to agree with Mrs. Swanwick that "the possession of prestige should disqualify a Power from being considered civilized, exactly in proportion to the amount of prestige possessed".

To obtain this prestige, we must abandon most of what my friends of the Left consider valuable, and surrender the gains of fifty years of social progress. We must give up politics and the pleasures of discussion; the liberty to criticize the government and to agitate for improvement in our conditions; the hope of better

education, of shorter hours of work, of ampler social services. For to be strong and mighty to-day, we must place our population, as the Germans have done, upon a war footing. We must be prepared to work nine or ten hours in every twenty-four; to register and regiment our people; to allocate men to such work as the government thinks important; to establish a censorship of opinion and the Press; to subordinate everything to the achievement of efficiency in the art of slaughter.

*And When We are Strong!*

And when, as a result of our efforts, we are strong and mighty, when we have regained prestige, when we are at last in a position to "stand up to" Fascism, we shall be able to face the test of war, which will not only inflict upon us unimaginable horrors, but may well bring in its train civil war, famine, pestilence, a breakdown of the structure of civilization, and a generation of European anarchy.

If, then, as a result of following the policy outlined in this book, England ceases to be a great country, with power to impose her will upon others, I for one should not complain. I should be content merely if it were a country of happy people. .

## CHAPTER XI

### A QUESTION OF FAITH: THE FAITH OF THE PACIFIST

#### *Personal Avowal.*

THERE is one matter which I have left to the end. It is not a matter of immediate political concern and does not, therefore, form part of the body of the book; nor is it a matter which can be explored by the method of argument which I have tried hitherto to follow. Nevertheless, it does in a very real sense belong to the book, since, because of it, the book has been written, and without it, it could not have been written. The matter is one that touches on a question of faith. It is, I think, clear that the arguments I have used, the position I have adopted, the methods I have recommended, fall within a certain framework of belief, spring, if you will, from a philosophy, are inspired, if you prefer it put that way, by a faith.

It is, in the first place, a faith in regard to ends. I believe that it is men and women and not States who have value, and that it is the sole business of the State to promote their happiness. This belief has been developed in an earlier chapter. Secondly, it is a faith in regard to means. I believe that human beings are at bottom reasonable and, believing this, I believe in the efficacy of reason as a means of persuasion, and of argument as a means of conviction. This belief belongs, and must of necessity belong, to the category of personal avowal. It is, I repeat, a matter of faith rather than of argument. One may hope that one's avowal may strike a chord of sympathetic response in one's reader, but

one cannot hope to convince him if it does not. Nevertheless, as this faith in means informs the opinions, and dictates, at least in part, the arguments of this book, some account of it is necessary to its completion.

*The Belief in Human Reasonableness.*

The faith, then, which, as a pacifist, I hold, is in the last resort a faith in the ultimate reasonableness of mankind; I would have said once, in the ultimate goodness of mankind, but I have come of recent years to believe in the doctrine of man's natural wickedness, and to doubt whether evil can ever be eradicated from human nature so long as it remains human. But though I think men are wicked as well as stupid, it has been my contention throughout this book that war is the result of man's stupidity rather than of his wickedness; it is born of thick heads rather than of hard hearts. Hence to believe that man is in essence reasonable in the sense that he can be made ultimately to see reason, is to believe that war may one day be banished from his life.

The belief in human reasonableness was common enough in the nineteenth century. Our fathers, taking an optimistic view of themselves, as of the world, believed that they were reasonable beings. This belief involved two corollaries. In the first place, reason was free. Its deliverances might be, and no doubt in practice frequently were, biased by prejudice and distorted by desire; but the fact that reason could be deflected by these influences was a temporary defect due to man's incomplete evolution. It was, indeed, a basic assumption of the age that reason in theory could, and in practice often did, operate freely. It could arrive at an impartial and "reasoned" choice between alternative courses of action; it could take a disinterested survey of evidence, with a view to forming a "reasoned" conclusion or

belief. It was only in so far as men's reasons operated "freely" in choosing and believing, that they could be said to act and think "rationally". Fortunately, however, they had already reached a stage of evolution at which appeals to their "free reason" were sometimes successful, and, under the influence of education and other enlightening forces, the degree of their "rationality" might be expected continually to increase. In the second place, reason was an instrument for reaching truth. One might of course make mistakes, argue faultily or jump to unjustifiable conclusions, but the mistakes could be detected, the faulty arguments corrected, the unjustifiable conclusions revised. This process of detection, correction and revision was itself the work of reason. Hence, if reason went wrong, it was only by reasoning—better reasoning, that is to say—that it could be set right. But, whatever mistakes reason might make, and however inadequate it might be as an instrument for reaching truth, it was always *open* to reason to arrive at conclusions which were true. A true conclusion was one which corresponded with external facts, and it was because of this correspondence that it was true. Thus the freedom of reason and its truth-reaching properties went hand in hand. A free reason was one that was constrained only by the evidence, the evidence of the facts; when, and only when, it was so constrained, it arrived at conclusions which were true.

The view that reason was free, and that, being free, it could reach true conclusions, was fundamental in nineteenth-century thought. J. S. Mill, for example, to take a typical representative of the time, tells us of his father that "so complete was my father's reliance on the influence of reason over the minds of mankind, whenever it is allowed to reach them, that he felt as if all would be gained if the whole population were taught to read, if all sorts of opinions were allowed to be addressed to them by word and in writing, and if

by means of a suffrage, they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinions they adopted".<sup>1</sup> Truth, in other words, will out, if men's minds are only given a fair chance to look for it; for, being reasonable by nature, men have only to be given access to truth, to recognize it. And, speaking of himself and his friends, J. S. Mill goes on to say that what they "principally thought of, was to alter other people's opinions; to make them believe according to evidence, and know what was their real interest, which, when they knew, they would, we thought, by the instrument of opinion, enforce a regard to it upon one another".<sup>2</sup>

*Modern View of Reason as the Tool of Instinct.*

To-day these beliefs are no longer widely held, the contemporary view being that reason has no power to alter men's opinions or to modify their actions, since reason is the tool of instinct and the slave of passion. A man's reason is represented as following his instincts just as the feet of a hungry dog follow his nose. Now if reason can only be brought into operation when instinct pipes the tune, she will dance to the tune which instinct pipes her. In other words, our reasons, being given us to provide excuses for what we instinctively want to do and arguments for what we instinctively want to believe, will arrive only at those conclusions which have already been unconsciously embraced because they appeal to instinct or satisfy desire. Thus the smoker persuades himself that tobacco ash is good for the carpet, and the fisherman that fish, being cold-blooded, do not mind having their throats dragged out of them by a hook.

This general view of reason expresses itself in modern thinking in two rather different forms. There is, first,

<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, pp. 89 and 94 (World's Classics edition).



the doctrine of the psycho-analysts, that reason is the tool of the unconscious and cannot, therefore, help but reach the conclusions to which our unconscious wishes incline us; and there is the doctrine of the Communists, that reason is an instrument for promoting class interests and can entertain only those truths which are in the interests of the class to which its owner belongs.

*Application to Problem of War of the Belief in Man's Irrationality.*

These doctrines have an important bearing upon the reasoned case against war, which I have tried to present in this book. War, we are often told, is natural to man, and reason is, therefore, helpless to prevail against it. You may prove to demonstration that war causes unhappiness, fails to achieve any good result, leaves the world worse off than it found it, is the begetter of physical pain, is foolish, stupid, wrong, immoral, barbarous, but so long as men love violence and cruelty and desire to achieve their ends by force, so long, it is said, will their reasons provide arguments for doing what they love and gratifying their desire, proving that war is right, just, honourable, necessitated by circumstances, required by self-defence, approved of by God. When, it is asked, did a nation ever wage a war which was not "just", was not in "self-defence", was not "approved by God"? And the moral is that to build up a reasoned case against war is useless, since it is neither from reason that war springs, nor by reason that it can be exorcised.

Modern doctrines of the causation of war afford a special illustration of the fatalism which pervades modern thought. Wars, we are told, are inevitable because circumstances make them so. There is a widespread contemporary belief that war is a sort of independent visitation, like locusts or the plague. The

biologically minded militarist urges that war is natural to man and can never be eradicated; the political realist, that war is natural to nations, and that they will always resort to it in pursuit of their interests; the economics-trained socialist, that war is a necessary outcome of the present distribution of private property and that, until the capitalist system of private ownership is abolished—and such abolition would itself involve civil war—wars will perpetually recur.

*That the Inevitability View of War is Untrue.*

I have dealt at length in other books<sup>1</sup> with the view of the relation between desire and reason to which I have referred. The view is, I think, demonstrably false, but this is not the place to argue the matter. I will confine myself to making the point that, if it be true, as the view in question alleges, that reason is suborned from the first, then it is true of the operations of reason, not only in the field of politics, but in other fields also; for example, in that of science and in that of logic. In these spheres, too, we have predetermined in our own minds, and predetermined by non-rational processes, the conclusions at which we mean to arrive. We should, then, cease to give lip-service to logic, since our so-called logical conclusions reflect nothing but the interests and wishes of those who reach them.

I have not, however, observed that Marxists disown logic, or psycho-analysts science. On the contrary, the former are apt and persistent in logical argument; the latter are anxious to claim psychology as a science. The aptitude and the claim suggest that truth is regarded as being in these spheres both reachable by reason and desirable. Why, then, it may be asked, should the operations of reason be looked at askance in politics? How-

<sup>1</sup> See more particularly my *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, Chapters IV and VII.

ever, as I have said, this is no place to argue the matter. I will content myself here with placing on record my view, that reason *does* sometimes determine what a man thinks, and, if what he thinks, so, too what he does. For, as a man thinks, so, at least on occasion, will he act. Hence, I think that Mill was in the right of it, when he held that to alter a man's opinions is to modify his actions. When all men of honour wore swords, they believed that honour required their occasional insertion in one another's bodies; accordingly, their swords were continually in and out of one another's bodies. When the good sense of mankind had superseded the curious belief that the most effective way of demonstrating that you are in the right in a quarrel is to make a hole in your adversary's body, duelling was abolished, swords went out of fashion and men went to the lawyer instead of to the fencing-master. Thus the course of men's actions was altered by the conclusions of their reasons.

### *The Removability of War.*

Let me apply this belief—it can scarcely be called in argument, for I have not here defended it—to the case in point. The view that is under consideration maintains that war is a necessary and inevitable by-product of human nature, or, alternatively, of the capitalist economic system, and that reason is, therefore, helpless to avert it. Against this view I should argue that war has no necessary biological basis in human nature, no necessary political basis in State nature, and no necessary economic basis in the institution of private property. War, I should maintain, is the result of certain definite political conditions. These conditions have obtained throughout the major part of human history, and over the major part of the earth's surface, but they are not necessary and can be removed. If they are to

be removed, it is necessary that men should first see that they are removable. It is here that my faith in human reason becomes relevant. Let me state the faith more explicitly. I maintain that man is rational in the sense that, if a proposition is true, and if it is presented to him often enough, cogently enough and persuasively enough, then, though he will reject it again and again, he will in the end accept it, and when he has accepted it long enough, he will begin to act upon his acceptance.

### *The Fact of Human Stupidity.*

Mind, I am not arguing that human beings are not stupid; they are, I think, appallingly stupid, so stupid that most of the evils from which we suffer are due to nothing so much as to our stupidity. The individual men and women that one meets are, it is obvious, not in their ordinary dealings, wicked. On the contrary, they are for the most part decent, kindly folk who do what they can to diminish human suffering, and will often go to considerable lengths in the matter of personal inconvenience in order to assist those who are in trouble. Yet, if one considers the affairs of mankind collectively and in the mass, if one takes, in short, a glance at human history, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are devils, or are at least intermittently animated by devils. For example, during a period of twenty-seven months from 1482 to 1484 two thousand males and females of the human species were burnt alive in public in the city of Seville by those who believed that by tormenting God's creatures for a short period in an earthly fire they were saving them from an eternity of torment in an infernal one. In the Great War of 1914 to 1918 men killed ten million and mutilated twenty-three million of their number in the belief that by these actions they were defending national honour, safeguarding the rights of small nations, preserving

democracies, protecting hearths, homes, kings, wives, children.

The motives that led men to inflict these appalling sufferings upon one another were not by any means always evil. On the contrary, they were on balance good, entailing in those who were animated by them the virtues of self-sacrifice, loyalty, bravery and devotion. But the beliefs which evoked the display of these virtues were almost certainly false. It is, for example, highly improbable that a good God enjoys the roasting of His creatures. It is not the case that democracy, kings, wives, and the rest were in fact protected by the methods adopted in war. It is not, therefore, necessary for a reformer wishing to persuade people to do what will make them happy to change men's hearts, but it is necessary for him to brighten their wits, so that their idealism may no longer be exploited by selfish interests, which induce them to lay down their lives in the defence of what they falsely believe to be right and justice.

### *The Failure to Connect.*

These generalizations have been frequently illustrated in the course of the preceding Chapters. People, I have pointed out,—the fact is indeed sufficiently obvious—want peace, yet they get war. Why do they get war? Because, while desiring peace, they nevertheless desire things which are incompatible with peace; because, while wishing to avoid war, they pursue policies which entail the risk of war among their consequences. And they do these things because they fail to perceive connections, fail, for example, to see that the existence in the world of a comparatively unpopulated Australia is a standing ground of envy and resentment; that envy and resentment breed unrest, that unrest leads to aggression, and aggression ends in war; fail again to see that the infliction of needless humiliation upon a beaten foe will be a challenge to him to make himself

strong enough to avenge the humiliation; fail to see that the motives which lead a nation to defend itself by arms will lead its neighbours to defend themselves against it with yet greater arms; fail to see—for the argument must be impartial and take its illustrations of the failure to perceive connections from the behaviour not only of our own nation, but of all—the contradiction—Mr. Pirow of South Africa has, as I write, just pointed it out—between an overwhelming desire for peace on the part of the average German citizen, and the imbuing of a couple of million young men with the determination to give their lives for Hitler coupled with the desire for an opportunity to show their determination, between the demand for colonies to accommodate an expanding population and the offering of bonuses to the newly wed and more bonuses for their babies in order to enable it to expand.

People, I repeat, want peace. Yet they get war, and one of the reasons why they get war is, I am suggesting, that they do not think clearly. Let me clinch my contention with an example which I take from Mr. R. W. Jepson's book, *Clear Thinking*. It begins with a quotation from an unnamed author:—

“We passed through a quiet valley in the Vosges; where the pine trees are even now nothing but blackened stems, and where in the undergrowth one is tripped up by the vast coils of barbed wire. At the further side are two immense cemeteries; one French, one German. All these countless tombstones, on both sides alike, state that those whom they commemorate died ‘For God and Fatherland’.”

Mr. Jepson comments:—

“The God was one and the same Father. The Fatherlands were separate and at enmity. And yet in the name of their joint Father they (with what devoted self-sacrifice)

killed and dismembered one another. Possibly a little clear thinking, a little grasp of the meaning of words, might have made such a calamity at least more difficult."

I conclude that if people reasoned better, if they thought clearly, if they were trained to see the relevant connections of their actions and, in particular, the connection between action and result, if they reflected upon the meaning of words, some part at least of the causes that make for war would be removed.

### *The Failure of Imagination.*

In saying that people are stupid, I am saying also that they are unimaginative. Imagination is in part an intellectual quality, and defective imagination constitutes one of the most important of the single causes of war. People do not realize that wars are horrible, because they do not see the horrors; do not hold with me that war is the worst of all evils, because its evils take place off-stage. People's imaginations, and especially the imaginations of women, are lacking in range. I have seen a woman who would shrink from killing a wasp go out of her way to avoid hurting a fly, and dissolve in an ecstasy of voluble compassion over a dog who had been run over in the street, receive with sublime indifference the announcement that during the preceding seven months two million people had died of famine in China, or that a number of Ukrainian peasants had been flogged to death by Poles during the "pacification" of the Polish Ukraine. It is almost as if suffering were not conceded to be suffering, unless it occurs within the same territorial area as that which happens to be occupied by oneself, or to persons living under a form of government of which one's political opinions happen to approve.

People's imaginations are no less lacking in perspective than they are limited in range. Let a calamity occur

on a sufficiently large scale, and they will be unable to rise imaginatively to the level of suffering which it entails. This defect on the part of the human imagination plays a large part in the causation and continuance of war. Thus at the time of the Passchendaele slaughter in the last war, I can remember people writing to the papers insisting that something ought to be done to stop the continuous barrage of shells with which the Passchendaele offensive began, on the ground that it was interfering with the habits of migrating birds, and I have little doubt that there were those who complained of the submarine campaign because it tended to endanger the lives and disturb the habits of fish. It is these defects of imagination which constitute a large part of human stupidity. Hence, I repeat, it is because they are stupid rather than because they are cruel or unjust, that men subscribe to the appalling cruelties and injustices which are perpetrated upon their fellow-men. They simply fail to realize what these cruelties and injustices mean.

It follows that, if people could be made more intelligent and more imaginative, if their wits were brightened so that they see things in their true perspectives, and perceived connections between actions and results, a large part of the causes of human suffering would be removed.

Now it is at this point that I wish once more to affirm my faith in the power of human reason and to assert that, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, human beings can, if reasoned with, be brought in the end to see the truth.

#### *Author's Belief in the Teachability of Man.*

There are moods in which, looking back over human history, one is tempted to take the view that men are incorrigible, that they will never learn. Justifiable in



moments of irritation, this view cannot commend itself to serious reflection. Consider, for a moment, the evils that have disappeared from the lives of men. Witchcraft and cholera, slavery and gladiatorial games and torture.<sup>1</sup> Each of these evils must, at the time of its prevalence, have seemed, as war seems to-day, to be irremediable. Human nature being what it is, you could not, men must have said—men in fact did say—abolish slavery. But you did. How was the change effected? By appeals to men's sense of justice, to their compassion, above all to their reason. Now the efficacy of an appeal to reason depends upon the educability of mankind. If men are not teachable, if they cannot and will not learn, then it is no use appealing to their reason. But sometimes, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, it is.

*Pestilence in the Fourteenth and War in the Twentieth Centuries.*

The situation in the Middle Ages in regard to plague was not unlike the contemporary situation in regard to war. The communities of Europe were swept by repeated pestilences of cholera and typhoid which decimated the population. Just as men beset the statesmen of to-day and ask them how to cure war, so they flocked to the doctors of the fourteenth century and asked them how to cure plague. And just as the statesmen of to-day offer, when approached, an infinite variety of different and self-contradictory proposals, so did the doctors of the Middle Ages offer a bewildering miscellany of conflicting and contradictory cures. And because no doctor *knew* of any cure, each *professed* to know of a different cure. Perhaps the most popular of all the accredited methods of meeting the situation was the

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, as the recent history of Germany, Italy and Russia has shown, the disappearance of torture has been only temporary.

method of prayer. People crowded into the churches and prayed God to avert the pestilence, thereby providing the best possible conditions for the spread of contagion.

But though the doctors could not tell the people what steps to take to cure cholera and typhoid, they could tell them what steps to take if they wished to prevent them. "The position," they said in effect, "is perfectly simple. If you wish to stop plagues, abolish the conditions in which plagues spread. If, in fact, you wish to prevent cholera, keep sewage out of your water." And in due course, when they had suffered badly enough and long enough, suffered for several hundred years to the tune of several million lives, human beings saw the doctors' point, devised a system of sanitation and ceased to suffer from plagues. And the inference? That human beings really are teachable. If they are suffering from some palpable evil, and if you can show them how the evil may be prevented, then when the evil has continued long enough and they have suffered badly enough, provided that you have in no way relaxed your efforts at demonstration but have continued to entreat them, arguing the while patiently, cogently, and persuasively in favour of the means of prevention that lie to hand, you can in the end induce them to do what is necessary to save themselves. In the end men will always see the point; and in the end they will see the point of disarmament, if they wish to avoid war, as they saw the point of sanitation, when they wished to avoid plagues. But it will take them a long time yet, and they may have to suffer a great deal more in the process.

### *The Power of Reason.*

If I am right in this view of human nature, then the crusade against war is neither less nor more hopeless than the crusade against cholera or against slavery. The

operations of reason are slow, and it is only over a long period that its influence begins to tell. Emotion and desire dominate the field while they are clamant, and the voice of reason is drowned; but while the influence of reason, though weak, is uniform and persistent, the promptings of desire, though strong, are intermittent and capricious. Emotion grows tired and falls away: desires conflict and cancel out. It is then that reason comes into her own. Hitler and Goebbels, bawling stark staring nonsense, may draw the crowd for a space, just as revivalist preachers have drawn it in the past, but you cannot bawl for ever; there are certain reasons why you cannot. One is that you deprive yourself of all power of emphasis by constant over-exaggeration, so that, having exhausted all the expletives in your vocabulary against the Jews, you find that you have none left for your war-time enemies. Another is that the capacity for emotion grows fatigued; presently it reaches saturation point. Nations condemned to perpetual enthusiasm are not able to conjure up fresh enthusiasms to meet special emergencies.

When emotion tires, and desire dies down, men begin to consider, to reflect, to think, some of them even to think clearly. Clear thinking is the most distinctive, as it is the most valuable, of human attributes. Unless we are to resign ourselves to a future in which men have lost their title to humanity, we must believe that its acid power will, in the end, disintegrate all the flummery of current pretences, eat the life out of every false loyalty and superstitious creed, and bite its way through to reveal the fact and illuminate the truth.

*Conditions for the Success of Reason in "Debunking"  
War.*

How can reason be assisted to "come into her own" in the present instance? What, in other words, are the

conditions which must be satisfied, if reason is to be successful in her endeavour to persuade men not to bring upon themselves misery and suffering by going to war? There are, I think, two main conditions which I take from Sir Norman Angell's admirable book, *Preface to Peace*. The first is that the particular form of nonsense which reason is proposing to "debunk"—the colloquialism must be pardoned, it so exactly expresses the effect of reason upon the nonsense that makes men go to war—should be plainly harmful in its effects. This condition is not always satisfied; it was not satisfied, for example, in regard to gladiatorial games or duelling. Mercifully, however, it is abundantly satisfied in the case of war. As I pointed out in an earlier chapter, war has been shorn of its glamour and, except in Germany, Japan and Italy, is no longer regarded as being in itself good. Moreover, it is evident that militarism and nationalism have made the world an exceedingly uncomfortable place to live in, while the continued production of guns instead of butter means that the poor and humble go short, and even the rich and proud have to give away more than a quarter of their incomes to the State. This first condition, then, may be deemed to be satisfied.

The second condition is that the evil which reason seeks to remove should be detachable; detachable, that is to say, from the mass of opinions which we hopefully call our politics, from the body of sentiments which we pretentiously term our morals, and from the accumulation of habits which we dignify by the name of a way of life. The last thing that most of us want, is to be placed under the necessity of introducing a change in our habits and mode of living, of altering our opinions, or of jettisoning any of the well-established antiques that form our mental furniture. To one and all of these, to habits, opinions, antiques, we are attached by a thousand ties of sentiment, custom and affection.

If, therefore, the eradication of war from human life meant the disruption of these ties, the task of the reasonable pacifist would become impossible. It was only for so long as he believed that cannibalism, duelling, witchcraft and primitive sanitation formed a necessary and integral part of his way of life, that the average man was induced to tolerate them. When they were shown to be detachable, so that their abolition did not involve uprooting habits or destroying mental furniture, they disappeared.

*The Obligation to Argue, to Perceive and to Convince.*

A similar demonstration is required in the case of war. If the general case put forward in this book is sound, such a demonstration is, to say the least of it, possible.

Let me, then, repeat my article of faith, that when the demonstration has been made cogently enough and persuasively enough and often enough, and when men have suffered long enough and badly enough from the results of their failure to be convinced by it and to act upon their conviction, then and not till then will war disappear. My case is, then, that war is not something that is inevitable, but is the result of certain man-made circumstances; that man who made the circumstances in which wars flourish, can abolish them, as he abolished the circumstances in which plagues flourished; that man is a reasonable being, and that, if arguments of sufficient weight are brought to bear upon him, and brought with sufficient frequency, then, given that the two conditions I have indicated are satisfied, he can be induced to abolish war. Hence the obligation which is laid upon those who share my hatred of war and my faith in the possibility of its abolition, not to relax their efforts, but in season (although not out of season) to seek to persuade

their fellow men that war is foolish, that it is wrong, that it will increase human misery, that it is not inevitable, and that it rests with them to abolish it. It is in pursuance of this obligation that I have written the foregoing pages.



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## Chap. I

You may well call him Chap. 1; for he is the first Chap I am going to talk about. Have no fear. He will not detain you long.

He was walking briskly down Fifth Avenue in the City of New York on a rather too hot June day of the year 1979. He was a man of something over thirty, short, and broad-shouldered; with a new straw hat on his queer head, and a light grey suit off the hook. In his right hand he swung a small new and smart attaché case, bearing the letters L.Z. A close observer would have seen that on the corner of his handkerchief which just showed from his pocket were the letters D. M.—in red silk. But then I am not a close observer, and neither are you; so we will not dwell too much on that. A really curious enquirer, who should have waited till he swung his hat, would have seen in the crown of it, tastefully embossed, the gilt letters J. F.

He had very pale green eyes, somewhat furtive though decided, too wide apart, and with a Mongolian lift at the outer corners: high cheek bones, a round face, and a skin which might be called a dirty yellow or a delicate parchment, according to whether one were engaged in flattering him or no. His rather scanty straight hair, a little too long at the back, projected from the hat above recorded. He was clean-shaven. His left cheek carried the pronounced scar of a sabre-cut, now nearly ten years old.

CONTINUED

# COMPLETE LIST CONTINUED

So walked he smartly down town by way of Fifth Avenue.

He was just about to turn into Tenth Street, and he was already within two blocks of the Travel Agency for which he was making, to take up his steamer reservation for England, when a tall man, in a slouch hat, coming suddenly upon him from the side street, touched his arm and stopped him in his stride. Even as he thus abruptly halted, a lanky, inane-looking man, wearing a look of indifference and innocence which would have made him suspected in the most crass company, stopped as abruptly, struck by something in a shop window. He was about fifty yards behind the pair who had thus met, and that was natural enough as he was paid to follow the man with the scar and had been keeping at that distance ever since Chap 1 had stepped out of his hotel nearly a mile back.

The scarred man and his tall, slouch-hatted friend turned down into Tenth Street at a leisurely pace, talking together: and the lanky gentlemanly man, at his due distance, did the same. But he now moved rather more quickly; he caught the pair up, passed them hastily, got just before them into the Travel Agency, and asked to look at the folder of the Dutch Line.

The two came in just as he buried his face in that piece of literature, and he heard the scarred one speak to the clerk at the counter.

"You know that reservation of mine on the *Zeeland*," he said. "Number 136? The single cabin on the top deck? Port side?"

He spoke clearly and quickly, with no very recognisable accent, and yet it was not exactly English. It would have puzzled anyone to say what it was, but it certainly was not peculiar to any district of

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the United States, still less of England.

Even as he spoke the man in the slouch hat muttered in another tongue, "Not so loud! We are observed!" But it was too late, the number had passed.

"Number 136?" said the clerk. "Yes?"

And even as he said it, the lanky, inane-looking man, who had been searching in the Dutch Line folder, handed it back. He had heard all he wanted to hear: and it was as well not to stay too long. Perhaps these gentlemen were used to recognising research workers of his kind. He went out sauntering like a man with no particular business before him and a fine incapacity for it if he had.

As for the other two, the slouch-hatted one added not a word, and the scarred one said no more than that he was giving up the cabin; he could not travel by that boat. The clerk told him the ticket was made out—which it wasn't—and must be paid for: a large sum, for the man with the scar looked after himself well. But he made no protest. He did not even ask to see the ticket. He had the money ready in his hand in notes, which he had pulled loose from his pocket. He did not delay to ask if he might get a refund if they should manage to fill the berth before the boat sailed, nor to make any of those objections which men usually make when they have to forfeit money uselessly. His gesture was that of one who knew exactly what he would have to give and was prepared to give it; of one, moreover, to whom the sum forfeited was of no consequence.

He took the receipt, signed the form acknowledging the giving up of his berth, and went out with his companion. The scarred man hailed

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*"Not so loud! We are observed!"*

a taxi, and as they both got in he gave the address of his hotel.

Meanwhile the lanky, vacuous-looking person was at the telephone. He was already in a public box. Before Chap I and slouch-hat were well round the corner, he had already rung up the Plantagenet Club and asked for the General Manager of the Truth and Justice Private Enquiry Company, commonly known as the T. and J.

That Great Personage, the trusted ally of Mighty Governments and still more mighty Banks—let alone Monopolists, Share Shufflers, and

other individual powers—came quickly to his end of the wire. For he was eager and anxious. The Distributing Centre in France had cabled three times in one day, so urgent was it, and he hadn't yet got the berth or the boat, let alone the names under which Chap I was concealing his very interesting personality.

Very welcome therefore in the ears of the Manager of the T. and J. was his employé's voice.

"That the T. and J.? Mister Harrison? . . . Good. The Zealand—136," he said . . . "Nope.

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# COMPLETE LIST CONTINUED

Chap. I (continued)

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Never mind the name. I'll get that later. I know that sort. I wasn't going to let him take my portrait. Yes, I know she sails to-night. I'm going right around now to the quay. I'll get his name on the list and ring you up again then. And I'll sure shoot him, too. You set right there. I'll ring again at a quarter of the hour . . ."

At the other end of the wire the Superintendent stepped out of the telephone box in his club, and told the servant to send for him the moment they rang him up again. He pulled out his watch.

"It'll be at a quarter of the hour," he said. And he muttered: "Time enough too! He's only got to step round to the Dutch Line wharf."

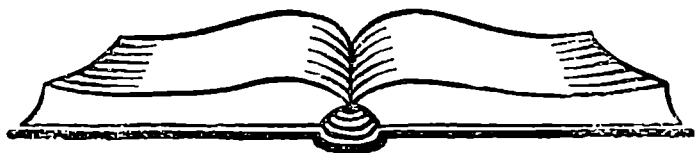
There was some disappointment in his face, which was remarkable for exactly resembling the face of any other great Business Brain: being, as it were, of wood, also set, scrawny and tortoiseshell-spectacled. He mused in anxiety.

He had to trust Evans (John). An experienced man. Same man as had gotten Sadie James her Alimony by that scoop with the Gimlet at the Merron House. What he said, went. Mebbe it *was* unwise to linger in that Travel Agency, but the Manager of the T. and J. couldn't help thinking that Evans (John) might at least have glanced without danger at the name on the Reservation. However, 'tweren't long to wait.

He sat in tension and attempted to allay the torture of suspense by recalling his success—such as it was—up to that point.

(Extract from *But Soft: We are Observed* by Hilaire Belloc, illustrated by G. K. Chesterton, one of the Penguin fiction volumes.)

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