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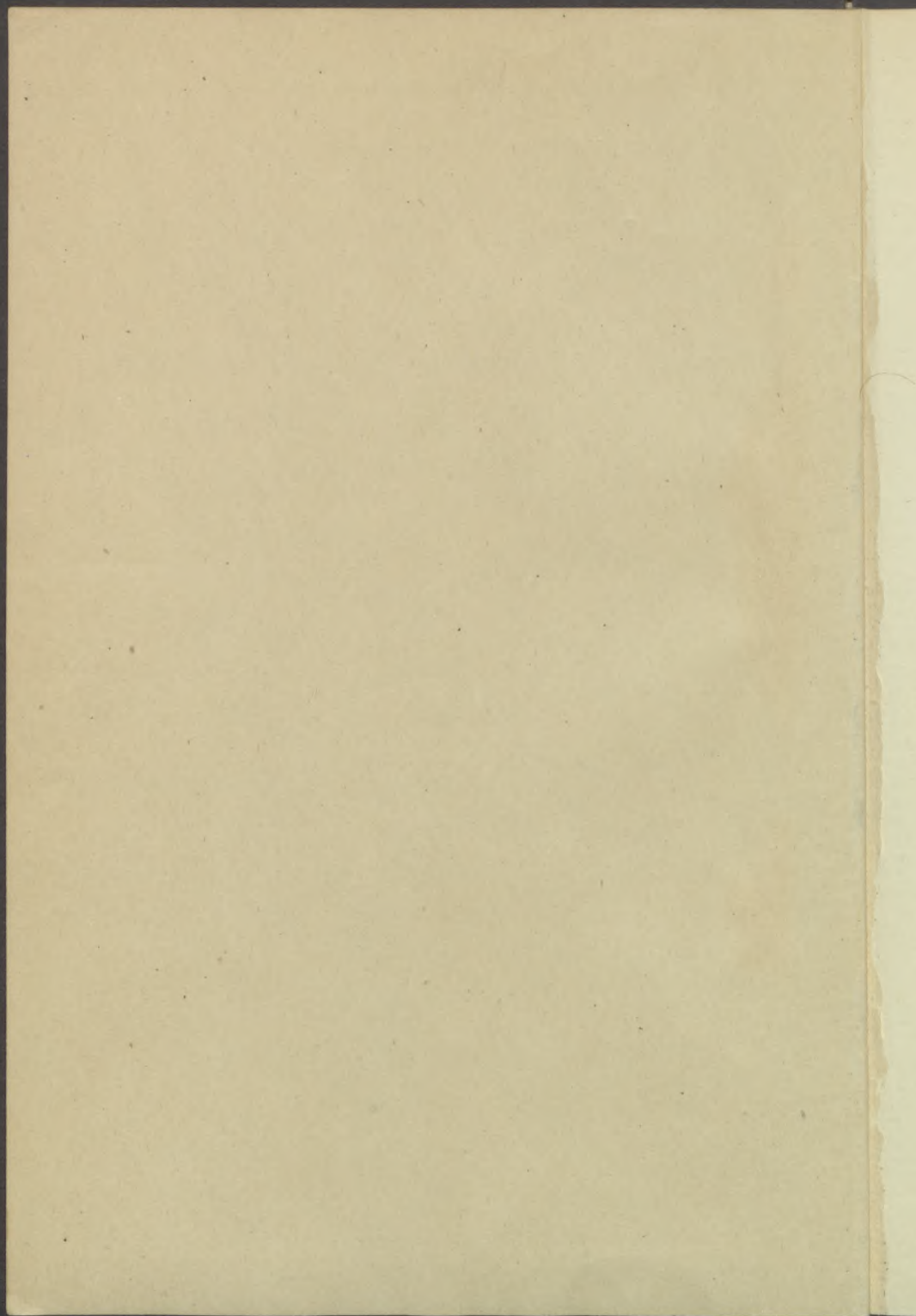
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THE STATE OF THE WORLD



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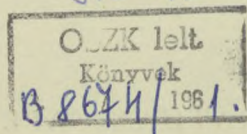
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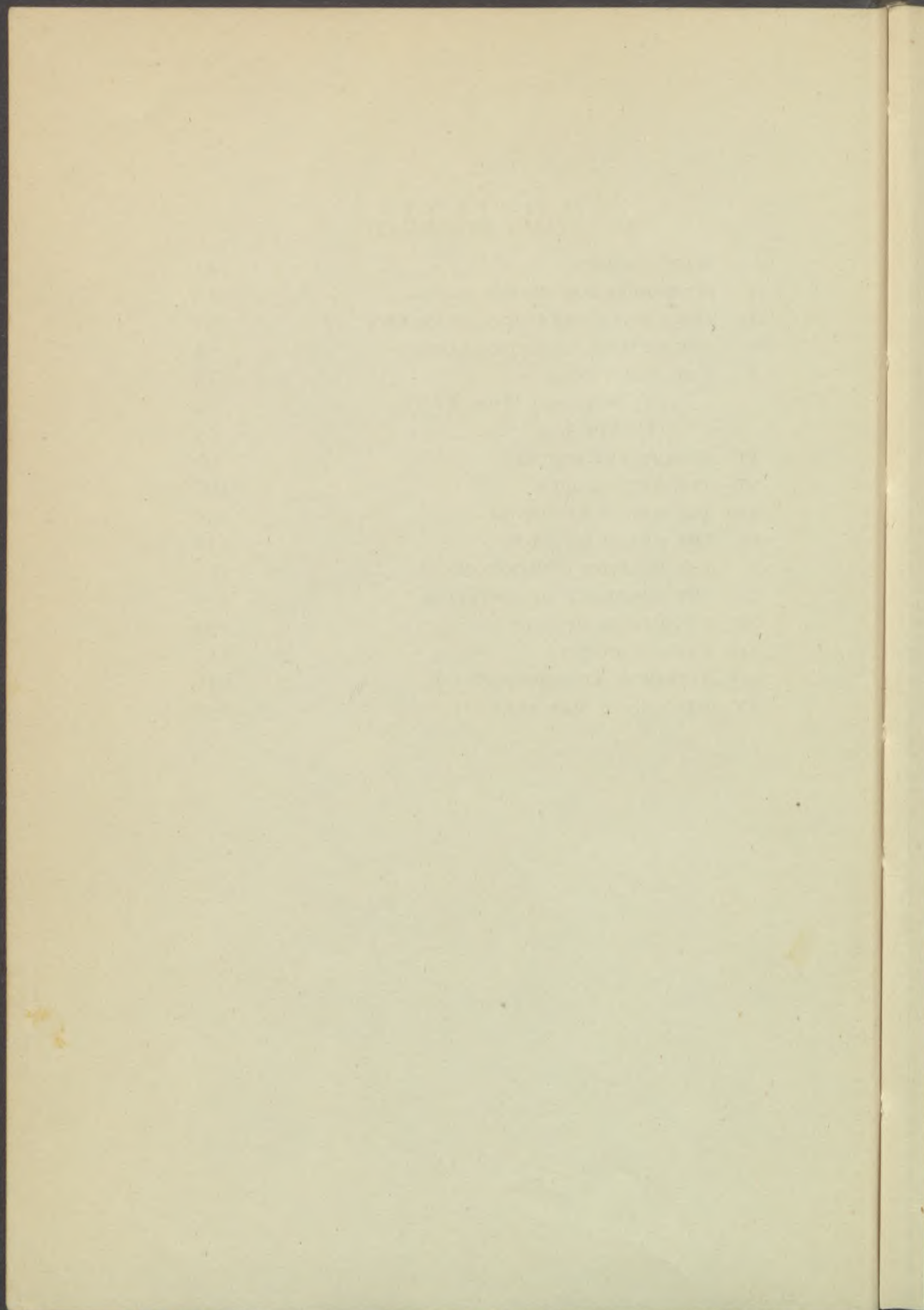


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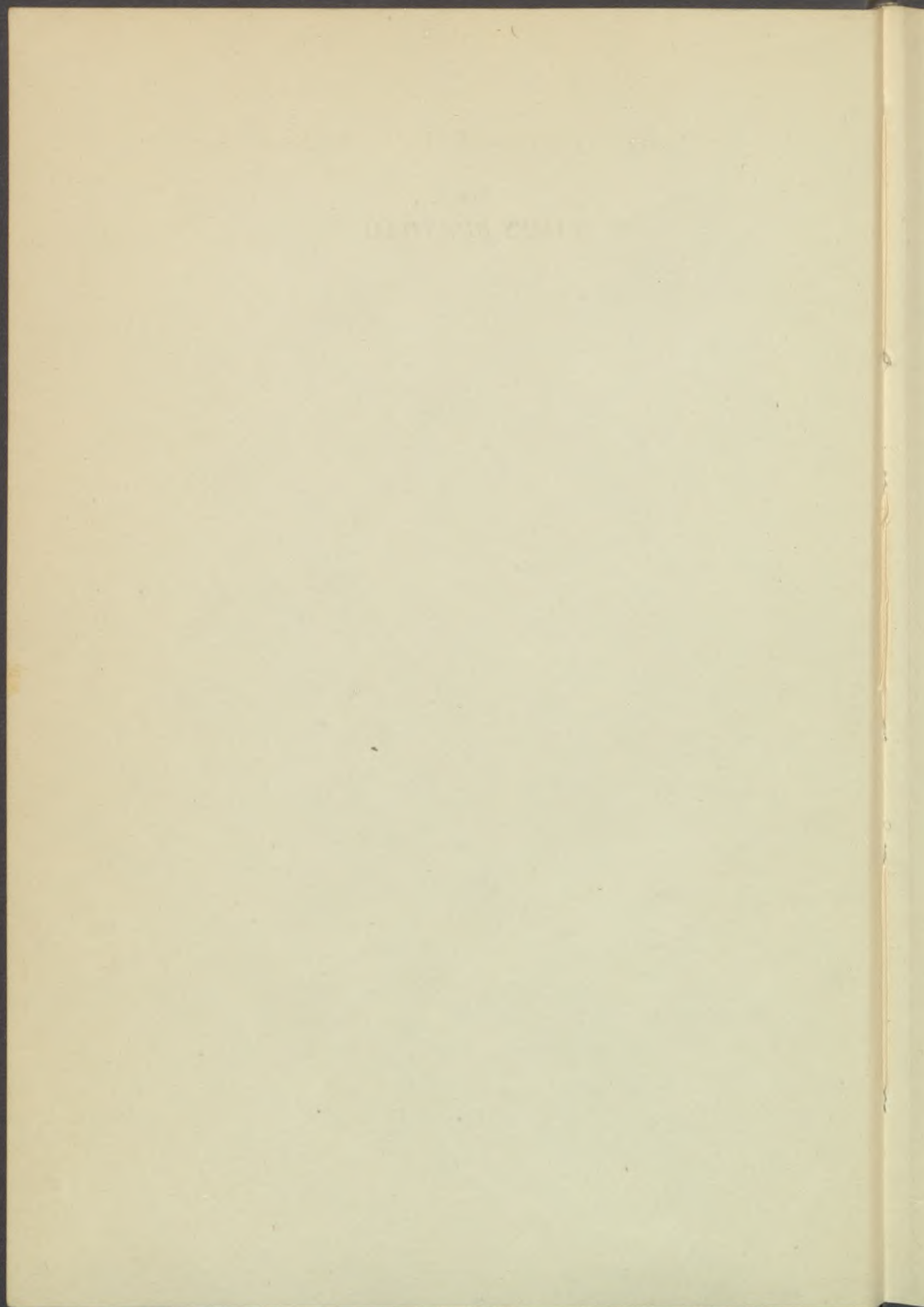
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*For*  
*JAMES BURNHAM*

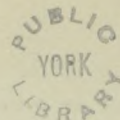




THE STATE OF THE WORLD







## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

SINCE the beginning of the nineteen-forties a large number of people all over the world have come to the conclusion that the war which started in 1939 cannot be successfully compared with the First World War nor interpreted in its terms. Attractive and exciting political studies try to convince us that while the First World War was fought between nations, the Second has transcended nations through a world-wide change in political ideologies. Dr. James Burnham, in his brilliant and awe-inspiring vista of a possible world, asserts that the First World War was the last war of capitalist society, whereas the Second World War is the first of a new society, that of the 'Managers'. A third school, of which Professor Laski is the most exciting exponent, regards the Second World War as a symptom of the Revolution of Our Time.

Now it is evident that these studies which emphasize the differences between the two World Wars reveal profound truths about our time. There is, however, an aspect from which there is not only a painful similarity between the conflagrations of 1914 and 1939, but a painful identity, and this identity on balance may turn out to be more important than the differences.

At the conclusion of the Second World War it seems evident that both wars had precisely the same causation and historical origin. No matter how confused the issue is, both wars were mainly caused by nationalism, which in our time still remains the greatest political force. At the bottom of these two wars there was the same anarchic division of the world into sovereign independent nation states which, by their very nature, are forced to compete and conflict with each other and are unable to create a mutually healthy economic organization. The worst feature of this situation is not so much the recurrence of

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war as the absence of peace. This is not juggling with words but an important distinction. If we submit the history of the last forty or forty-five years to a critical analysis we find that the war started neither in 1939 nor in 1914, but somewhere in the beginning of the century when the economic interdependence of the world became complete; at a time, in brief, when the modern world was in position to solve its problem in economic terms for the first time in history. Since that date — a date impossible to locate with precision — the world has not known peace in the previous meaning of that word, but has found itself in a state of war, a state which from time to time flared into armed conflict. These two aspects of the war, or, if preferred, the revolution of our century only assumed a sharp and misleading distinction in the western half of the civilized world, where the majority of people have lived for the last forty or so years under such happy circumstances that they knew no other collective horrors than those of armed conflict. Nor was there any equality of sacrifice or equality of suffering during the armed conflicts between the two halves of our civilization.

Those who reflect on this tragic aspect of the mental climate of our time very often come to the same conclusion as Spengler, Paul Valéry and others, that ours is a degenerate age leading to the decay of civilization. Such bitter conclusions are unjustified. Our age, indeed, is the very opposite of a degenerate age, and, instead of being the end of civilization, is the opening of a new chapter in civilization. The state of war, or revolution, of the twentieth century is caused by the growing pains of a new order of things. Our very problem is that in the twentieth century man's achievements in practically every sphere have far outrun his power to control those achievements. This is the very opposite of degeneracy, no matter how painful its effects. Instead of degeneracy we are living in a period characterized by a lack of balance between man's knowledge of Nature, which during the last centuries has given him power over things, and man's knowledge of Man, which should have enabled him to gain power over himself. 'After having trans-



## INTRODUCTION

formed his environment', says M. Jean Coutrot in a magnificent analysis of the contemporary human condition,<sup>1</sup> 'Man is beginning to be able to render this action harmless and if possible fruitful.'

The economic and political trends of our time are world-wide; and the crisis and the revolution of our time are caused by the fact that these trends are continuously clashing with the frontiers of the nation state. The problem of our century, therefore, is more political than anything else, in spite of the fact that it is usually referred to as 'the twin problem' of the century. It is true that the political and economic problems are interwoven. The economic problem, nevertheless, is the lesser of the two, though being nearer the camera it appears to be out of correct proportion. This fact, the result of a mental and emotional astigmatism inherent in the condition of man in the twentieth century, will become increasingly evident when and where the economic problem finds, in our own lifetime, its temporary solution within the artificial framework of the nation state, or the still more artificial but perhaps more satisfactory and hopeful framework of the Zone of Influence.

It is my intention to give a brief analysis of the political problem of our time, namely a short natural history and descriptive anatomy of nationalism, and for the purposes of analysis I shall attempt to separate it from its apparently larger, but actually smaller, 'twin' the economic problem. Because this book is an analysis, a report, a summary, a review of a problem, it is not intended to suggest remedies, nor will it even attempt to offer a solution beyond describing what is happening in the world to-day. Its main concern, therefore, is not to express what is desirable and what ought to happen, because its author assumes that the reader already knows what he himself considers desirable. If he does not there is a vast multitude of books and pamphlets at his disposal which tell him what he should consider desirable. On the contrary, this book sets out —

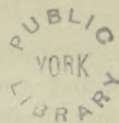
<sup>1</sup>JEAN COUTROT: Introduction to *Entretiens sur les Sciences de l'Homme* (Paris, 1937).



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in its conclusions — to tell of things which are likely to happen, regardless whether such things are desirable to the reader, to the world or to the author himself. The temptation for a writer in the political field to offer remedies instead of knowledge is very great, because most readers prefer the first. This preference on the part of the public is the fact which turns so many political writers into political charlatans, who forget that lasting remedy is only possible on the basis of knowledge.

Some readers might object to the tone of the book on the ground that it attacks much of what people in our time feel strongly about or consider sacred. The author wishes to justify his tone by the fact that he is writing his book immediately after the Second World War when he himself feels very strongly that *after the outbreak of peace lies should be the first casualties*. Other readers may be led to believe that the author is paying lip service to power politics. To this charge he cannot do better than borrow that much borrowed phrase of Machiavelli's, who, when accused of 'teaching princes villainy and how to enslave', wrote, 'If I have been a little too accurate in describing these monsters, I hope mankind will know them, the better to avoid them . . .'



## CHAPTER II

### BLUEPRINT FOR PRISON WALLS

NATIONALITY is a feeling of consciousness of belonging in various respects to a group of people. These respects are numerous, and when all is said and done none of them can be regarded as more important than the others. Two words, 'race' and 'language', jump at once into the mind, and these two indeed seem to cover the most important facts of nationality. They both seem obvious and fundamental, unmistakable and infallible criterions, till we begin to look at them a little closer only to discover that they are neither unmistakable, nor infallible; that they are not always criterions, and that there are other criterions which are equally important.

Since many people go as far as to identify race with nationality, let us consider race first.

Race is roughly a group of people, supposedly of common descent, who share certain physical and mental characteristics. Some of these characteristics are glaringly obvious: the negro looks obviously different from a white man in colour and body features, an Indian looks very obviously different from a white man in colour, but not so in body features. Within the main categories of colour and physical features there are innumerable sub-divisions of which members of a given colour-group are conscious. They are also conscious of belonging to one of these sub-divisions themselves. This feeling that we belong to a definite racial group is a form of race-consciousness. We do not always imply that our group is superior to others, but we always imply that our group is different from others. This group feeling is more than race and certainly much older than nationality; it is as old as humanity. It is a fundamental characteristic of man all over the world. It is known as the gregarious instinct, the fact that man is a social animal who cannot live alone. It



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was this instinct that brought about what we now regard as race, and it was this instinct that brought about nations. The instinct fundamentally seems permanent; race and nation are temporary and incidental.

The attitude of science towards race is that race does exist, but on a very slender basis. Analysis of the descent of the population of Europe proves that the mixing of races has been continued for very long periods, that there is no purity of race and, therefore, that no race theory as to the quality and value of races has any serious foundation. Science has also proved that race consciousness and racial antipathy are not even instinctive. For one thing they are not universal. Under certain circumstances, during certain historical periods, in certain parts of the world, they do not exist. Secondly — and this seems a devastating proof — racial antipathy does not involve sex-aversion. We, therefore, have to accept the fact that race consciousness, racial superiority, racial antipathy, are feelings that are not instinctive, but 'have grown up on another basis and have been given a deliberate racial interpretation'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, we have already arrived at nationalism. Race has been made an important basis of nationalism, race theories have been evolved or invented and propagated to serve a definite purpose.

We can prove for ourselves how true the scientific discovery is that no pure race exists when we try to identify somebody's race with his appearance. We can 'spot' people, and this is a game in which most of us white people indulge. First and foremost we can spot negatively: we can spot that someone is not of our group; then, if we have a knowledge of other groups, we can spot positively. The important thing is to spot the man before he speaks, to spot entirely on the basis of appearance. If we succeed we can congratulate ourselves that there is 'after all truth in race theories'. We, however, did not prove the truth of any race theories. We may have succeeded in our spotting, but we did not necessarily spot race. That would be a diffi-

<sup>1</sup> PROF. F. BOAS: *Anthropology and Modern Life* (W. W. Norton, New York, 1932).



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cult thing to do even if our victim looked typically Nordic or typically Latin, because among European nations there are no fundamental anthropological characteristics that belong exclusively to one single race. In other words, the result of our spotting was not so much of race as of country, or the approximate part of the world from which our subject may have originated, i.e. Central Europe, Northern Europe, etc. For this purpose we merely need a certain amount of experience. We have a very large assortment of clues at our disposal, a good many superficial but highly significant features, such as haircut, hair style, clothes and characteristic motion of the body. Our spotting may have been correct, but we spotted features which were either artificial or subject to environmental factors and, as such, could be created at will under certain conditions.

How far these external features can and do guide us is indicated by the observations of an amateur anthropologist friend of mine who could spot American soldiers at once in a swimming pool where regulations forbade swimming garments, that is without such extremely helpful clues as even swimming-trunks or glasses which can have a distinctive American appearance. The naked body was enough. My friend spotted them by their typically American features, such as the fact that they 'inclined to run fat' (an interesting observation, in view of the U.S.A.'s symbol — Uncle Sam — a lean, wiry, tall figure; also in view of that other early nineteenth-century conception John Bull, a beefy, stocky type, almost an un-English type in the twentieth century). My friend also observed that they 'stood and moved like Americans do'. It is stressed that he was spotting living people. In contrast to him it may not be uninteresting to recall Bismarck's remark on looking at the dead bodies of French and German soldiers on the battlefield at Sedan in 1871 — 'They all look alike to me, except the uniforms. . . .'

These are anecdotes to confirm and reject race theories. An anthropologist can draw very interesting and very important conclusions even from bones as to racial identities. His observa-



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tions, however, cannot give any guidance as to the respective value of races, and, from the point of view of science, this is all that ought to matter.

Group features are overwhelmingly artificial or are subject to environmental factors and, therefore, can be created at will. If, say, an Albanian boy, or a French boy, comes at the age of two to England and is brought up here, he will give the impression of being an Englishman when he grows up. What constitutes 'Englishness' will be complete. This Englishness, of course, will not be determined by England as a whole because there is no universal Englishman, even though national cohesion in an island country may be stronger than in a country that has less strong natural frontiers, but he would display the distinguishing characteristics of the environment in which he was brought up. If he is brought up exclusively in an environment in which people speak a strong dialect, as in the more isolated parts of Yorkshire, he is bound to give the impression of a Yorkshireman. The characteristic movements of his body will be conditioned by his environment, and so would be his tastes, his attitudes, his outlook on life. He would differ from other Yorkshiremen in nothing but individual features, from which point of view, to some extent, everybody is different from everybody else. He might quite well become an ardent British patriot. The cells of his body would remember ancestors and things that had happened to them; it is, however, not probable that they would remember specifically French or Albanian things.

If we leave out the environmental and therefore superficial factors, and consider instead the hereditary and therefore natural factors, we have very little scientific guidance as to race and still less as to racial values. It is an observable fact that in the northern countries of Europe there are a large number of tall, fair, blue-eyed individuals, while in the so-called Latin countries there are a large number of short, dark-haired, dark-eyed individuals. How many? That we do not know, because racialism has never been developed as far, even in Germany, as to find out the percentage of 'typical' Germans on an anthropo-



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logical basis. All we can talk about in this respect is 'frequency'; thus the frequency of straw-coloured hair in Norway seems to be higher than in Greece. The Mendelian theory proves conclusively the extent to which anthropological characteristics are hereditary, and other theories prove to what extent climatic influences are also hereditary. Science, however, knows no pure race, and practically all scientific theories in this field seem to corroborate the Biblical allegory of the Garden of Eden — namely that all human beings are most probably derived from one single race. The descendants of these ancestors — so the theory runs — became isolated under various climates on the world's surface and their physical and mental characteristics reacted to the climatic factor. But this was not all. In the course of history (largely pre-historic history) these people, already separated into races by the climatic factor again became mixed; consequently every white man had yellow and black ancestors as well as white ones and vice versa.

In view of these scientific discoveries and surmises, many educated people to-day instead of race prefer to use the word culture, which is a better, truer and less offensive word. It is, however, a pedantic word, and, because in the common parlance of every country it is a word which is used also in other senses (either meaning the non-materialistic aspects of civilization or the rearing of bacteria for experimental purposes), it is not likely it will ever become popular.

Race, however, is an important basis for nationalism. Nationalists in every country are fond of evolving a national type or types, which, of course, are largely illusory. In this respect it may be of interest to recount a story of a Norwegian friend of mine, who is tall, fair and well built, looking what Norwegian nationalists like to regard as truly Norwegian. 'One day', he said, 'I was told by a man in London that I looked "very English"'. I didn't quite know what to say to him. He was toothless and moth-eaten and looked as if he had lived for years in a basement exclusively on caraway seed. I love England, but I have not the slightest wish to be included among



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them and still less on the terms of any resemblance to him.' 'You needn't have felt so horrified,' I said. 'The man is as likely as not the devotee of the Nordic theory, which he in turn as likely as not uses as a means of compensation for his own deficiencies. If he had not looked what you described him, he would not have been as likely to have been interested in the Nordic theory. I may, however, be wrong.'

Race, when all is said and done, is not a reliable criterion of nationalism, because nationalism is very strong in countries which are of composite racial origin, such as Switzerland or the United States. It is not a true criterion the other way round either, even if it is combined with similarities in language as is usually the case. The Poles and the Russians, the Austrians and the Germans, the Flemish and the Dutch, the Welsh and the Bretons are very similar in both race and language, yet their nationality is markedly different.

Language is a stronger criterion than race, and, as criterions go, it is one of the strongest of nationality and of nationalism. Of the factors that separate individuals and nations from each other, language is the strongest: conversely, a common tongue is certainly a stronger tie than common racial features. There is a mysterious connection between race-culture and language. Every language is in a way a philosophy in brief, and if an individual speaks a foreign language he cannot help becoming a foreigner himself to a certain extent, even if he learnt that language in his native country. Many people exaggerate this, others try to underrate it, yet it is a psychological factor of great force.

Language, as a criterion of nationality, is a far better means of spotting a foreigner than racial characteristics. It is as a rule his speech that gives him away. If someone has no foreign accent he is automatically taken to be a native as long as he gives no indication to make his national identity doubtful. A common tongue, indeed, is a basis on which a strong sense of community may and does arise. Generally speaking a common tongue unites people more strongly than any other factor. This

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was one of the important factors which refuted Marx's dictum to the effect that workers have nothing to lose but their chains, and one of the factors that turned socialism in our time into national socialism. The consciousness of a common tongue is a feeling which all people now share very intensely, but it is a consciousness that unites people only up to a certain point. Civil wars are a possibility even in the twentieth century. (The Spanish war was certainly not a war between Catalans and Basques, whether they actually fought against each other in the course of it or not; and roughly half of the population of China does not understand the language of the other half.)

The consciousness of a common tongue in the nation-wide respect is a feeling which is not very old. It may be older than modern nationalism, which officially dates from the French Revolution, but it is certainly not older than the Renaissance. Some historians put the date even later than the Renaissance. During the Middle Ages there was quite a Babel of tongues within what are now considered national territories in Europe. We regard these tongues as dialects, but for the contemporaries they were unintelligible foreign languages. It has been said, for example, that the steady disintegration of the universal Latin culture of the Middle Ages was greatly prompted by the fact that Luther translated the Bible into German. Luther never translated the Bible into German, which in his time did not exist. He translated it into his own mother tongue called by philologists to-day Middle German, which was then quite unintelligible to inhabitants of other parts of what is now Germany. In fact Luther's translation of the Bible had to be translated again into *Plattdeutsch*, another German dialect.

Germany only became a nation some three hundred and fifty years after Luther. England and France, however, were already nations in Luther's time, yet neither of these countries had a national language. National consciousness in England and in France, therefore, was the private affair of those who spoke 'the same language'. In Chaucer's lifetime (1340-1400), the linguistic division was so strong in England that the *Canterbury Tales*



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would have been quite unintelligible in the north of England. It was long after Chaucer that the adoption of the East Midland English resulted in standard English. In spite of this, and in spite of its gradual adoption by the population, English aristocracy — in common with the rest of European aristocracy — still read, wrote, and spoke various foreign languages in preference to their own. During the Restoration fashionable England seemed to have a contempt for the English language, which by that time was completely standardized, virile and beautiful. Many of the nobility spoke French among themselves though they naturally knew English well. Frederick the Great's remark to the effect that 'German is only fit for horses', was a variation of the fairly general aristocratic attitude towards the national language during the eighteenth century.

Language, therefore, like race is neither an infallible nor a universal criterion of nationality, no matter how strong a basis it might provide for nationalism. Switzerland has four official languages and is very proud of its Swiss nationality (and inordinately proud of the fact that she is a nation in spite of four official languages). Furthermore, three of Switzerland's four languages are the official tongues of three sovereign states. The case is similar in Belgium, Canada, and in South Africa.

This is true also, inversely. There are languages which are the official tongues of more than one sovereign state: English, German and Spanish for example. That there are differences in pronunciation, in inflexion, in accent, in the exclusive use of additional words in one country, is immaterial.

Standardization, that is the creation of national languages, was an important necessity for practical purposes, and it was greatly helped by technological inventions. The first of these inventions was printing, followed in the nineteenth century by the popular newspaper, and in the twentieth by wireless and sound film. These inventions among others have thus only partly served the cause of human progress; they helped as it were the further disintegration of a universal culture and



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fostered national cultures. It has often been argued that the silent film promised to be a very important agency towards the reunification of culture, and that the addition of the sound-track had frustrated most of these hopes.

Standardization through technical agencies was, however, not enough, and the national language in every country has been fostered deliberately by compulsory education and by other means. Standardization, especially since the nineteenth century, brought about a steady decline of dialect in every country. Many people regret its going, for dialect for educated persons often has a great charm and fascination, but it renders contact difficult. (In an army unit in the Midlands I was asked to take over the control of the wireless, because the staff-sergeant, a west countryman, could not 'make head or tail' of the speech of the four other signallers in our unit — two Geordies, a Lancashireman and a Cockney.) Britain is not the only country where some people who speak dialect are inclined to be ashamed of it, but speech in Britain is a particularly brutal example of class stratification. Dialects are social facts everywhere. In view of present-day developments they are, however, doomed and would soon die out, even if governments subsidized them, along with local customs, native dress and other forms of regionalism. They can only return if there is world-government; a fully federated world with strong decentralized local units.

The existence of a national language is only the initial step towards national unity and unity of feeling. For true national unity more is needed than a common tongue, or rather the need is that the tongue should really become common, and that the people of a country should speak the same language. This is certainly not the case to-day anywhere on earth. There is no country in existence now which can lay claim to the unity of its national culture. In most countries education for the majority of the inhabitants comes to an abrupt end at the very age when knowledge begins to stimulate man's mind. The result of this is a split in the national culture. Among European

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countries this split is at its most disastrous in England proper,<sup>1</sup> in view of the country's wealth and the height of its achievement in the cultural sphere.

In England the split in the national culture is further aggravated by an additional split in the culture of the élite. Generally speaking, in every civilized country there is a split between those who receive a scientific and those who receive a classical education, which is regrettable but natural. In England, however, there is a deplorable Philistinism among those who receive a scientific education and an anti-scientific snobbishness among those with a classical education.

Just as nationality cannot be reduced to race or to language, it cannot be reduced to a political fact either. Nationality, outwardly indeed, is a political fact, but the political aspect is not the whole of nationality. This is emphasized when in terms of political science we speak of 'legal' or 'political' nationality and of 'personal' nationality. 'Legal' nationality is citizenship, and citizenship is acquired by the same means in every country. These means of acquisition are through three legal processes: birth, marriage and naturalization. Birth in most countries is based on the *jus loci*, which means briefly that everything born in the stable is a horse; thus the child of an alien born on British territory is a British subject. It can also involve the *jus sanguines*, the doctrine of blood, or of descent, a doctrine which has been adopted by the Nazis but was not evolved by them. It means that someone can claim legal nationality on the ground of the nationality of one or both of his parents.

The other two processes of legal nationality are marriage, in case of women, and the process of naturalization, either through an executive department (such as the Home Office in Britain) or by act of parliament. Legal citizenship can also be conferred on an individual as an honour.

Legal nationality can be lost. It can also be given up. An individual can obtain release from citizenship or can acquire

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps primarily differences in educational standards which make Scotland a 'foreign' country.



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another citizenship without release and thus have dual nationality; and he can be deprived of citizenship. According to the constitutional practice of certain countries, legal citizenship can be lost if the citizen spends a certain period of time abroad. It is indeed possible for an individual not to possess legal nationality. The so-called 'Nansen Passport' was an attempt to solve this problem.

Legal nationality is not the whole of nationality, because emotionally it is not accepted without reservations, sometimes not even by those who are educated enough to accept legal facts. In certain countries, indeed, the state itself distinguishes between what virtually amount to first and second class citizens. The form this distinction takes varies a good deal according to countries and the circumstances under which a country lives. Thus, in Nazi Germany, the Jew was openly declared a second class citizen and was deprived of his political rights. In Britain the naturalized citizen's rights to enjoy the privileges open to natural born British subjects are subject to reservations.

The acceptance of legal citizenship as a criterion of nationality varies a good deal according to countries and their inhabitants. In this respect it may be said that the British attitude is the exact opposite of the French and American. The majority of Frenchmen and Americans almost insist on a foreign resident taking up the country's citizenship, and the moment he does so they usually accept him as a Frenchman or as an American. The British do not exactly resent a foreigner becoming British; they condescend to allow him to do so, but they protest vigorously if he claims to be a Britisher. Some experts think such an attitude is a dangerous luxury on the part of a small country with an ageing, dwindling population, if that small country has ambitions to maintain itself as a great power.

Legal nationality is the basis of the problem of national minorities. The Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia were Czechoslovak citizens, the Hungarian communities in Rumania are Rumanian, the Catalans are Spanish, the Georgians are



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Russian and the Welsh are British citizens. (See chapter five.)

So it is apparent that neither race nor language, nor the political factor are the whole of nationality, though they are important parts of it. In certain communities religion is also an important basis of nationality. There are also other factors which, generally speaking, appear less obvious than race, language and political fact, yet for some people they command a stronger sense of loyalty than these three. Among these are common history—the feeling of community, a kinship of emotional life, the possession of a sovereign state, the mysterious force of the soil, or, in the case of the Jews, nationhood without sovereignty.

Apart from the legal aspect, nationality is a spiritual factor which is subject entirely to environment. Thus it can be, indeed it is, artificially fostered, and similarly it could be artificially discouraged. When all is said and done, nationality is not a fundamental human characteristic; in other words it is not in the nature of man. It is, however, based on powerful instincts, which are very much in the nature of man. The same applies to nationalism, the emotional expression of nationality. Group consciousness and solidarity are in the nature of man, national consciousness and national solidarity are not. The cohesion of nations is a force which is nearly always invisible. It usually only manifests itself in the hour of crisis, of which war is the most common example. In wartime members of a nation instinctively sink their differences and let a common identity prevail. This identity, however, is temporary and the moment the danger passes differences again prevail.

All good definitions of nationality (and of nationalism) emphasize its spiritual character. According to Israel Zangwill it is a 'state of mind corresponding to a political fact'. According to Renan it is 'the everyday's plebiscite'. One of the best definitions of nationality was made by Harold Laski, who wrote: 'Members of the national unit recognize their likeness and emphasize their difference from other men... The fact of nationality is urgently separatist in character... It is exclusive



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and it promotes a loyalty which may often, like family affection, live its life independent of right and truth.<sup>1</sup>

Laski's observation brings out fully the essentially dangerous character of nationalism, because it makes it at once obvious that it is impossible to draw the line between beneficial and harmful nationalism. To the unbiased political scientist nationalism is never beneficial, because he regards the world as one, and for the common interest or the common cause of the world nationalism can never be beneficial. At its best it can be harmless. He knows that nationalism, even in the cultural sphere, is a source of danger, but, because his intention is to serve the common cause of the world, he pays lip service to this apparently harmless separatism in the hope that nations will eventually be willing to sink their differences in the political sphere. He is fully conscious of the rational and irrational bases of nationalism, and he knows how much nationalism comes about by accident and how much through artificial fostering. And he also knows that nationalism is, to a considerable extent, a matter of education, because though irrational elements play a great part in it, science can make even the instincts of men subject to rational control. Mankind can be educated to be world citizens in the same way as they are educated to be citizens of one country. The former has never been done, but the tradition of the latter is much more recent than ardent nationalists care to admit. The political scientist is inclined to regard it as a tragic accident that the rise of popular education was followed by the rise of nationalism. In this respect the teaching of history and geography played the largest part—chiefly history, because time lends itself more readily to deliberate distortions than space. The teaching of history as a school subject first appears in the eighteen-fifties, roughly corresponding with the rise of nationalism. Before that date history, in Europe at least, was not a school subject, but after that it became part of the curriculum in every country. The history taught to school children is deliberately nationalistic in

<sup>1</sup> H. J. LASKI: *A Grammar of Politics*, p. 221.



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every country. It can be safely said that school books on history do not vary according to degrees of honesty, but according to degrees of skill in subtle distortion and forgery for the purposes of national propaganda. Comparatively unbiased history is only taught at the universities, which are attended by the smallest percentage of the population and therefore are a private affair.

Finally, the political scientist knows that the nation-state in its present form is the source of the most terrible disease of our age. If the destruction of his own nation state would put a stop to the curse of our civilization he would be quite willing to use all his power for its destruction. This, however, would only result in the misery of his own countrymen, because it would not affect other nation-states. He therefore restricts his activities to enlightenment. His task is difficult. He is confronted by powerful and often overwhelming irrational forces of ignorance and prejudice, which are often made excellent use of by vested interests, not necessarily vested interests based on money. Besides, his work is all the time hindered by scholars who—like himself—know the truth, but scholars who, for vanity, fear of loss of popularity, or often for material motives become traitors. That they are traitors to the cause of humanity is a crime which most people cannot easily recognize. They are, however, in the long run traitors to their own country, the truth of which usually only becomes evident after they are dead.

Man is faced by certain foundations for prison walls, but it is he himself who builds those walls, locks the gate and loses the key. This sentence could have been written by an enlightened representative of the nineteenth century, and he would still be right in conclusions, however wrong his hopes have proved. In the optimistic mental climate of his age he readily assumed that man was a rational, reasonable being, guided by enlightened self-interest, and consequently that the twentieth century would solve its organization in economic terms resulting



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in a peaceful, happy, prosperous, free, democratic, international order. This, as we know, has not happened; in fact there is not the slightest hope of it happening in our time.

The twentieth century has found man very different from the conceptions of the age whose representative monarch, Queen Victoria, had only one short peep into it, then quickly closed her eyes as if frightened by what she saw there. The scientists of our age find man irrational and unreasonable, with a self-interest which is by no means enlightened; they find his mind a split mind, capable of some rational reasoning and a good deal of irrational belief. Modern science can prove that this strange dualism in man is based on physical facts in the composition of the human brain. Rational reasoning is seated in the 'roof brain' (pallial cortex), which is a relatively younger part of the brain than the optic thalamus which is the seat of emotions. There is, indeed, a hierarchy of governing centres in the nervous system. Professor Mottram, in an admirable little volume,<sup>1</sup> describes this hierarchy as follows: 'There are the old-established centres [of the brain] which govern the ancient reflexes of standing, walking, running, breathing and the circulation of the blood. There are later developed centres co-ordinating the reactions of the body as a whole. And then, finally, there are those most recently developed sheets of nerve tissues called the roof brain.' Comparisons show us that the relatively newer parts are more easily put out of gear than the older ones. It takes a large dose of chloroform to upset the breathing reflexes, but a small dose will stop the activity of the brain.

The investigations of Sherrington, Head, Mottram and other scientists seem to indicate that the fundamental difference between man and the higher types of animals is the well developed character of man's roof brain. It is on the reactions of the roof brain that human personality to a large extent depends. 'A person with highly resistant roof brain cells will show a different personality from that of one with less resistant roof

<sup>1</sup> PROF. V. H. MOTTRAM: *The Physical Basis of Personality* (Pelican Books, 1944).



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cells.<sup>1</sup> The roof brain, however, is comparatively new, delicate and easy to upset. If this happens the older and stronger part of the brain becomes predominant. This explains partly why people can feel so deeply about things that are fundamentally worthless. This also explains wishful and fearful thinking which are enormously old in man and result in the craving for the absolute, that is, for religion and patriotism. These in their original primitive form are not only older than Christianity or the nation state, but probably older than the Neanderthal Man.

The unity of the world, the brotherhood of man and other nineteenth-century political ideals still remain political ideals. In fact, they have become burning necessities. Nineteenth-century hopes to achieve these ideals have failed because nineteenth-century science knew little of the real condition of man. Thence the optimism of its beliefs and the frustration of its hopes.

Not only did nineteenth-century science know little of the constitution and the functioning of the brain, but it knew next to nothing about other physical bases of the human personality. It knew little of the endocrine organs, the influence of the thymus, the suprarenal bodies, the pituitary, the thyroid and the rest of that strange orchestra over human behaviour. Nor did it know much of what has been discovered about the mind by Charcot, Freud, Adler, Jung, Ferenczy and others. The nineteenth century saw an enormous acceleration in the advance of the sciences of nature (physics, chemistry, biology), but it made little advance in the sciences of man (psychology, physiology, sociology). Consequently it saw enormous progress in the material sphere and very limited progress in the human sphere. Man has learnt to conquer nature, but has not learnt to conquer himself, because he believed that he was identical with his own roof brain, which, according to modern scientists, accounts for about ten to fifteen per cent of human behaviour.

In view of these facts it is easy to understand the impasse of

<sup>1</sup> Mottram, *op. cit.*

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socialism (which has nothing whatsoever on its side except an appeal to the roof brain, that is reason) and the triumph of Fascism (which has everything on its side except an appeal to reason), and it is easy to believe the fashionable generalization that no politician can adequately explain the rise of Fascism. It would be perhaps truer to say that nobody without an up-to-date scientific knowledge can explain human behaviour of which Fascism is only a typical example.



### CHAPTER III

## THE FAMILY TREE OF NATIONALISM

THE original meaning of patriotism is love for the *patria*, the home in the strictest sense of the word. Later, however, the individual was lured away from his home by another and larger unit. This unit — a group of people, a tribe — according to Ortega Y Gasset, issued an invitation to the individual with an attractive programme in mind, an invitation to carry out a great enterprise in common. The individual accepted the invitation and extended his loyalty to the new and larger unit. This process, through which finally nations came into being, took a long time, and it is a process which, even yet, is not complete. For one thing, to extend the love of home to a larger unit that contains the home is an intellectual process of which many people are only partly capable. Besides, there are other powerful forces at work which offer strong resistance to unification.

In a later chapter we shall examine the social and economic factors that from time to time threaten the unity and the cohesion of the nation.

Apart, however, from the difficulty of thinking in national terms, the nation is too big a thing. 'The greater the Fatherland, the less can one love it,' said Voltaire. 'Affection decreases with expansion. A too numerous family whose members one hardly knows cannot arouse our warm love.' These lines clearly explain that what in our time is known as 'local patriotism' or regionalism, was, in former times, 'patriotism'. This nowadays is usually a historical relic and is not a strong source of resistance against unification, but all the same it clearly shows the partly accidental, partly arbitrary and by no means final and everlasting character of the nation. In spite of all the advance of scientific technology and deliberate policy of

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unification, regionalism or local patriotism is present in every single country. In a sense most people are provincials, whether they live in a tiny village or in the suburb of a metropolis. In countries like Germany or Italy, whose national unity is comparatively recent, regionalism is easy to understand. It is similarly easy to understand in countries with large blocks of national minorities. The political issue regarding these minorities is, at best, hardly more than an issue of regionalism. Regionalism, however, exists in countries where national unity is very old and where there is no issue of national minorities. Thus, it exists in England proper or in France proper. There is regionalism and local patriotism to varying degrees in every local community, not only in the fact that Cornishmen, who often claim not to be English, sometimes regard other Englishmen — even from the southern counties — as foreigners. It exists in Yorkshire as much as in Huntingdon or in London, in the Auvergne as much as in the Dordogne or in Paris. It is naturally strongest among agricultural communities, but it is by no means confined to them.

Regionalism was much stronger when the countries of Europe were still largely living on the land, that is, before the nineteenth century when communities lived everywhere in strong regional isolation. Most people knew little about their own country beyond a few miles from their home, because there were few opportunities of communication. The word 'foreigner' in most of its implications meant something different from what it means now, and for a simple-minded person it was quite a problem whether he should fear, hate or mistrust most, the inhabitants of a town a few miles away or the inhabitants of another country, five hundred miles away. The attitude of Mrs. Evans (an aunt of Mrs. Henry Wood, the novelist), who regarded everyone not born in Worcestershire as a 'foreigner', was still fairly general in England in the years after Waterloo. Mrs. Evans was a member of the prosperous middle class (the wife of a glove-maker), quite well-read and to all intents and purposes of sound mind. Her attitude in 1820 was already



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becoming a relic in the country whose national unity is one of the oldest in Europe, but it lingered on for a longer time in countries that followed the lead of the first industrial country in the world. In the agricultural lands of Eastern Europe it still survives to a certain extent, and in America many a farmer still does not quite know what 'furriners' really are.

Regionalism was the natural consequence of lack of communications, lack of information other than local information, and lack of standardized education. The strongest present-day link of a unified nation, the common tongue, that is a standardized language, was missing. Dialects were strong and people sometimes literally could not understand others living no more than a hundred miles from them within the same mother country.

It was the Reformation which paved the way for nationalism. As its result people in Protestant countries were enabled to follow the church service in their own native tongue, and the central political authority of the Pope ('The Bishop of Rome' in the English Book of Common Prayer and 'The Son of the Whore' according to Luther) gave place to the national authority of kings and princes. The Reformation by itself was, naturally, not enough. Universal Christianity, through the national churches, still retained in every country a strong political power which lasted for more than two centuries after the Reformation. Scientific thought had to arrive to destroy the political power of the churches. The Reformation only attacked the Roman Catholic clergy, quite often in the name of God; science, through the French Revolution and after, attacked the Church itself; it attacked God in the name of Man. The attack was successful; God and his worldly representatives lost their political power, but, tragically enough, it was neither man nor science which assumed the political power wrenched from God and his churches. People lost their faith in God without transferring it to science. They gave it to the nation.

For this tragic fact there were two very valid reasons. For one thing, science was young and had little prestige; for another,



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science could only appeal to reason and not to emotion. It could never satisfy man's craving for the absolute as Christianity did; it could never clarify the unexplainable; it could never give an acceptable explanation for the limitations and the inequality of man. It was this craving for the absolute which in the beginning made man invent God, and now that he was shaken in his faith he tried to find a substitute for God, an austerity-God. He soon found one. The French Revolution liberated man from the fetters of the Church, but man apparently did not rest till he found fetters in various ways more tyrannical than the Church. In this sense it would perhaps not be untrue to say that throughout history vested interests always existed to exploit man's craving for the absolute, and that it is (or perhaps was) a great mistake on the part of socialists to think that these vested interests were invariably and without exception *always* material vested interests. Contemporary developments show unfortunately only too clearly that the exploitation of man promises to be extremely easy after capitalism has disappeared from earth.

Nationalism, as a political force, dates from the French Revolution. Its most important feature is its aspiration towards statehood. This aspiration briefly means that nationalism is not only separatist in character, but yearns to find a strong state in which it can safely isolate itself from the rest of the world. The idea of splendid isolation is a permanent dream of all nation-states, the larger of which from time to time attempt to put it into practice only to find that it is a luxury which, in the long run, is beyond the means of all nations, even the richest and the most powerful.

The French Revolution, in other words, put on the map a new but perfectly unnecessary political principle, to the effect that not only human beings but also nations should be free from oppression and should have the right to choose their state and form of government. The implication of this doctrine, which later became known as 'the principle of self-determination', is that the 'state' and the 'nation' should mean the same thing;



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that nations should form states and that states should be formed on the national basis. This principle was so eagerly accepted in Western Europe as the last word in political progress that to-day even educated people often do not know the difference between 'nation' (a group of people) and 'state' (a unit of political power). In Britain philological confusion often prevents a clear differentiation between the two categories. The English language derives adjectives only from the word 'nation' and not from the word 'state'. Thus, what the Labour Party really aims at is not the 'nationalization' of the mines, but 'state-ization' — that is, state-control of the mines. Similarly, the margarine the Englishman eats in wartime is not controlled by the nation but by the state. The difference between the old patriotism and nationalism is that nationalism in our time expresses itself through the state; in other words it is a political force. This is such a new fact in history that it often leads people to think nationality did not exist before the nineteenth century.

X The leaders of the French Revolution were thinking in universalist or international terms. They were dreaming of a general European revolution, but the bitter opposition of the reactionary forces of Europe (similar to the events in Russia in 1917-18) produced in the mind of the French people a feeling of fear, isolation, separateness and a sense of strength in unity. This feeling of patriotism in the French people was not entirely spontaneous. It was something like a subconscious or a latent force in the mind of the masses of France which was brought to the surface by the élite of the Revolution: Danton and Robespierre. They used it as a means of self-defence against the internationalist aristocracy of France, who went into exile and tried to overthrow the revolution with help from abroad. If any two men can be credited with the creation of modern nationalism, they are Danton and Robespierre. They chose a nationalist flag instead of the flag of the Capets; they instituted military conscription (for the first time in history), and they told the masses, also for the first time in history, that the country, that is the nation-state, was the greatest good in which all can

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share. Things like this had been said before in many countries. The effect, however, was different, because nationalism had not been a political force or by no means an exclusive one. Shakespeare did sing the praise of the 'happy breed' two hundred years before the French Revolution, but those lines in *Henry V* could not stir his audience then as they could after the French Revolution.

The result of the tenets of the French Revolution was that on one side stood the nation in which the masses were offered a stake, on the other the coalition of the 'international' aristocracy threatening a *patrie* that, in the masses' mind, had become identical with democracy.

It was thus the first time in history that nationalism, which in the past had been the private affair of kings and the upper classes, became the collective public affair of the masses. X

Robespierre, however, saw that patriotism was not enough, and, parallel with his nationalist propaganda, he started an internationalist propaganda in order to find alliances abroad against the internationalist coalition of the *ancien régime*. The slogan was 'liberty, equality and brotherhood'. The Revolutionary Convention conferred French citizenship on foreign revolutionaries — one of them being Tom Paine, the author of *The Rights of Man*. It also sent its agents abroad. For a time, indeed, it seemed that the Revolution might conquer Europe. It was successful in Switzerland, in Belgium, Holland, Western Germany and Northern Italy. Reaction, however, proved stronger in the other countries. In England it found a staunch opposition under Pitt and the Revolution failed to liberate the masses of Russia or those of the Habsburg Empire. For the understanding of events that came more than a hundred years later it is very significant and important that the French Revolution left Spain, Russia and Eastern Europe relatively unaffected.

France under Napoleon transformed its wars for the revolutionary liberation of Europe into wars for the conquest of Europe. The opposition to Napoleon gave birth to nationalism



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in other countries, yet the impact of his wars did not make the same impression all over Europe. They meant blood and tears and sacrifices for the conquered country, but they also meant various benefits. Napoleon, in the end, did unite Europe against himself, but before he did that he had united countries which previously had no national unity. His conquests also meant the end of feudalism and regionalism, and produced that very up-to-date and intelligent legislative system known as the 'Code Napoléon', as well as various economic advantages. In other words, Napoleon, in a way, tried to force democracy and progress on Europe. Belgium, Holland, Italy and the Rhinelands felt that they had benefited by Napoleon's rule and did not react strongly against him. But England, Russia, Austria, Spain and Prussia turned violently nationalist.

X The birth of nationalism in Europe, therefore, began with the French Revolution and Napoleon's conquests, and, in the decades after Napoleon, every European nation developed a strong desire to form a united independent sovereign state. Not all of them succeeded at once; the process took more than a hundred years, ending with the institution of the Irish Free State (1921). Nationalism as a political force, with its aspirations towards statehood, came about with the applause and the active support of the progressive elements of the world. It was regarded as the last word in political progress, the supreme good. Its slogan was national self-determination, i.e. the tenet that a nation has a right to independence and that its sovereignty is one essential condition of its happiness. The nation state thus became the final moral absolute in the minds of the most progressive thinkers of the day, and those who denied these ideas were regarded as enemies of progress and as reactionaries. Of such there were many no doubt. But there were precious few among the élite of the nineteenth century who could have foreseen the catastrophe<sup>d</sup> to which these ideas of enlightenment would lead. One of these was Lord Acton who had written in 1862: *'Nationality does not aim either at liberty or prosperity, both of which it sacrifices to the imperative necessity of making the nation the*



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*mould and measure of the state. . . . Its course will be marked with material as well as moral ruin.'*<sup>1</sup>

The history of the past eighty years has more than justified these prophetic words. The premise on which the idea of national self-determination was built was false. It came from the attractive but idiotic association of the individual with the nation, two things that have hardly anything in common. The individual needs liberty, freedom, equality and the right to choose his government; the nation does not. The effect of this idiotic association was that nationalism in a hundred years or so had from supreme good become a great evil, which the progressive person to-day would like to suppress if he could find the way to do so.

The truth, of course, is that it was not nationalism which had changed much since the nineteenth century, but the condition of the world, and it may be said, without undue generalization, that at present, politically speaking, the trouble with the world is that nineteenth-century nationalism still exists although we live in the middle of the twentieth century.

Simultaneously with the triumphant progress of nationalism, the population of the world began to increase in enormous proportions. The causes of this are to a certain extent unknown. The known causes are that there were practically no wars between Waterloo and the eighteen-fifties, that food became cheaper and industrialization generally raised the level of existence and decreased the death-rate all over Europe. The increase of the population has rendered necessary a far larger controlling activity on the part of the state over the citizen than ever before. The state became more and more a positive factor in the life of the nations. This, in turn, brought about an increased interest on the part of the population in the affairs of the state. In other words, wider sections of the communities began to take interest in politics.

Growing industrialization and the development of communications brought about rising standards of prosperity, and

<sup>1</sup> LORD ACTON: 'On Freedom'.



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what later became known as economic interdependence: that is, a world market, an exchange of goods, or in other words, a new and hitherto unknown basis of an international and interdependent economic order.

Both the Liberal school (the predominant political school of the period) and Marx thought that the steadily growing economic organization and economic interdependence of the world would almost automatically find an international solution. The former, in the words of Richard Cobden, thought that 'the dependence of countries upon one another must inevitably snatch the power from the governments to plunge their people into war'. Marx, on the other hand, said that the power of the proletariat in the end would destroy the nation-state and put an end to wars. Neither of them was right. The battle was won by the nation-state. With the tremendous increase of population, one state after another realized the necessity of a conscript army. In order to achieve this the state—conscious of its dependence on the good will of the workers and peasants—began to grant various concessions to them. The concessions were small in the beginning and varied according to state, but they steadily grew, and the differences in, and extent of, concessions between states had a tendency to similarity. In view of these concessions (national services, benefits, factory legislation, etc.) the workers, in turn, could not very well accept Marx's dictum that the worker had no country and had nothing to lose but his chains, because he either saw, or, in times of economic prosperity, could easily be persuaded to see that the state served the interests of more than the capitalist class. The state thus began to find that it could lay claim to the patriotism of the worker.

The economic principle of the nineteenth century was free competition between individual producers and between individual nations, and for a time the principle worked miracles. Then free competition gradually led to chaos, unemployment and discontent, and the state had to interfere in order to maintain its popularity. It either imposed tariffs to protect

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the native producer or it gave its sanction to private enterprise to exploit new areas. This latter process is known as colonial expansion or imperialism. X

The older industrial countries of Europe throughout the eighteen-eighties produced more goods than their home markets could absorb and their old customers, the less developed countries of Europe, could no longer provide the necessary market. Most of the industrial countries, therefore, were forced to create markets outside Europe. Simultaneously there arose an increasing need for raw materials.

Goods were not the only things for which markets had to be found. By the eighteen-seventies the older manufacturing countries in general, and Britain in particular, had accumulated a good deal of surplus capital, very largely because it was not needed for home development and because it was not used to improve the condition of the workers' lives. Most of this money was lent to backward or, at least, undeveloped countries, in order that they could buy constructional goods from the creditor country. It was only natural that those who invested money abroad should take an interest in the fortunes of the particular country to which the money was lent. The word 'interest' is open to wide interpretation. Interest in itself is enough only when the creditor is sure his money is safe and interest is likely to be forthcoming in good order. When, however, he feels he has reason to believe that his interests are jeopardized, he would use all his influence at home (that is, the Foreign Office of his country) to assure the safety of his investment. This form of political interference was used also to maintain supplies of important raw materials; then, when competition with rival exporting countries began, the government at home was asked to maintain exclusivity of supplies.

From the eighteen-eighties onwards there began a more systematic exploitation of colonies by those countries which possessed them, and a desire to acquire colonies grew among those which had none. Thus there came about a scramble for 'places in the sun', until the still available areas of the globe



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(Africa) were divided between countries which were strong enough either to have a colony or a sphere of interest. The immediate result was great relief, sudden general prosperity, optimism and the confidence given by prosperity. But serious people thought that imperialism, and the rivalry which is manifest in imperialism, might possibly plunge nations into war with each other.

It soon did. During the eighteen-eighties came news of the discovery of very valuable gold deposits near Johannesburg in South Africa, and thirteen years later there followed a quarrel with the South African Dutch which led to the so-called South African War.

This war was a very important event in economic history, no matter how small a war it was. It was the first time in history that imperialism had plunged white nations into war, and it proved to all that private economic interests, by assuming the cloak of nationalism, were bound to result in armed conflict. Its implications were far-reaching. By coinciding with the advent of the popular Press, it received an enormous newspaper publicity and did much damage to Britain's good name abroad. It was the beginning of the popularization of the charge of hypocrisy against Britain, and the beginning of the era when people openly or covertly smiled whenever official Britain talked about fair play. That it was exploited by Britain's rivals was very natural; it was a subject that lent itself easily to exploitation. It is often said that, after the South African War, Britain was respected abroad merely because she was a powerful country, and even Britain's friends came to the conclusion in connection with the South African War that something must have been fundamentally wrong with Britain to force her to abandon honesty. For the student of the pathological aspects of nationalism the story of the South African War was the most valuable field of study till Hitler came to power.

A very significant and important feature of the subsequent period between the South African War and 1914 was that

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the growth of nationalism went parallel in every country with the growth of a desire for democracy on the part of the population.

In 1905 there was an unsuccessful attempt at a revolution in Russia; five years later the king of Portugal was assassinated and a republic established; in Eastern Europe there were successful risings against Turkish domination culminating in the First and Second Balkan Wars. In every country in Europe the masses were becoming more and more articulate in their desire for an extension of their individual freedom, for the protection of national minorities, for the extension of suffrage in general and to women in particular. Trade unions and various working-class movements became strong and strikes came in waves in every country. This great move towards democracy, however, did not follow the abstract logic of democracy which is definitely universalist or, at least, internationalist. In practice — because of the very existence of the nation-state — the desire for democracy only strengthened and intensified nationalism. Nationalism in turn intensified the desire for democracy. The Second International in 1907 supplied the only ray of hope by adopting a policy of 'down tools' in case of war.

The socialist resolutions against war, however, never worked. Marxist internationalism had not sufficient prestige, because it was new compared to nationalism. It was also based on reason and not on emotion, nor could socialist emotionalist slogans and symbols compete with the slogans and symbols of the nation-state. In no country were the socialists sure of the attitude of their brothers in other countries, because their solidarity was based on reason, unlike nationalism which is largely based on habit and fear.

The defeat of socialism by nationalism, however, was not merely the work of blind forces. An important element of deliberate activity on the part of governments contributed to the defeat. In July 1914, the German Socialist Party — ten days before the outbreak of the war — published a manifesto



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in which they made their protest against the foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and openly demanded that the German government should do its best to prevent war if it could, but, in any case, that it should not take part. The German government countered this manifesto with a campaign to the effect that Germany was attacked by Russia, and as a consequence the Social Democrats were swept off their feet by popular enthusiasm and by the hatred of Russia felt by the German masses. A day after war broke out about 80 per cent of the German Social Democrats voted for the war credits.

This had a painful effect on socialists in Britain and France. They also voted for war credits without, however, any spontaneity. Jaurés, the leader of French socialism, was murdered and several British socialists were brave enough to turn conscientious objectors. The governments, and the ruling classes of the powers which went into war in 1914, may have had their fears and doubts about the attitude of their working classes towards the war. Yet these fears and doubts were unjustified because, far from opposition, there was a measure of enthusiasm among the workers of every belligerent country as they entered the war.

The sufferings and the misery the war caused did nothing to abate nationalism, in spite of the fact that after the war large sections of the public discovered that nationalism was the first and foremost cause of it. On the contrary, the war intensified nationalism all over the world, and the twenty years' truce between the two world wars showed very clearly the vicious circle in the operation of nationalism. It seems certain that intensification of nationalism in one country leads inevitably to the intensification of nationalism in countries with which the first country is in close relation.

The belligerent powers during the war indulged in necessarily intensive, and therefore necessarily unscrupulous, nationalist propaganda, aiming at offering a false, but on the whole fairly effective, compensation for sufferings and privation. This propaganda, unfortunately, outlived its usefulness

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after the German collapse, but it became responsible for a misguided desire for revenge, in the spirit of which the Peace Treaties were drawn up. The Peace Treaties further intensified nationalism, because they left the victors uncompensated, dissatisfied, still nervous and fearful, and the vanquished embittered, humiliated and revengeful. The one single universalist and deeply humanitarian proposal which emerged from the war, the idea of international co-operation through the League of Nations, was — partly through the faults of President Wilson and those of his opposition at home — exploited for the purposes of the narrowest and most predatory nationalist interests. Peace between vanquished and victor thus became the continuation of war by other means.

After the war economic rivalry between nations was as strong as ever; in fact, the motto of every nation state became 'national unity through economic self-sufficiency'. Now, however, the atomization of Europe was almost complete, with seven new independent sovereign states added to the anarchic patchwork that had been Europe before 1914.

Nor was nationalism confined to the former belligerents. The conditions of the war — mostly the difficulties of transport — had forced various political and economic measures on the neutral countries, including a certain amount of economic self-sufficiency. There may have been other and additional reasons. In any case it is interesting to note that one of the most peaceful countries of Europe, Norway, with a very high standard of prosperity and education and a strong European universalist tradition, a country which was hardly affected by the war, suddenly changed the name of its capital from Christiania to Oslo (a more Norwegian name).

The economic condition of every European country was further aggravated by the fact that emigration into the United States became practically impossible after the war. The United States were forced to resort to nationalist measures to control immigration, and thus a great safety valve for the European poor was closed.



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It was natural that the economic rivalry and the drive for self-sufficiency, practised within the narrow frontiers of the sovereign state, soon led to the economic collapse for which liberal capitalism is largely but not entirely responsible. This collapse in turn intensified nationalism. The World Economic Conference, called together to find a remedy for the greatest economic crisis in history, was unable to find any common basis for a co-operative economic system for the world, and countries continued to seek economic remedies in the political isolation of their frontiers and in high protective tariff walls. In the course of this dreadful period of misery amid plenty, the ignorant and misled masses of the world may have been inclined to disregard the magic incantations of nationalism and its symbols, but they certainly turned to the nation-state to give them food.

There arose in many parts of Europe a strange, pitiful nostalgia for the good old days of the years before 1914, when travel was free, the state largely negative, passports and visas in most parts of the world unknown, and it is very typical of the twenty years' truce that a large number of people mistook a few false portents for promises of peace. The most important was the Locarno period, during which large numbers of the population of Britain and France drugged themselves into a slumber with hopes about the League of Nations. It never occurred to them that the League in fact never existed, that Geneva was perpetuating a series of injustices, and that two wrongs seldom make one right. From time to time during this period of drugged slumber disturbing voices declared that all was not well with security. One voice in Britain was particularly persistent. It had an attractive nasal quality. Again and again it warned the slumbering British that danger was ahead, that Germany was rearming. But that voice never said why Germany was rearming.

The growth of nationalism was made easy in the years between the two World Wars, because in every country the First World War brought about departures from democracy.



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During that war every belligerent country was forced to suspend certain aspects of its constitution, and, in varying degrees, to legislate by government orders. Certain wartime emergency regulations had been maintained in every country after the war; in fact they were never revoked at all. In Britain the public complained a good deal about the so-called Defence of the Realm Act (Dora), which was merely an irritating survival of wartime emergency legislation. The Emergency Powers Act in Britain and the suspension of trial by jury in Hungary were more typical examples of the growing power of the state.

It would be a mistake to assume that the growth in the power of the state was entirely due to the war; the war had merely speeded up a process that was slowly but surely under way in every country. The power of the state—or, to be more precise, the power of governments—had been growing imperceptibly ever since the early years of the century. Naturally this happened at the expense of the power of parliaments. This significant process is called in scientific language, the 'shift in the seat of sovereignty'. It was brought about purely and simply by the fact that, with the growing complexity of modern life, legislation and government became highly specialized functions, needing highly specialized and highly trained experts, bureaucrats and civil servants, all of whom accordingly acquired a greater share in the legislative function than the elected representatives of the people. It was not surprising that the American public developed a growing suspicion against 'those clever people down East' (meaning the State Department and the Brain Trusts), or that Lord Hewart, Lord Chief Justice of England, in the early nineteen-thirties wrote a book against 'the new despotism' (meaning Whitehall).

This shift in the seat of sovereignty, which went parallel with the growth in the power of the state, was naturally stronger in countries where the institutions of parliamentary democracy were weak through lack of democratic traditions, and because of general poverty. It was, however, very significant in Western Europe where democratic institutions had stronger



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and firmer historical foundations and where the wealth of the nations was greater.

Though nationalism had grown everywhere after the First World War, its growth varied a good deal in intensity according to individual countries, and the student of politics, who followed the course of nationalism in the various countries of Europe and compared its varying intensity, saw at once that there was little mystery about nationalism, and where mystery existed there was a system in it. He noted, in general, that the intensity of nationalism was in direct ratio to the economic conditions of the country in question. That is to say, a poor country, on the whole, was more nationalist than a rich one, or at least more demonstratively nationalist. He further noticed that nationalism was more intense in countries which had lost the war, or suffered more than others during it, or in neutral countries that found themselves in economic difficulties after it. This increase of nationalism was soon exploited for the only purpose for which it could be exploited, namely for counter-revolution. If the poverty, the sufferings, the insecurity and the bitterness of the people had not expressed itself through nationalism, then Communism would have found a ready ground among those who lost the war or found themselves in economic difficulties. Because Communism expressed itself against nationalism, the sentiment of the masses was used against the only progressive internationalist movement that appeared on the horizon after the war. The ruling classes of these countries, afraid of Communism, curbed the masses for their own purposes, weakened or suppressed the precarious democratic institution and got hold of the state. In other words, they maintained the existing class structure without those excuses and apologies for capitalism which in most countries pass for democracy. This political system later became known as 'Fascism', and its most significant feature is that it is one form of capitalism in decay, and that, as such, it cannot endure for a long time. There are further forms of capitalism in decay, i.e. a transitory stage between capitalism

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and an alternative economic and political system which, no matter how horrid and anti-democratic, cannot be called 'Fascism' any more. These developments are new and thus no generally accepted name exists for them.

The means by which Fascism was achieved varied a good deal according to countries and according to conditions. In certain countries a former quasi-democratic national leader or monarch established a partial dictatorship; in other countries the leader of the counter-revolution conquered his opponents. Different also was the extent of totality in dictatorial powers. In certain countries a shadow democracy was allowed to remain, such as parliament, and a bamboozled socialist Press; and trade unions had to submit to a good deal of interference. The main feature of these systems of government was always that freedom, if it existed, was more substantial in theory than in practice.

The first country in Europe to become a semi-dictatorship was Hungary, where the communist revolution had been overthrown in 1919, and the leader of the counter-revolution assumed power under the guise of a shadow democracy. His system allowed a small socialist opposition in parliament, trade unions (after extorting a promise from them that they would not try to organize agricultural workers) and a free Press (subject to a carefully camouflaged and retrospective censorship). In order to help the maintenance of its power this semi-dictatorship kindled the fire of nationalism through its over-emphasis on the necessity for the revision of the Peace Treaties for which there was, however, genuine justification.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hungary is an interesting case in point in trying to assess the *real* differences between democracy and autocracy or democracy and dictatorship. It is true that the institution of trial by jury had been suspended in Hungary after the First World War, and it is true that, apart from the general elections of 1920 when the poll was secret, only some 20 per cent of the electorate (those of the larger towns) voted in secrecy, and that there was official discrimination against Jews. There were, however, features of Hungarian life which are very difficult to reconcile with the idea of autocracy and dictatorship. One was the Press. I do not know whether the following instance (quite typical in the Hungary of the 'twenties and 'thirties) constitutes 'freedom' or not. The late Alexander Pethö, a well-known Budapest editor, one day wrote a leading article in his newspaper containing some



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Turkey went through a similar transformation at the same time, under Kemal, and in the following years of the early 'twenties no less than half a dozen states became dictatorships, or at least suspended democratic institutions: Greece, Lithuania, Portugal, Poland, Jugoslavia, Italy and finally, in 1923, Spain under General Primo de Rivera. These countries had no particular ideologies in the sense of totalitarian states which emerged later. Even Italian Fascism was a very elastic political principle in its early years. As a rule the dictatorships of the early 'twenties merely suspended democratic institutions and kindled the fire of nationalism to combat the internationalist forces of Communism.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 put into practice an economic theory rivalling capitalism, the predominant economic order of our time, and its original principles aimed at providing a substitute for nationalism, the predominant political force of our time. Communism was successful as far as the solution of the economic problem went. Within the frontiers of Russia it evolved a new economic order, but it could do little towards the solution of the political problem. The success of Communism in Russia gave rise to a strong opposition in capitalist countries, and the leaders of Russia, far from conquering nationalism abroad, had in effect strengthened it all over the capitalist world.

Not only did Communist internationalism give rise to

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very vigorous abuse of Count Klebelsberg, then the minister for Education, in which Pethö said that one ought not to be surprised by the policy of the Count knowing that he was a hermaphrodite. For this biological reference Count Klebelsberg sued Pethö; there was a much publicized trial in the course of which the minister was violently criticized by all witnesses for the defence, and as a result of the trial Pethö was sentenced to four weeks' 'state' imprisonment, which is an institution closely reminiscent of the third act of Johann Strauss' *Gay Rosalinda (Fledermaus)*. He had his own food, drink, smokes and newspapers, could receive as many visitors as he liked, and when he came out his friends gave a dinner party in honour of the 'martyr of despotism', while his paper as a result of the affair almost doubled its circulation.

Features like these (and they were innumerable) do not prove that Hungary was a democratic country, but they do much to confirm the theory that democracy, as such, is little beyond wealth and tradition (of wealth), or the witticism that Britain was a reactionary democracy and Hungary a liberal oligarchy.





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Fascist dictatorships; there was, in the middle nineteen-thirties, *no* country in the world without a budding Fascist party, including countries where democracy was very strong (Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Great Britain and the United States).

Before his death Lenin saw that the world revolution was not taking place. Of his two heir apparents, Trotsky tried to maintain the original Marxist dogma that Communism could never achieve its object in one single country. Accordingly he advocated strong international action by the propaganda organ of the party, the *Comintern*. Four years after Lenin's death, however, Joseph Stalin expelled Trotsky from the party, for which act the Bolshevik Old Guard promptly called Stalin a traitor who let down the cause of Communism. The part played by personal motives in Trotsky's expulsion from the Party cannot be assessed in our time; nevertheless, it is clear on evidence that the cause of international socialism in Russia was 'let down' not so much by Stalin as by historical circumstances. The Russian masses, no more and no less than the masses anywhere else in the world, were unable to develop enthusiasm for a doctrine which could not appeal to their emotions. All they wanted — in common with the masses all over the world — was social and economic reform within the nation-state. Stalin, who could not abandon the idea of internationalism, decided to create the best incentive to and propaganda for Communism by the achievements of what he termed 'Socialism in One Country'. His plans, however, were not crowned with easy success. During the ten years after Lenin's death, the U.S.S.R. succeeded, with great difficulties and under conditions of internal and external stress, in raising the standard of living of the Russian masses. It was an impressive achievement, but before it could be carried further by means of the Second Five-Year Plan (1934-39), the moves of the counter-revolution, manifest through the Anti-Comintern Pact, made Stalin realize that the very existence of the U.S.S.R. was threatened by war. Thus, from 1936 onwards, instead of



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concentrating on further internal improvements, that is, the production of consumption goods, Russia had to concentrate on self-defence, and instead of on the manufacture of commodities she had to concentrate on that of weapons of war. Russia thus gradually lost more and more of her internationalism. When the Second World War began the threat of invasion and foreign domination increased her nationalism (as a similar threat increased nationalism in every country, regardless of its economic structure). This steady increase of nationalism was given an enormous, final stimulus by the actual invasion of Russia in 1941. The dissolution of the Comintern in 1943 was partly a political gesture towards Russia's allies, partly the necessary acknowledgment of facts.

In the beginning the Fascist counter-revolution seemed little more than a revolution based on a negative ideology, namely the reaction of capitalism against the revolution. If democracy in our time can be described as capitalism with apologies, the corresponding generalization for Fascism is capitalism without apologies. For the outside observer (capitalist and socialist alike) the first years of the Nazi rule were nothing but a rule of reactionary capitalism. All democratic institutions were suspended, and in fact a few state enterprises (the achievements of the social democratic Weimar Republic) were restored to private enterprise. German national socialism, however, soon underwent a very thorough change. The process of putting the clock back and returning to reactionary capitalism was quickly reversed. The state which at the beginning of the Nazi revolution seemed to favour the capitalist began to intervene against the capitalist in a very important direction. His ownership in the means of production (and this is the criterion of capitalism) was made the subject of more and more rigorous state control, almost akin to state ownership. This, of course, in itself was not socialism, and indeed, to the socialist enemy of Germany, the Nazis' system presented a picture of capitalism in decay. Before and perhaps even during the Second World War, Nazi Germany in many ways looked like a

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capitalist state, and to a certain extent it was; in reality it was almost as far from capitalism as from socialism. The German capitalist, when we come down to fundamentals, was different from the working class in little more than income and all that this entails. His control over his works or factory was little more than nominal. His enterprise was no longer private; that is, it was no longer he who decided about wages or prices or where to buy raw materials and what to manufacture, and it was not he who decided what was most profitable to him. This is not socialism, and because certain German capitalists made huge profits under the Nazi system, the impression might be given that the Nazi system was really a capitalist system. The majority of German capitalists, however, were not allowed to decide what to do with their profits. By the time the system came to an end, they were little more than favourites of the state, enjoying at times great privileges, but certainly not the rulers, and still less the exclusive rulers, of the state. That Hitler was not entirely his own master is a fact which goes without saying. It is, however, a dangerous mistake to assume that Hitler was ruled by capitalists. Among the clique that ruled Hitler there were a good many rich men, or men with big incomes; yet they wielded little power *on the basis of their wealth*, or through ownership or control of wealth. In the middle years of Hitler's regime the growing tendency was towards rule and power on a *functional* basis, that is on the basis of ability in organization, bureaucracy, army leaders and so on. In 1945, when Hitler was finally defeated, the gap in the ideological and in the economic structure was still very great between Germany, the Soviet Union and the democracies, but much less great than most students of politics to-day care to admit.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE NATURE OF NATIONALISM

NATIONALISM has been described as a 'total' group feeling because it involves the whole group, the nation, and because in our age it stimulates a greater intensity of enthusiasm than any other group feeling. Nationalism, furthermore, is essentially universal. Since its basic foundations are present in every individual, it is present in every country, though nationalism in each country varies in intensity according to regional factors. Among the white countries of the world, nationalism has everywhere taken the place religion used to occupy as the predominant or total group feeling. This, in other words, means that under our civilization nationalism is the greatest political force. Under other existing civilizations nationalism is taking the same course it has taken among us. The nationalism of Japan, and to a lesser extent that of China and of India, are clear proofs of this.

X In view of this fact, nationalism has often been described as the greatest universal evil, for, in the last analysis, it is solely responsible for modern wars. The description is inadequate. It is nearer to the truth to say that nationalism is the greatest universal evil because it is becoming more and more evident that it makes peace altogether impossible. Nationalism creates an atmosphere, a mental climate — some people actually call it our own *Zeitgeist* — in which peace is only distinguishable from war in rich and powerful countries where the majority of the inhabitants do not notice that this mental climate makes peace and war continuations of each other by other means.

It is, furthermore, the greatest total evil in world history because other evils of the past could never have been described as 'universal' or as 'total'. The Plague, the great scourge of three centuries, was limited to Europe. It brought dreadful misery on our continent. Within its area of operation it was

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universal; it killed young and old, rich and poor, the pauper and the prince, and there was no remedy against it. It had to take its course until, according to scientific theory, man could provide enough antitoxin in his body to make him resist infection.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to compare the reactions and attitudes of people 'in the know' in relation to the Plague and to nationalism. Those 'in the know' in both cases make something like a correct diagnosis. In the old days they knew that the Plague was contagious, and the doctor at least dressed himself up in those strange, protective garments familiar from contemporary woodcuts, and burnt frankincense when he approached the house. Yet he did not realize that the disease was contagious through microbes and that his fancy dress could not protect him if the microbes infected his own drinking water. To-day the person 'in the know' recognizes that nationalism is partly a contagious disease; as a matter of fact, he knows more than that. As a rule he knows the whole causation of nationalism, and if he does not, at least he knows more about it than his ancestors knew about the Plague. He is, however, alone and isolated with his knowledge in a world where ignorance about the most universal malady is by no means confined to those for whom education finished at the age when knowledge just begins to stimulate man's mind. Ignorance about nationalism is, in a way, compatible not only with academic honours, but with actual achievements in scientific fields. The man 'in the know' is alone because some of his own kin, people who share his knowledge and recognize the truth, are either weak and are afraid to tell the truth, or are traitors and suppress the truth, and/or sell themselves to interests whose very existence is bound up with the maintenance of nationalism. It is indeed easy to come to the conclusion that the patriot, no matter how true a patriot he is, is the worst enemy of progress and the greatest traitor to the cause of the world.

<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated by Lewis Mumford and others that the Plague in Europe killed what in 1918 would have been six hundred million people regardless of age groups or of sex. The number of casualties during the First World War was sixteen millions, almost exclusively males of certain age groups.



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It is easy to reach this conclusion. Universal justice and universal ethics are on one's side if one thinks so, but what is the remedy? The greatest political crime in our century, very typically, is high treason against the state, just as it was heresy at the time when the Church had secular power. And high treason — just like its opposite, patriotism — is not enough, even if the traitor commits treason through the deepest universalist conviction; because under our civilization such a man can only serve the interests of *another* sovereign nation-state, which fundamentally is quite as great and quite as rotten as the traitor's native land. The 'true country of man', the world-state, only exists as a figment of the imagination of a few writers. Such a person knows that the most progressive political thought in the world to-day, socialism, is fighting a losing battle against the terrible strength of nationalism. Socialism, indeed, has to retreat all the time; it has to make an alliance with nationalism, the result of which is 'Socialism in many countries', or rather, 'Socialism in our time', which is national socialism. Indeed, this seems to be an inevitable stage in political development in our time. The 'true clerk' to-day, who is a 'heretic' of nationalism, finds himself in many ways in the same situation as his distinguished ancestors who got into trouble for telling the truth. Galileo was forced to withdraw his tenets and — according to the anecdote — he murmured under his breath: 'E pur si muove' ('and yet it moves'). Others, lesser and less docile men, were burnt at the stake. In our time such a man might be elected to parliament where, if he expounded the truth about the nation-state, he would meet with the greatest contemporary punishments that can be meted out to a public man: he would become ridiculous, or be regarded a bore. He might, alternatively, undertake the path of contemporary martyrdom, which in a democratic country does not mean the concentration camp or the penitentiary, but a dreadful sense of loneliness. His mental state would soon become the terrible and involuntary isolation of the neurotic separated from the world by his hypersensitive condition, and

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in whom separation inevitably creates a sense of inferiority. To be a minority is usually a very unhappy state of affairs, especially a minority which finds itself against popular conceptions of moral norms.

It was this very condition that eventually led Lord Acton to write that famous and characteristic line in a letter to Mary Gladstone — 'I never had any contemporaries.' Those who try to find an interpretation for Acton's loneliness usually say that his life was embittered because, being a Roman Catholic, he was not admitted to Oxford or Cambridge. (He went to a university abroad.) This is not an adequate explanation, because other Roman Catholic English peers (the Norfolks, the Denbighs, the Southwells), even if they were cultured and sensitive, never felt they had no contemporaries. Acton, practically the only man of his century who knew with prophetic insight the truth about the nation-state, had no contemporaries because spiritually he belonged not to the pre-Reformation age but to, shall we say, the twenty-first century? Our own century seems to be dedicated to the Common Man, and the Common Man, largely through no fault of his own, is the worst enemy of progress, and if he is not there are many people who are ready to see to it that he should become so. If, on the other hand, the contemporary man in the know is capable of that understanding resignation of the sage who does not hate because he understands, he tends to think that, like the Plague, the scourge of our century has to take its natural course; until the inhabitants of the world 'produce enough antitoxin in their bodies to make them resist further infection'. Nationalism like the Plague is unlikely to destroy our civilization, but it damages it; and like the Plague it provides breathing spaces between the horrors of its outbreaks, short intervals like the golden days of the early nineteen-tens, or like that idyllic landscape, the days of Locarno, which lulled the majority of mankind into a false dream about the corner that had been successfully and happily turned until a new outbreak brutally shattered the romantic landscape of illusions. He remains, it



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seems, alone, because the best practical brains of the century are voluntarily or involuntarily too much preoccupied with symptoms and their treatment, such as the inadequate distribution of the wealth of individual nations. They do not seem to realize that poverty and inadequacy of means are but symptoms of our collective disease, and if they continue in political isolation with their well-meaning endeavours towards economic reform, they will only cure the symptoms and not the cause—the cause which is behind the whole, the bigger of the ‘twin problem’ of our present-day existence.

Nationalism is universal. It is the custom of students of politics to divide it into various categories, to talk about pacific nationalism and aggressive nationalism, about Western European and non-Western European nationalism, and finally about personal and political nationalism. These categories can and may serve some useful purpose in the study of nationalism, but, since nationalism is the predominant political force of our civilization, it is obvious that the fundamentals of nationalism, the essence of nationalism, are exactly the same everywhere, though naturally its intensity is subject to conditions which vary according to countries and according to times. Nationalism has no permanence of intensity, and it may be said that the typical characteristic of nationalism is the typical characteristic of the volcano. Its eruption is subject to conditions and, in theory at least, we know the conditions under which nationalism could or would erupt. It is said that nationalism ‘always existed’, which is a very relative statement. Something like nationalism could and did exist in the sentiments of man from the earliest age, but conditions in former times did not make it possible for nationalism to become dangerous. Similarly, it is said that in the course of the nineteenth century, when it first made its appearance as a political force, it was ‘good’, whereas in the twentieth century it became ‘bad’. The truth is that the difference between the nationalism of the two respective centuries is the difference between the conditions under which men lived then and are living now. Not only was



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the world in the nineteenth century a bigger place than it is now, but individual countries were also bigger and less united.

It has been said that the nationalism of the old-established and secure nations may be strong, but it is not demonstrative and that of the young and insecure nations is. This is a very false conclusion. Nationalism is not so much a question of national character as it is of national behaviour, though patterns of behaviour sometimes display themselves for such a long period that they give the impression of character. The very moment a nation has cause to feel that its security is threatened, its nationalism becomes strong, and, more often than not, highly demonstrative. 'Pacific' nationalism, therefore, is a misleading term. A nation is peaceful either because it has not sufficient strength or no cause to be aggressive. Switzerland to-day is probably the most peaceful nation on earth. She has often been called a 'professional neutral'. It is, however, highly doubtful whether she would have remained as peaceful if, by some strange chance, she suddenly acquired a population of thirty millions. The misleading factor is not only that certain countries describe themselves as 'peace-loving', but succeed in persuading themselves that they are so. Others, like Germany and Italy, in recent years openly described themselves as 'war-loving'. We had the Nazis' own word for the fact that Germany was fond of war. And here arises the crux of the matter. Hitler and the other Nazi leaders certainly said that the Germans were war-loving, or that war was a 'mission' of the German race. The point, however, is that under the circumstances the Nazis were forced to say this, and as often as possible. Such a statement was an extremely important factor of internal propaganda aimed at the conditioning of Germany for war. Extremely important, because in spite of the fact that the Germans were '*always* warlike', that is to say bellicosity was a pattern of German behaviour in the last eighty years, this 'tradition of beastliness' was not enough. Not enough because war needs a tremendous sustained effort on the part of a nation, and it calls for suffering, privation and sacrifices



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which the Germans (or any other race) may be unwilling to make without efficient conditioning propaganda. Thus, the Nazi leaders were trying (and succeeding) to persuade Germans that they like war fundamentally, that war is a mission for the German people. Fundamentally, of course, no nation is either warlike or peace-loving. Warlike character is only in the fact of the nation-state, in the sovereign nation-state, in the fact of sovereignty. In the words of Dr. L. P. Jacks the connection between the war-making habit and the state structure is so intimate that, if the habit were broken and war finally banished from the earth, the entire state fabric would have to be reshaped on a pattern corresponding to a new mode of life. 'A world of non-war making sovereign states is a flat impossibility. A race of vegetarian tigers would be a parallel conception.'<sup>1</sup>

The pacific nationalism of old-established and secure nations is thus superficial and skin deep. This is very clearly demonstrated by any of the old and prosperous democracies of Western Europe. Their moderate nationalism, their pacific tendencies, have in the past been due to favourable economic and political circumstances. Their moderation, their prestige abroad, were due to their wealth just as much as to their democracy. Their wealth ensured a certain measure of national cohesion, or in other words, national unity. The economic and political circumstances of these nations are, however, no longer as favourable as they were in the past. If circumstances continue to deteriorate, the inevitable consequences will be an increased nationalism and a drift towards some totalitarian form. While most people, in Britain at least, agree as to the first consequence, many would argue that the second is not likely to happen in England. Their view is that British democratic institutions are so old and so deeply ingrained that it is highly unlikely that Britain would drift towards a form of dictatorship, even if changed conditions pressed her towards one. These arguments are not tenable. No matter how deeply

<sup>1</sup> DR. L. P. JACKS: *Peace by Compulsion*.

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ingrained democratic traditions are, the democracies would give up such traditions with surprising elasticity and speed, if and when they realized that their traditions might plunge them into danger. During the years between the two World Wars, Britain was forced to give up naval supremacy, free trade, the gold standard and the voluntary basis of her armed forces. She had, for a long time, been proud — and justly proud — of these traditions, some of which were deeply ingrained, but they went all the same. During an actual war, traditions go with greater speed if their departure is necessary. The lease of naval bases on the Caribbean is an excellent example of this, and also an excellent example of tact and political skill to deal with the artificially inflamed nationalism ('The British Empire is not for sale' and 'What we have we hold') of the masses, when national interest requires the exit of deeply ingrained traditions.

The difference between a war fought for gain in the national interest and a war to maintain possessions in the national interest, is a purely formal difference which makes absolutely no change in the intensity of the nationalism of either of the belligerents.

Nationalism, in view of the above, is neither ultimate nor irreducible. The causes of nationalism are inherent in human nature, and those elements that go into nationalism are instinctive. Nationalism in itself, however, is not instinctive, and the instinctive elements that go into nationalism could be directed into other channels. Finally, nationalism in its dangerous modern form, that is, a political force expressing itself through the sovereign state, is new, and it is not an exaggeration to say that it has its beginning, its climax and its end. Many students of politics think that it has already reached its climax of development and after a time it will follow the course of religion as a political force. Others maintain that it has reached its climax in Western Europe, but not in other parts of Europe, while it is still in the primary stage under Oriental civilizations. While there are indications that modern nation-



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alism may have had its beginning, its climax and its end, there is no serious evidence for the belief that it *has* reached its climax anywhere in the world to-day.

One of the most characteristic features of nationalism is its universality within the group. Nationalism does not vary according to age or sex, and it certainly does not vary according to social class or other sub-divisions. The only variations it allows are between individuals, and even these are subject to change from time to time.

In earlier periods of history certain social classes were not only less nationalist in outlook than others, but were decidedly anti-nationalist. This was largely the case among the feudal aristocracy before the advent of state power and the nation-state. The feudal aristocrat in the pre-capitalist and pre-national era was something like a king within his own province, and he often resented the nominal or actual king (another, richer, or more successful feudal aristocrat) centralizing the country on a national basis. Nationalism for the feudalist inevitably meant loss of power, and thus he often fought nationalism when he fought the king, who was identical with the state. The battle between the feudal oligarch and the state was won everywhere by the state, and the feudal aristocrat — if he survived — accepted nationalism. Moreover, he sometimes became a member of the new aristocracy, which controlled the state, whose other members were originally middle class people — lawyers, merchants, bankers. In a generation he became the embodiment of nationalism.

Similarly, at the other end of the social scale and in another historical period, the industrial worker became decidedly anti-nationalist. The period in question was the years immediately following the spread of the doctrines of socialism. In this respect it is important to note that though both English and French socialism are older than Marx, and consequently not Marxist in policy, structure and character, there are fairly strong manifestations of Marxist internationalism both in France and in Britain, and a portion of the working classes in



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both countries had shown strong anti-nationalist tendencies before 1914.

To some people the nationalism of the working class in general, and of the British working class in particular, is a great and pleasant surprise. They think that the working class as a whole has a strong inclination to be unpatriotic. The truth is that national sub-divisions do not make any difference to nationalism, though class and occupation can make a difference to the form nationalism takes. Members of the working class can at times be extremely nationalist, on the border of pathological and morbid nationalism, and they have good reason to be so. The fact is that the state from time to time makes powerful bids for the sympathy of the workers. During the nineteen-tens the working class as a whole may have displayed some antagonism towards nationalism and may have opposed war because they recognized its imperialistic character. They were against military service and armaments, because they felt that armaments used up money which could or ought to have been spent on social services, or on the raising of their standards of living. For a time, indeed, it seemed that socialism might provide an obstacle to war, but those who believed this were greatly mistaken. Governments all over the world realized that they must count on the support of the workers and they, therefore, gave the masses concessions or promises of concessions. This was partly responsible for the fact that the workers in every belligerent state did not provide an important opposition against the First World War. A few socialist leaders in Britain and in America became conscientious objectors; in other countries they showed a willingness to conclude a negotiated peace. Later on some of them protested against the harshness of the peace treaties, developed a sympathy towards the League of Nations and made a strong demand for disarmament. In Britain and in France they became politically victorious for short periods, but the time came when they were forced to abandon a good deal of their anti-nationalist or internationalist attitude and, willingly or unwillingly, ally themselves with the



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nationalists. This change of front was due to the vicious circle of nationalism; that is, whenever the nationalism of one country grows strong enough to threaten another, the second country goes nationalist itself. The main cause of the change in the mental climate of the British working class was the threat of Nazi Germany. The typical farcical situation which arose in Britain has arisen many a time since the French Revolution in many countries. The British ruling class, in face of Fascist nationalism, made a few concessions to the workers and promises of more to come, thus claiming that democracy was in the national tradition. The working class in turn began to sympathize with the national tradition because it meant a measure of democracy.

In this connection an unsavoury suggestion was made that the patriotism of the workers had been bought. While this statement is scientifically true, it casts a dreadful reflection on a social-economic system which is only willing to make sacrifices when in a tight corner. The other observation that workers on the whole were doing well out of the war is an equally dreadful facet of scientific truth. Some workers before the war lived at such low standards that the war had to come to improve their standards.

It is often suggested that, because of their lack of educational opportunities, members of the working classes are more subject to nationalist propaganda than those who receive a better education. This statement is only partly true. Nationalism, unfortunately, is not entirely a matter of schooling, and those who are immune from it are very often not highly educated people, though education naturally does much to develop the critical sense, scepticism or objectivity, that alone provides immunity from nationalism. While it is easy to find examples of pathological nationalism among the members of the working classes, one comes across working men who have a quite genuine and intelligent understanding of the truth about nationalism. Sometimes it is an example of the healthy instincts of the unlettered, sometimes the happy coincidence of various in-

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fluences. For the first, I found an example in the person of a young soldier who was stationed with me in Yorkshire. He could not read or write, and previous to the war had never been out of his native Essex, but on several occasions he made the most amazing valid statements on nationalism. He knew it was universal and he knew that national interest was a private affair of nations. And finally he summed up nationalism in the following terse conclusion: 'War to-day is cheaper than peace', which is more or less one of the conclusions to which the student of nationalism comes after years of academic training and long continued research. War, at the present stage of our civilization — and in the short run — is cheaper than peace.

The other example was a sergeant of mine (age 32, married, two children, Methodist, an ex-lorry-driver from Derbyshire). He discovered the truth about nationalism through socialism, Christian propaganda, popular books on science and talking to 'foreign chaps'. He did not believe in the unity of man in the church sense and he did not wish to love his fellow men: he merely wished to live with them. It was, however, through the teaching of the Church that he became conscious of the unity of man in general. Similarly, he was 'beyond' the Labour Party. He knew it was merely a means to an end, but it was quite clear to him that domestic socialism could at its best result in slightly better social conditions within national frontiers and not in the absence of war between nations. He clearly understood the permanent character of modern wars and the fact that rigid sovereignty makes peaceful intercourse between nations impossible.

Dealing with the attitude of the working class towards nationalism it should be noted that research in this field is rendered additionally difficult for technical reasons. I have said already that people whose formal education came to an end at the age of fourteen cannot help talking a different language from those who profited by better educational chances. The research worker (journalist, sociologist, novelist,



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mass-observer) must be familiar with the technique of translating working-class terminology into standardized language. This needs a good deal of ingenuity and self-discipline. For this purpose he must have more than a knowledge of working-class mentality; he must have a good knowledge of the individual he is observing. He must know the difference between the everyday vocabulary of his subject under observation and the vocabulary used quite instinctively when talking to someone of a different class. He must make careful allowances for timidity or arrogance, for a desire for good fellowship and for the desire to please. Besides, the observer's path is full of temptations of which romanticism, sensationalism and sentimentality are the commonest. Whether he is a writer or a scientist he must look for truth, and when he has found it he should not be afraid to tell the world. Oddly enough — perhaps because social science to-day is still in its infancy — the writer-artist sometimes gives a better view of working-class mentality than a scientific sociologist. The meshes of his strainer are finer than those of the sociologist and he often catches more of the substance of the infinitely slippery material of human emotions. By association, a novel by Henry Green — in spite of his preoccupation with *Stilromantik* — can disclose more about the factory worker's inner life than a good, scientific report.<sup>1</sup>

Our review of the working-class attitude towards nationalism would not be complete without mentioning the compensatory element in nationalism. In this respect nationalism has to a great extent taken the place of religion. If nationalism cannot provide the same degree of mysticism as the promise of salvation, it provides more obvious facts, and facts which appear more concrete than salvation. Further, it offers mysticism, too. In the form of national pride it offers the believer a certain amount of compensation for the ills he is suffering — as a rule at the hand of his own compatriots. This motive is periodically

<sup>1</sup> HENRY GREEN: *Living* (Dent, 1932) and *Caught* (Hogarth Press, 1944).



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exploited by the ruling class, which at times uses the foreigner as a convenient scapegoat lest the real culprit be found. Ignorance and prejudice, therefore, are additional pieces of capital in the hands of the national propagandist elements in the ruling class, all the more because working-class prejudices against foreigners are in one instance justified. The working class is afraid of foreign competition, and the fear continues in spite of the ban on immigration because the working classes do not yet realize that 'exporting the unemployment' (with all its implications — undercutting prices and consequently unemployment in the importing country) is possible without one single alien worker entering the country.

It is often said that nationalism is on the whole stronger in the lower middle classes than in the working class. It is asserted that the inarticulate working class sensibly *feels* that foreigners are 'just like ourselves', and that newspapers have little influence on them because they cannot really 'read'. It is asserted further that the lower middle class, being half-educated, has lost the healthy instincts of the uneducated and its nationalism is more pernicious. All that can be fruitfully discussed in this respect are certain trends among various social groups of the community, conditioned by membership of the group. On the other hand, we get much better and clearer views if we make groups on other bases than on income or social groupings. The individual who is frustrated is more likely to become a nationalist than the one who is successful, and the man who has much to lose is likely to become more nationalist than the one who has little to lose, the ignorant more than the educated (i.e. educated in international relations). Finally, the man brought up in nationalism is more likely to be nationalist than the one who was not. These, and similar ones, are the real categories, and in so far as they correspond with the actual class stratification of a given nation we can find justification for attempts at generalizations. Thus it is not safe to say that nationalism on the whole is stronger in the lower middle class, but it is reasonably safe to say that



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members of the lower middle class on the whole show a stronger tendency towards nationalism in all its forms. The growth of German and Italian Fascism throws a very interesting light on this view. When the economic slump began to threaten the economic and social position of the lower middle class, that is the margin separating them from the working class, they were strongly inclined to go over to Fascism of their own accord, in order to save, or perhaps to improve, their social position. They were not threatened with actual starvation as much as with loss of social status.

The non-political element of the working class went over because all they wanted was improvement of their conditions through Communism or Fascism, but Fascism was more likely to win. The political element of the working class, on the other hand, resisted for a long time, and Fascism could never claim anywhere near the majority of them. Those who deserted the ranks of socialism did so for various reasons, among which were the following: they became attracted by the 'socialist' tenets of Fascism; that is, the carefully calculated political radicalism in Fascist programmes. Later some of them went over because of the success of Fascism in the field of foreign policy.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the peasant to nationalism is patriotism in the original and most natural meaning of the word. The peasant loves his own soil, and loves it passionately, but seldom really extends this love to the whole nation, simply because he does not know the nation. The large majority of peasants know much less of the nation than the most backward industrial worker. This shows the very essence of what it is to be a peasant. To be a peasant means not so much an agricultural occupation as a certain psychological condition which is typical of agricultural workers only in certain places and at certain times. The peasant is a comparatively new figure on the stage of history, and to be a peasant is a temporary or an intermediate stage. Four hundred years ago there were no peasants in Europe and it is highly doubtful whether there will

<sup>1</sup> For details see the Chatham House publication *Nationalism* (O.U.P., 1939).

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be any peasants left in fifty years' time. They are the result of capitalism, but they are disappearing before capitalism is transformed into another economic system. Before capitalism there were no peasants, and those who still remain in agriculture are becoming farmers or agricultural labourers. They might — and in certain respects will — display the mental characteristics of those who live on the land, but they will not share with the peasant that which makes him a peasant — isolation from the world beyond his soil and an almost complete lack of collective sense. In England or in America one cannot talk about peasants; in Scotland, Wales and Ireland one does (with little justice). In a general sense one cannot really talk about peasants in Western Europe, or for that matter, though to a lesser extent, in the Soviet Union.

The peasant is living an isolated life and his interests are bound up with his land, and the 'foreigner' to him is quite often the man from the neighbouring industrial community. He is thus, in certain respects, still living in the seventeenth century. It is true, but not relevant, that on the whole he inclines to be superstitious, suspicious, narrow, religious, strongly individualistic, and at times he lives at a higher artistic level than the more civilized industrial worker. He had, and to a distinguishing extent still has, his native dress, traditions and folklore, but these are more regional than national.

It is, however, very relevant that the politics of the peasant are bound up with his land. He is the typical member of the community who, however intelligent, is not as a rule capable of that intellectual process which is needed to transform his (local) patriotism into nationalism, to feel that his beloved acres are part of the nation. In certain places he is quite indifferent to which country he belongs, as long as he can possess his land or has a chance to satisfy his hunger for land. If he is promised land, he is often quite willing to leave the surroundings in which he was born, or even to leave the country of his birth. Self-determination in 1919 was a great



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problem to him, because he tried to figure it out in terms of land, his only interest. Accordingly, he quite often disregarded the nation which claimed him as a member.

In the above we saw how little dogmatism is possible in trying to identify the extent or the degree of nationalism with class stratification. The position is similar if we try to identify the same on an occupational basis. It is usually assumed that people in the services professionally are more rabid nationalists than those who are not serving under the Crown. This, however, is not quite the case. The professional soldier and the civil servant (the two occupations are fundamentally the same) in a sense are professional patriots, because through their jobs they are forced to identify the interests of the state with their own. Their whole existence, in fact, is bound up with the interests of the state. They, however, develop a kind of respect, or at least a recognition, towards soldiers or civil servants of other countries; and if they know the inner workings of the armed forces or of the administration of their own government department, they certainly will not believe their own to be exemplary and the other essentially inferior.

The problem is different if they happen to be on the retired list when other factors come into play. The most important of these is the loss of actual authority. A retired officer or pensioned civil servant might easily develop a tendency towards rabid nationalism, or even towards Fascism. The most typical feature about Colonel Blimp is not the fact that he is an officer, but that he is a *retired* officer; another less important feature is that Blimp had never been a staff officer.

Sometimes it is suggested that it is not the Colonel but his cousin, Mr. Blimp the business man, who is the dangerous nationalist. A business man indeed may have good reason to be a nationalist, because his short-term gains may be large. His personal and individual responsibility for war and for hard peace terms may often be out of proportion to his social function. Some business men, however, are not affected by foreign competition, while others have every reason to fear war, which



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in exchange for a short-lived prosperity might even ruin them by the time it is finished.

The intellectual, on the other hand, is supposed to be anti-nationalist, but this is subject to reservations. In the general sense the intellectual is a man of independent thought and an enlightened person, but this cannot mean enlightenment in every field of human affairs; as a rule not even in the main fields. Thus, it may be possible for a first-rate mathematician to be quite reactionary in politics, for a great expert on comparative philology not to know the first thing about nutrition, and for a fine physicist to be quite indifferent to the most burning social problems. To be an intellectual is always a preoccupation, and the jokes about the absent-minded professor often have a grain of truth in them. It is not *compulsory* for the professor to throw his watch into the pond and to put the frog into his waistcoat pocket; if he does so it is understandable. The problem is entirely different when the intellectual in question deals with subjects which involve the understanding or knowledge of nationalism. He then may be said to be 'in the know', to understand the full implications of nationalism, its vicious circle, and its ultimate dangers. In view of this, in the best interests of his country he ought to be an anti-nationalist. Very often, however, he is not. In certain cases he may not like to ventilate his views because he fears loss of prestige or unpopularity. In certain cases, on the other hand, he becomes a traitor; consciously or unconsciously he misrepresents facts, he forges facts, he gives them a false interpretation out of sheer vanity, fear of insecurity or love of power.

Nationalism among students belongs, in a way, to the same category. A student either through his own insufficiency, or through economic circumstances, may feel he is being defeated by the competitive economic system. He sees nationalism in terms of a job, the same way as an unemployed machine-operator, leather worker or axed officer does. In less progressive countries he is very often a member of what is



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known as the 'intellectual proletariat', and as such a strong supporter of political extremism of the Left or of the Right. Further contractions of the economic system in Western Europe might swell their numbers and force their views towards greater extremism.

Finally the parson. As a servant or as a commission agent of God, he ought to be an anti-nationalist by profession, and he has better opportunities to express his convictions than anybody in any other vocation except a writer. Even over the writer he has an automatic advantage. His audience is more ready-made than the writer's, and, before he acquires a prestige of his own, he can make excellent use of the already existing prestige of his Church. The prestige of his vocation and the prestige of Christianity both enable him splendidly to get away with strong anti-national convictions. Yet, the parson in our time is in almost exactly the same position as the socialist politician. He may play with supranational and pacifist convictions; in reality he is rendered as subservient to the nation-state and its interest as the socialist politician. If the socialist to-day is allowed to socialize the nation-state and nothing more, the parson is allowed to spiritualize the nation-state. If he goes further than that he gets into trouble, as parsons and priests in German concentration camps could testify. (Pastor Niemoeller was *not* a case in point. He was as rabid a German nationalist as any Nazi, and his prosecution by the Nazis came about because he and some other members of the German Evangelical Church fell out with the Nazis, *not* on nationalist grounds.) On the opposite side we find the parson who offers rat poison to German children.

Nationalism is universal, but the nationalism of each country is subject to variations. It is sometimes said that the nationalism of the backward countries is less strong than that of the countries of Europe. The explanation is that nationalism in the East is, generally speaking, in the same position as nationalism was in Europe at the time when the nation-state first appeared on the stage of history. The East to-day in

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varying degrees is still living in the pre-nationalist age. Nationalism thus is more or less confined to the ruling and to the educated class. This backwardness in a sense would be a highly desirable backwardness for the world at large, but it is not of a permanent character. Every sign to-day indicates that nationalism in the East is developing in much the same direction as it did in Europe.

Since nationalism is universal, and since its variations are subject to various conditions, I find it unnecessary to make a comparative survey of the nationalism of the various states of the world, especially those inhabited by the white man. What we find are not really differences, but variations on one basic theme: that is, certain instincts common to all men. In view of this one reads with some surprise the attempts at comparing the nationalisms of various countries — especially those of the white man. Bertrand Russell, in an exciting essay,<sup>1</sup> comparing British and American nationalism, observes that 'English patriotism like that of other Europeans belongs to the instinctive and subconscious part of human nature, in which we are little different from the brutes; American patriotism belongs to the intellectual, conscious, reasoning part which is more civilized but less compelling'. Russell hits on the truth in the words 'little different from the brutes', which means the social instinct common to man and to *certain* animals. However, this is no more typical of the English (and of other Europeans) than it is of Americans. The difference between English and American nationalism is really a variation, but this variation — the intellectual reasoning nature of American nationalism — is not an exclusive American characteristic. It can also be observed in French nationalism.

'This fundamental difference,' Russell goes on, 'because it is not understood, is a source of mutual irritation. Every European in America has been worried by the constant question, "How do you like America?"' To us, there is a sort of indecency

<sup>1</sup> BERTRAND RUSSELL: *British and American Nationalism* ('Horizon', January 1945).



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about the question, as if a man should say, "How do you like my wife?" . . . Now, it would be really impossible to discover any 'fundamental difference' in this respect between the nationalism of various countries and still less between Britain and America. The question, 'How do you like our country?' or 'What do you think of our country?' is really a stock question, almost a conversational opening in all countries under present civilization in general and in Britain in particular. It is not the least surprising that Russell has never been asked, in his own country, how he liked England. Foreigners, however, are often asked and, conversely, the English are often asked the same question in other European countries.

The materialist was wrong in many ways about nationalism, especially about its roots, its strength and its dynamism, and fundamentally wrong in assuming that it would quickly come to an end, yet he was right on one very significant point. It is the following: the instinct (social instinct, group instinct, fear, struggle) is an inherent human characteristic; nationalism is the form in which the instinct is expressed and is acquired as a result of various factors, mainly that of environment. From this it is clear that practically any nationality and any kind of nationalism can be produced synthetically. When I say 'practically' I am thinking of technical limitations. Earlier in this book I said that if a French or an Albanian child at the age of two or three is taken to England and brought up there, the child when he grows up not only could not help giving the impression of an English person, but would also feel like an Englishman. His nationalism would not be 'English' nationalism, because such a thing does not really exist, but the nationalism of the environment in which he was brought up and in which he lives. His foreign name and the political fact of his birth abroad might make certain differences; these, however, are technical limitations.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ALIEN CORN

#### (a) NATIONAL MINORITIES

THE expression 'national minority', is comparatively new to wide ranges of the public. Before the Peace Treaties of 1919 it was a term whose use was restricted to scholars and men learned in political science. After the Peace Treaties it made headlines. Most people learned that it was an important political problem presented by people living under an alien rule. From time to time newspapers mentioned the fact that there were about fifteen million such people in Europe, roughly three per cent of Europe's total population, and that there were no countries in the world without national minorities.

What is a national minority? The Peace Treaties, which were the first large-scale attempt ever undertaken to solve this problem, deliberately avoid the term 'national' minority for political reasons. They talk about 'racial, linguistic and religious' minorities. These three aspects are, as we know, not the whole of nationality, even though the first two, generally speaking, are often more important than any other. Therefore we shall have to find a definition as to what 'national' minorities are.

A foreigner or a group of foreigners living in a country are not national minorities. In polite parlance they are 'foreign visitors' or 'foreign residents'; in harsher official terms they are 'aliens'. A national minority must be a political member of the state: he must be a citizen. Thus a Greek or a German who is a naturalized British subject is, in theory, a national minority, but only in theory. In practice the problem of minorities only arises when there is a group of a certain size present. Thus, the forty thousand Lapps of Norway are a national minority.



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The issue of national minorities in Britain is partly obscured by a fact which is not always present abroad, namely that the 'subject races' almost completely adopted the language of their conquerors; yet the Welsh, the Scot and the Irish are national minorities in the most typical respects. They became minorities through conquest (and later by immigration). They were numerically small nations and they had been conquered and defeated by a more powerful nation. Nor did they at once share the political and economic liberties they are sharing now with the majority race. There was a period in history when their language was actually banned, and not so long ago they were openly regarded by the ruling race as inferiors. This attitude in our time on the part of the English seldom manifests itself openly and much of the minority nationalism in Britain is not stronger in effect than local patriotism, which in our time is the best solution of the problem. The fact that the problem in Britain has been more or less solved helps to obscure the issue.

The clearest case of national minority in Britain used to be the Irish. The attitude of the majority race towards the Irish showed the same incomprehension as that of other nations towards their national minorities. The rulers of Britain, like those of other countries, had come to regard the Irish as a kind of inferior English, and were slow to realize that the manifestations of their nationalism had taken precisely the same turns as those of other national minorities elsewhere. Nationalism spread by the intelligentsia, aspirations towards Home Rule, the threatening revolt in 1914, the successful revolt after the First World War, the partition of Ireland, dominion status, aspirations towards a united Ireland — these are all typical manifestations of minority nationalism.

In Britain, as in Western Europe in general, the issue of national minorities is little more than an issue of local patriotism. In Central or in Eastern Europe, however, the conditions are different, and national minorities constitute a serious problem.

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The Peace Treaties of 1919 were the largest scale attempt at the solution of the problem of national minorities. It was one made largely by force (plebiscites were seldom allowed), and it was claimed that no previous territorial repartition of Europe had ever given liberty to so many subject races. This statement, politically speaking, is entirely true, yet the settlement was a failure because the problem is only partly a political problem.

Let us take the case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which presented one of the greatest problems of national minorities. The old Monarchy, which came to an end in 1918, consisted of about fifty million inhabitants, of which twenty-five millions belonged to Austria and twenty-five millions to Hungary. Centuries of conquest and migration had made these two main areas of the Monarchy a fantastic patchwork of races, religions and language, in which thirteen million Austrians and twelve million Hungarians ruled over twenty-five million subject races.

The principle of national self-determination in President Wilson's mind did not mean the carving up of the Monarchy, and it is safe to say that, originally, the representatives of the Allies did not want this to happen either, because no matter how little they knew about economic factors, they realized that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a tolerably self-contained economic unit and that the dissolution of the structure would only aggravate the situation. What they originally had in mind was a new federal constitution in which all the composite races would enjoy equal rights.

This, however, did not happen. The war, so far as the Habsburg Monarchy was concerned, ended in national revolts of all the races and nations of which Austria and Hungary consisted. We do not know the precise extent to which these revolts were the consequence of the intensive Allied propaganda, but we do know that Allied propaganda used every means to hasten them. Apart from this, the spokesmen of the Slavonic races of the Dual Monarchy wanted complete separation from the Austrians and Hungarians. Another considera-



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tion was what later became known as the establishment of a *cordon sanitaire* against the U.S.S.R. As a result of these facts the Dual Monarchy was carved up at the Peace Conference, and from it emerged an independent Czechoslovakia, an enlarged Rumania and Italy, the major part of a united kingdom of southern (Jugo) Slavs, and the south-eastern section of an independent Poland. The two original partners, Austria and Hungary, were reduced to two tiny fragments. The idea of national self-determination, an idea which was somewhat out of date when it emerged in the nineteenth century, was used to all intents and purposes as a weapon against Germany and Russia.

Under such circumstances it soon became evident that the disruption of the Dual Monarchy brought neither happiness to the heirs of the Habsburgs, who had now all become prisoners to their own freedom, nor lasting security to the French. The intense nationalism of the elements of the Dual Monarchy which disrupted it, continued to be as intense as before. The almost complete disregard of the economic factor and the deliberate sacrifice of erroneous but generally accepted political principles, instead of solving an important problem had, between them, created an important cause for the Second World War.

The successors of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were, naturally, not satisfied with self-determination, that is with freedom and independence, which are abstract issues and as such have never fed hungry people—to mention only the most important and obvious problem. They yearned to be prosperous and they yearned to be strong. This, in the long run, proved impossible for them even at each other's expense.

Before the First World War the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a tolerably self-sufficient economic unit, and as such it worked so well that it was said that, like Voltaire's God, it ought to have been invented had it not existed before. Politically speaking, however, it was a most unhappy collection of races. Up to 1867 it was ruled by the Austrians, who then,

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unable to resist the demands of the Hungarians for an equal share in government, gave way, and from 1867 until 1918 it was ruled jointly, the Hungarians gaining more and more control over it. The other nationalities who made up half of the population of the Monarchy, were all the time frustrated in their aspirations towards equality, and so they constituted a large and burning problem of national minorities. Speaking generally it was a great injustice to render twenty-five millions of Rumanians, Serbs, Croats, Slavonians, Czechs, Slovaks and Ruthenians subject to twenty-five millions of Austrians and Hungarians.<sup>1</sup> The solution of the problem was, however, far from simple. The only intelligent solution would have been a federal constitution on the lines of Switzerland, which had often been suggested before. Such suggestions were sabotaged before the First World War by, among others, the Hungarian ruling class, and after the war by the spokesmen of the subject races. Instead of a federal solution, therefore, the Peace Treaties created six new states out of one; all weak, all infested with national minorities and full of a sense of revenge, or of fear of the others; and where there was neither fear nor revenge there was economic rivalry. The new frontiers could not be drawn on satisfactory ethnological lines because, for one thing, the national minorities formed large separate pockets and islands apart from large contiguous masses. Besides, ethnical frontiers would have meant either economically or militarily vulnerable frontiers, and in view of the fact that the settlement was made at the point of the gun, strong frontiers seemed important. The main principle was to separate Austria from Hungary and to prevent the restoration of the old frontiers. Needless to say the Peace Treaties were made entirely in favour of the former subject races. Their frontiers were drawn so as to make them less vulnerable to attack, and in such a way that the states of the former subject races could start life with economic advantages over their former masters. For these

<sup>1</sup> And the Hungarians who regained their freedom as recently as 1867 were for this very reason less enlightened rulers than the Austrians.



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two reasons they were given areas which were almost completely inhabited by Austrians or Hungarians. The result of the new frontiers of 1919 was a partial political solution and a complete economic muddle. That the frontiers were often so drawn that a town was separated from its railway station, a village from its church, a house from the estate, only mattered to an individual, a family or to a village community. The new arrangements, however, dislocated markets, deprived industrial districts of sources of raw materials, and men of their former livelihoods.

The newly created sovereign states naturally all wanted to be strong and prosperous, all wished to industrialize themselves, and so they surrounded themselves with high tariff walls. Harmony and co-operation between them was out of the question. Austrians and Hungarians had suffered a blow to their pride, and were deprived of much of their livelihood. They had no feeling of co-operative spirit towards their former subjects, and only reminded them from time to time that 'the hour would come'. This was at least the Hungarian attitude. The former subject races, on the other hand, realized that the hour would come the moment the force that maintained the artificial frontiers weakened. They therefore armed themselves to the teeth and tried to create national unity behind their frontiers. It was a difficult job, because instead of one large-scale political injustice as before 1918, all of them multiplied the same political injustice on smaller scales without the compensating advantage of belonging to a larger unit. They all had national minorities large enough to cause serious trouble. This would not have mattered if they could have improved the lot of their minorities, so that the minorities would have been left with no cause to be disloyal to the new country. Nationalism is a governable factor; poverty gives it a sting, prosperity removes its sting. Prosperity, however, was not available. They were all poor countries, none of them self-sufficient, and besides, memories of the injustices they had suffered from their former rulers, and fear of retribution, very seriously hampered

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all their efforts to find a sensible solution of an extremely difficult problem. The best treatment of national minorities was accorded by Czechoslovakia, yet neither the three and a half million Germans nor the million Hungarians were happy under the Czechs. When all is said and done, industrious, hard-working, and thrifty Czechoslovakia was comparatively poor, in spite of territorial gains, and could not improve her economic conditions in such a way that her minorities could forget the fact that they were under alien rule. At least, the majority of them could not. That the Home Rule promised by Benes at the Peace Conference was not accorded to the German minority was a serious matter; but more serious still was the fact that the same German minority was reduced to such poverty in democratic Czechoslovakia as was unknown in undemocratic Austria. These were, however, national minorities: the Slovaks were not. The Slovaks were supposed to be equal partners in the new republic. Owing partly to Hungarian oppression, partly to other causes, the Slovaks on the whole were a delightful, but fairly backward nationality, and the Czechs had a very difficult time with them. The Slovaks were unhappy under Hungarian rule, but in the course of the twenty years between 1918-38 they grew to hate their own kinsmen, the Czechs, almost as much. What they really would have liked, just as all nations in the world, would have been a strong and independent Slovak state. This was impossible, so the Slovaks went on in their uneasy partnership with the Czechs and indulged, like all races in a similar position, in blackmailing them. By the majority of well informed people in Western Europe between the two World Wars, Czechoslovakia came to be regarded as a highly democratic country. This belief was largely due to two causes: first Czechoslovakia was surrounded by dictatorships and near-dictatorships, and secondly she was created by one of the greatest democratic statesmen of our time, President Masaryk, whose influence over the state, however, began to wane soon after he became her first president. Under the spiritual guidance of Benes and others, Czechoslovakia, a



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country of high hopes, became something which is theoretically a contradiction in terms but not so in practice: a reactionary democracy, in which a tolerable democracy was enjoyed by the Czechs at the expense of the national minorities.

Czechoslovakia did not treat its national minorities harshly, but it could never solve the problem, and thus it was in the forms of the treatment of national minorities that there appeared great differences between the Czechs and the other Succession States of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Czech attitude towards the minorities was that of a reactionary democracy; the attitude of the Rumanians, the Poles and the Serbs, was, in varying degrees, that of a reactionary absolutism.

In those countries national minorities were definitely badly treated, apart from the most predatory use of the economic weapon against them in which Czechoslovakia also indulged. The preponderance of the ruling race (the Serbs in Yugoslavia and the Rumanians of the pre-war Rumanian kingdom in Transylvania and Bessarabia) over their own kinsmen was more predatory and more deeply felt than that of the Czechs over the Slovaks. The reasons were largely historical. All the non-Germanic elements of the Dual Monarchy had for long periods been oppressed races. There had, however, been a great difference between oppression by the Austrians as in the case of the Czechs, the Hungarians and some of the Poles, and oppression by the Turks of the Serbs and Rumanians. Austrian oppression allowed the emergence of fine national cultures and a comparatively high economic civilization in Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary. Turkish oppression only resulted in backwardness in Rumania and Serbia.

Austria soon reconciled herself to the loss of her former grandeur and never carried on any revisionist propaganda against any of her former subjects. She realized that she could not live alone and that resurrection of the old Empire was impossible. She therefore began to consider joining the German Reich which, under the circumstances, seemed the logical thing for her to do. The Allies knew from the very beginning that



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impoverished Austria would sooner or later be forced to come to this conclusion, and that union between Austria and Germany would greatly strengthen Germany. In the Peace Treaty, therefore, they forbade the formation of such a union. As the years went by and the division between the Allies grew more pronounced, Austria, in her desperate economic circumstances, was forced to blackmail the League of Nations for various kinds of financial assistance as a price for not concluding an Anschluss with Germany.

Hungary, on the other hand, was all the more revisionist. Her ruling oligarchy promoted an intensive propaganda abroad demanding 'Justice for Hungary'. Behind the highly dramatized and often ridiculous efforts of *irredenta*, there were genuine grievances against the Peace Treaties which could not have been buried, suppressed and forgotten, even if the Hungarian ruling class had carried out a democratic land reform, which was the country's most burning necessity. The ruling class often said that Rumania had in fact carried out an extensive land reform, yet standards of living were somewhat lower in Rumania than in Hungary. This lame excuse contained a good deal of truth. Land reform in Hungary was a shameful necessity, the realization of which would have improved conditions to a great extent. There was, however, no getting away from the fact that Hungary would still have remained a poor country and would still have felt she had a just grievance against her neighbours. The oligarchic Hungarian ruling class had greatly exaggerated the numbers of the Hungarian minorities in the Succession States and the treatment accorded to them. Their number, however, would have been still too large and the discrimination against them too strong, even for a Hungary living under high democratic standards to have been allowed to forget the issue.

The makers of the Peace Treaties of 1919, realizing that great crimes had been committed against national self-determination, drew up a few so-called 'minority treaties' to protect the interests of the national minorities handed over to the



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newly-created states. It was left to the League of Nations to see that the conditions of these treaties were fulfilled. The League, however, never attempted to administer the Minority Treaties. It would not have made much difference if the attempt had been made. Just plebiscites, frontier revisions and resettlements of nationals would have made the issue more tolerable for some individual minorities and would have been good examples of Geneva window-dressing, but would never have solved the issue. The issue of national minorities is the issue in miniature of the world. It can only be solved through federal principles, so that in the end it should become an issue of regionalism, a variation of local patriotism.

This, in plain English, means a kind of absorption. It is obvious that total absorption cannot take place because a national minority is, after all, a nation within a nation, not a small group. Small groups can be totally absorbed, nations cannot. Examples of the former are numerous; thus Britain totally absorbed her French Huguenot refugees; Sweden, France or Austria their Irish or Scottish mercenary soldiers; Rumania her Greek; and Hungary her Armenian settlers, simply because their number was not sufficiently large for them to form a nation.

What I mean by a 'kind of absorption' is the solution of the problem of national minorities in Western Europe. They still continue to be national minorities, but far more in theory than in practice. In practice they develop a loyalty towards the ruling race when they receive complete equality with the ruling race. The theoretical character of separation is clearly shown by the efforts for separation of tiny little groups on the part of each national minority in Western Europe. Strictly speaking, there is no national minority on earth, no matter how well treated in general, without some members who do wish to separate, for separation is the very essence of nationalism. The difference, however, is that in Central Europe these separatist movements are strong, whereas in Western Europe they hardly exist. But exist they do. There is a Breton group

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which aims at leaving French sovereignty, and there is a Scottish separatist movement which aims at the creation of an independent Scotland. Before the Second World War a group of Welsh separatists set fire to an R.A.F. aerodrome in Wales, and the members of the group at the subsequent trial refused to speak English though they were bi-lingual Welshmen. These Tooley Street affairs vividly show that the issue still exists 'in traces' as a chemist would say.

Absorption has an amazing aspect when it comes to individuals or to small groups, namely that it can also work in intermediate directions. This means that members of the ruling race can become *de facto* national minorities through long continued residence among, and intermarriage with, national minorities. In a so-called 'un-national' state like Britain, this is an everyday occurrence. A fair number of people of pure English stock after a residence of not more than two generations mysteriously become Welsh or Scottish and claim to be such. But this is also frequent in countries where the minorities are minorities in more than theory, and where the problem has become a burning reality. Patriotic Hungarians regarded it as high treason when a number of people who, according to their descent as recorded in birth certificates were pure Hungarians, claimed to be Rumanians, Slovaks and Serbs long before 1918; that is, while they were still living under Hungarian sovereignty, and when it was, if anything, a handicap to be a national minority.

### (b) THE JEW

The Jewish problem is in one respect a unique, and in another a typical problem of nationalism. It is unique in that the Jews are the only nation of important size in the world today who have no country of their own; who, in other words, do not form an independent sovereign state. They are a nation, moreover, which is not living under the sovereignty of one single nation-state like the Uzbeks, the Basques or the Welsh;



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or under two, or three nation-states, like the Germans or the Hungarians, but under the sovereignty of practically all nation-states of the world. About half the grand total of sixteen million Jews at present live in the United States, in the U.S.S.R., in Poland and in Rumania, and the remainder in the other countries of the world.

The Jew is a typical problem of nationalism, because, when all is said and done, he creates a problem of national minorities. That the Jews have been a national minority for a longer period of time than any other national minority, and that they are an *international* national minority makes the case an unusual but nevertheless a characteristic one. There are many factors which help to confuse or to blur the issue of the Jews as a national minority. In certain countries the Jews are a national minority in language, in religion, in race; in most countries, however, they have adopted the language of the state and, in many instances, have even left their own religion. Another factor which confuses the issue is that in certain countries the Jews are officially regarded as a national minority (e.g. in Rumania), but in the overwhelming majority of countries they are not officially regarded as a national minority. This lack of official recognition, however, does not alter the issue one iota. The expression 'national minority' is, after all, a technical term like 'appendicitis' or 'undercarriage', employed to make scientific thinking and exchange of views easier. Many an Englishman, for example, does not realize that the Jews are a national minority in England whether they are so regarded by the British Constitution or not. He knows that Cohen is a British subject by birth; he thinks it is fair that Cohen should have a vote, should have the right to carry on business, to draw the old age pension; he nevertheless does not consider Cohen an Englishman. This is not anti-semitism (though anti-semitism is essentially based on this fundamental attitude that the Jew is different); it is in fact the most civilized attitude available towards a national minority. The Englishman in question may not pronounce the word 'race' when he says or

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thinks that Cohen is 'different', but 'race' is definitely the word at the back of his mind, usually quite unconsciously. He knows it is not a religious issue, because if Cohen were to marry an English girl who on marriage left the Christian Church for the Jewish faith, he would still continue to regard Cohen's wife as English. And he also knows that Cohen is a British citizen by law.

This is the attitude of civilized and intelligent people towards Jews in general all over the world, and this attitude in its fundamentals is not different from that of the uncivilized and the unintelligent. The latter merely builds an edifice on these fundamentals: he draws conclusions, evolves theories, usually because he discovers that nationalism (of which anti-semitism is just one conspicuous example) is a paying proposition, at least in the short run.

We said that the Jewish problem is a problem of nationalism, and the same would apply to anti-semitism, which, generally speaking, is merely an example of race hatred or race-aversion. Anti-semitism, however, apart from the differences which I mentioned earlier in this chapter, has additional bases, and in this it is quite unique. One of these bases is that the teaching of Christianity on the whole is not favourable to Jews, and Christian teaching still remains an early influence on the mind. From the Old Testament the Jews emerge as a great race. We have been taught that Jesus was a Jew, but at the same time there is a strong emphasis on the part played by Jews in the crucifixion, which, it seems to me, on balance gives an unfavourable impression of Jewry as a whole, and, in Roman Catholic countries at least, it is an additional basis for anti-semitism. This additional source of anti-semitism is, of course, not present in non-Christian countries (such as the Arab world, where anti-semitism is based on more typical foundations of nationalism).

Needless to say, the attitude described as civilized is very often faked. There are many rabid anti-semites among those who, by implication, profess a civilized and enlightened attitude. Insincerity after all is an art which can be carried to a



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pitch of sinister perfection, and it is extremely difficult to discover anti-semitic attitudes in a man who always refrains from committing himself and exploits the standard formula: 'I'm afraid I don't know Jews.'

What renders the problem additionally difficult is that the Jew is the only international national minority. It is this, incidentally, which makes them a nation. As so often happens when we are dealing with nationalism, we are confronted with a vicious circle. The Jewish problem is one of the biggest vicious circles of nationalism, and it cannot be solved separately from the solution of the problem of nationalism. It is the fact that they are regarded as a separate race which makes Jews conscious of being a nation, and it is their being a nation that makes it impossible for them to be completely absorbed into the nation-state of which they happen to be political members. Individually, of course, there are exceptions. Individual Jews often undergo the same process as other newcomers to a country. They give up their religion and their Jewish culture, they intermarry with the natives, and in two generations they completely disappear. This is more than 'assimilation' or 'absorption' (which, according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, are one and the same thing). This is a process for which *disappearance* is the only possible word. There are many people who quite genuinely do not know that they possess Jewish ancestry, and there are many such people who may become rabid anti-semites (whose anti-semitism thus cannot be explained by attributing it to consciousness of their Jewish blood producing an inferiority complex. Their anti-semitism is based on a different foundation. This 'disappearance trick', incidentally, has often been exploited by authors of novels, plays and film scenarios). *Disappearance*, however, is less frequent among Jews than among other national minorities. Their national coherence is stronger than that of other nations, for which there are strong historical reasons too well known to merit further discussion; consequently, resistance against 'disappearance' is also stronger than in other national minorities. This

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coherence, among other things, may explain why it is easier to 'spot' Jews in a community. Some people think Jews are a purer race than others because they have kept apart and married among themselves for long centuries, and that long continued isolation is the cause of the high frequency of Jewish body features among them. If we substitute 'culture' for 'race', such an opinion, to a certain extent, may be justified on historical grounds. For undoubtedly there are patterns of Jewish behaviour: some very pleasant, others highly unpleasant; and there is a high frequency of Jewish facial feature among Jews. The tricks which these play are at times tragicomic; thus a tall, fair, straight-nosed, straight-haired person can still look typically Jewish, and conversely, a short, dark, fuzzy-haired, hook-nosed man can still appear very Gentile.

Jewishness, however, just like Englishness or Frenchness, is not confined solely to looks or body features, body movements or vocal reflexes. It is also a pattern of behaviour, and this, as I argued in an earlier chapter, is overwhelmingly a question of upbringing and early influences. What applies in theory to an Albanian boy being brought up from early childhood in Yorkshire, would apply in theory to a Jewish boy being brought up in exclusively Gentile surroundings. Later in life he might come to look excessively Jewish, but it is hardly likely that it would be his Jewish ancestry which would determine his pattern of behaviour. What might strongly determine it, of course, would be his discovery of being a Jew by birth, i.e. not an ordinary foreigner, and/or the discovery of this fact by others. It is on this point that we might well ask the question in general: What is a Jew? And for that matter: What is a Gentile, a Chinese and a Negro? From the standpoint of nationalism the answer is childishly simple. A Jew is a person who gives the impression of being a Jew. In practice this is the only basis of nationality.

The Jewish religion is Monotheism, that is, belief in one single universal God, which fundamental tenet is maintained by its



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two offshoots, Christianity and Mohammedanism. Its history, however, was very different from that of its offshoots. Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Mohammedanism became universal because they were adopted by nations with countries of their own. Judaism could not become universal because 'the Second Coming' of the Messiah who would give his people a state could offer no attraction to nations who already possessed a country. That is the reason, on the other hand, why Jews could not possibly accept Christianity, and kept apart, turning their original 'state' religion into a 'national' religion. This national (political) character of Judaism is still very strong. It is full of the symbols and anniversaries of Jewish history, which symbols and anniversaries, ironically enough, are celebrated all over Christendom under various disguises. Thus, the Jewish *Purim* is celebrated as Nativity (Christmas), and the Great Fast (Jom Kippur, in commemoration of the Destruction of the Temple) as Good Friday.

When the Jewish nation was dispersed this national religion developed into a collective religion and determined the Jewish attitude of Jews all over the world. This attitude was a collective life, a 'nation within the nation', which individuals or small groups of individuals from time to time abandoned, thus disappearing in the larger nation. This sense of Jewish collectivity (solidarity), augmented by the hostility of the ruling nation (which was partly provoked by Jewish solidarity), was always sufficiently strong to maintain the Jewish nation. This is the essence of the Jew being a national minority, and the history of the Jews in its main outlines is, necessarily, reminiscent of the history of other national minorities.

Jews differ from other national minorities in that they are an international national minority, and that, unlike some national minorities, they were neither aborigines of the country they live in, like the Welsh or the Slovaks, nor had they lived in the country as long as other national minorities — like the Germans in Transylvania. It was these two historical differences which were largely responsible for the Ghetto; that is, official segre-



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gation, which in different forms still continues under our present civilization all over the world. The old Ghetto, which to *some* intents and *some* purposes came to an end in the course of the nineteenth century, was a prison. The Jew was officially regarded as an alien and had to conform to certain contemporary 'aliens' regulations'. This official status, however, automatically gave the Jew two important compensations. Because he was an alien nobody expected him to be a member of the state he lived in. He could, therefore, live his life as a Jew very nearly to the full, and the Ghetto also gave him a moral independence.<sup>1</sup> When the Ghetto was officially abolished, and the Jew became a political member of the state in which the Ghetto stood, he lost these two compensations. He could no longer live his life as a Jew to the full and he no longer possessed the moral independence the Ghetto gave him. There came about that strange dual loyalty in which many Jews in the contemporary world find themselves: loyalty to Jewry and loyalty to the nation-state in which they live. This is an unhappy problem which few of them can solve. In other words, it means that most Jews in the world still live in a Ghetto: in a Ghetto, however, which is spiritual. They were released from the old Ghetto and were promised equality in return for complete moral surrender. Most of them paid the price of moral surrender but did not get full equality.

It is very natural that under the circumstances the vicious circle can only be broken if there is a Jewish nation-state. This idea became very prominent in the nineteenth century — the century which was responsible for the ideology of the nation-state — and Dr. Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, whose activities were actuated by the Dreyfus case (1895), had many forerunners. Zionism, the movement for an independent sovereign Jewish state, is as actual to-day as it was in the nineteenth century. People of advanced thought argue that the

<sup>1</sup> These arguments are well developed in detail in a Chatham House publication called *Nationalism* (Oxford Un. Pr., 1939), an excellent standard work on nationalism in general.



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nation-state is a dangerous anachronism which ought to be abolished. This is true, but the nation-state still persists. Under the circumstances, therefore, why should the only nation on earth to-day without a state be denied a sovereign independent nation-state?

In spite of the stronger racial, or cultural, cohesion or solidarity among Jews than among members of other nations, there is no justification for talk about Jewish 'national character', any more than about the 'national character' of other nations. All we can talk about is patterns of behaviour within national groups, or about the comparative frequency of certain characteristic traits. Of these patterns of behaviour among Jews I am here solely concerned with their attitude towards nationalism. My own personal observations in various European countries seem to indicate three main patterns of Jewish behaviour in this respect. Reading the following it will be observed that these categories in certain respects do not correspond to similar categories into which non-Jews can be classified.

1. There are many people to-day all over the world who realize that the nation-state, with its rigid frontiers and inherent prejudices, defeats itself in the end because it sets formidable limits to human activities and cramps the human mind. The frequency of this universalist, pacifist, federalist attitude or ideology is very high among Jews for obvious reasons. Such Jews, who perhaps look on themselves as the ancestors of the unnationalist man of a desirable and possible future, are often willing to make, and at times do succeed in making, splendid contributions to the cause of a united world. These Jews are not necessarily the great Jews — like Marx, Bergson, Einstein and Freud — who by implication have done more towards the unification of mankind than any other quadrumvirate of philosophers of any race at any given period of history. These Jews are not necessarily even the minor prophets of a united world; men like Zamenhof who during the romantic period of internationalism tried to cut the vicious circle of nationalism by inventing a universal language which he called 'Hope'

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(Esperanto). They are just Jews who, prompted by a twenty centuries' old process, try to work for a united world. They may be people of humble station and of humble individual achievement: little Jewish intellectuals or semi-intellectuals; an ill-paid school-teacher in Paris, Manchester or Brooklyn; a humble librarian in Bucharest, in Leeds, in Montevideo. The type naturally exists among non-Jews, too, but how much more intensely, unselfishly and patiently this type of Jew — undoubtedly the finest Jew on earth — works for a universal world than his Gentile equivalent.

2. The Jewish nationalist. If it were true that the Jews were the first race known in history which regarded themselves as 'The Chosen Race' and started a fatal nationalist ideology, anti-semitism would be fully justified. The 'Chosen Race' theory, however, is older than the Jews, and as likely as not older than written history. A certain section of Jews, however, have always provoked and will always provoke anti-semitism as a natural reaction to their impatient, unpleasant and exaggerated chauvinism. The trouble always is that the unthinking (and in this respect most people are unthinking) associate the Jewish chauvinist with the whole of Jewry. It is precisely this type of anti-semitism which an independent Jewish state would solve. If such a state is once formed it would inevitably result in a split in world Jewry. Provided it really fulfils the aspirations of those who work for it, a large section of world Jewry — especially from Eastern Europe — would emigrate there, whereas those who do not wish to regard themselves as Jews might then stand a better chance of being absorbed by the nation-state whose allegiance they claim. In fact, there is much probability that in a few generations many Jews would then 'disappear' in the body of the nation in which they live, as other descendants of foreign immigrants do.

3. Finally, there is the Jew who, in Western Europe and in America, makes up perhaps the most frequent general pattern of Jewish behaviour, namely the Jew who does not wish to regard himself a Jew, who wishes to be absorbed in the nation-



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state in which he lives. Nationality, however, is a two-sided affair, a contract between the nation (not the state) and the citizen, and it needs acceptance by both parties. Thus, it is not enough for a citizen to wish to be an Englishman, the nation also must accept him; the nation, I repeat, not the state (acceptance by the state merely results in an official document which might or might not be regarded as a 'scrap of paper' by the nation). Conversely, it is not enough for the nation to regard someone as an Englishman, if he does not wish to regard himself as such. The nation has enormous direct and indirect emotional, legal and material forces at its disposal to keep John Smith within its membership, and yet John Smith, if he wished to (and if he is in a position to do so; this is very important), can sever his contact with the nation. It is this bilateral character of nationality that turns the Jew in the final analysis into a national minority: a national minority well treated in Western Europe and in the new world, and a national minority less well treated in Central Europe, but a national minority all the same. This duality forced on Jews the two first mentioned patterns of behaviour, and it is forcing on them the third: to do their best to be accepted as full members of the nation. It is an uneasy, unhappy aspiration. The Jew knows that he is not really succeeding; he knows, furthermore, that he is looked on not as an ordinary foreigner, but as a special kind of foreigner, and this causes a problem which is very difficult for him to solve. One attempt at solution is resignation, the second is cynicism, the third is a sense of humour and the fourth is callousness. These, however, are not available for every Jew and not invariably available for many. So it is that many Jews pretend not to be Jews, others are forced into an attitude of false pride in proclaiming themselves Jews (while they wish to have nothing to do with Zionism). Still others try to find compensation for their genuine and imagined grievances, and the fulfilment of this wish for compensation on the part of the frustrated Jew is one of the most powerful sources of anti-semitism. This wish for compensation can become a driving

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force to achieve wealth and social prominence, and the road to such achievements is paved with the stuff anti-semitism is made of, just the same as the result of the wish for compensation which takes the form of revenge. Some people think that this revenge motive is strong among those Jews who engage in anti-social activities such as the black market. Finally the odd situation of imperfect assimilation leads certain Jews to exhibit the worst type of loud nationalism of the state of which they are citizens. The 'Ve British' Jew is not confined to Britain; he is a familiar type in every country. Some people laugh at him, others hold him in the worst contempt, and it is very difficult to decide which of the two reactions is justified. Such a Jew may simply lack a sense of proportion. He may think a nationalistic attitude is expected of him, in fact a strong one because he is a Jew. On the other hand his may be a case of the pitiful zeal of the convert who often is more royalist than the king. Finally it can be the same contemptible impulse which leads so many people — Jews and Gentiles alike — to exaggerated nationalism, because they find that nationalism pays. At least, in the short run.



## CHAPTER VI

### BEHIND THE SCENES

MAN is a social animal, who instinctively organizes himself into groups, like certain (but by no means all) animals. This instinct is part of the fundamental and irreducible 'condition of man'. Community life, group life is the only form of existence for him. Some call it the 'gregarious' instinct, or social instinct; others think it is merely a variation of another instinct, namely fear, or, in other words, the instinct of struggle. Living in the nation-state is a form of group life; it is, however, an incomplete group life because the group proper is the whole of mankind: the *civitas maxima*. Man can only satisfy his gregarious instinct to the full, and consequently prosper to the full and develop his personality, if the unit in which he lives is the whole world. There are only two final and irreducible units: the individual and the whole world. All others, such as family, tribe, nation, are intermediate units and, as such, are neither final nor irreducible.

Human history in this respect seems to be the record of the gradual integration of mankind. Tendencies and developments towards integration in the past have been so marked, though not regular, that we are quite safe to conclude that this tendency is a historic law. Therefore, in this sense, there definitely is progress, and the same tendency is likely to rule the future. History, on the other hand, is also a record of man's resistance to integration; a losing battle.

Nations or nation-states cannot be described as artificial, though artificial elements play a very important part in them; they can, however, be described as largely accidental structures. They are the results of the social instinct in man, though the social instinct never told men to form themselves into nations, and still less did instinct suggest how big the nation should be and how large the area it ought to occupy. The nations, as

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territorial units, came about largely through geographical or geological facts and incidents. Their size was limited by the sea, a high mountain or extremities of climate. These limitations are known as natural frontiers. The naturalness of frontiers is, however, gradually being neutralized by certain material aspects of civilization (in other words, man's conquest over nature), which also brought about the interdependence of one nation upon the other. Accordingly, to-day, the highest existing form of integration, the nation-state, is attacked by the facts of life. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the nation-state, as such, is fighting a losing battle against the facts of life, and the conditions in our time in this respect are very similar to the conditions of those times when nations came into existence. And life under such conditions is necessarily hard and unpleasant, not to say agonizing. Birth as a biological process is not without the agony of birth pangs.

Man as a matter of fact often realizes in our time the need for further integration because to varying degrees he recognizes the facts of life and the trends of history. He realizes that the nation-state is accidental and he feels that there are only two final and natural irreducible units: the individual and the whole world. The realization of these truths, however, might endanger the very existence of the nation-state in which he lives. The nation-state, therefore, interferes in order to maintain or strengthen itself by trying to bring about national unity. This, as such, is a retrogressive step and we might even go as far as to call the nation-state a reactionary anachronism. But the issue is not so very simple. For one thing it is perfectly true that a number of individuals, i.e. the ruling class, which to all intents and purposes means the state, have a vested interest in maintaining the unity of the nation. This intention by itself would not be enough for the purpose. The majority of the members of every nation insist on maintaining the unity of the nation because they themselves feel they have a vested interest in it. This insistence in fact is so strong that a ruling class with an internationalist programme would hardly be tolerated.



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From this two things are at once clear. The first is that governments and ruling classes are not really free agents, no matter how powerful they may be, but a group which is permanently tied by a rope to contemporary political forces. The length of this rope varies, but it is never long enough to allow much manipulation or manœuvring on the part of the ruling class. The second is that, from the point of view of national cohesion, there is no difference between political systems, such as democracy and dictatorship, because both must rest on popular support or on popular consent. Tyranny is a very relative and very elastic word, and as a political fact it has strong limitations. To state one obvious fact: only a comparatively small number of people can be put into concentration camps. It has often been said as a retort to such an argument that the whole of Germany was in fact (and Russia is) a huge concentration camp. There is, indeed, a great deal of truth in this saying, although not in particular reference to Germany and Russia. To a certain extent every single nation-state is a concentration camp, and to a certain degree every single nation-state is a dictatorship. This degree is extremely difficult to define precisely, because quite frankly we do not know where democracy really ends and dictatorship really begins. Some experts put this degree of difference high, others put it somewhat lower. That a great degree of difference does exist is plain and obvious to everybody, but it is easier to assert this than to define it. The truth — at least one aspect of it — seems to be easier to find in that roughshod generalization often offered by quite uneducated individuals, who instinctively feel that 'money' is at the bottom of democracy. This generalization, however, needs a good deal of paraphrasing. It certainly is a common observation that wealthy countries are, generally speaking, more democratic than poor countries. It would not be true to say, however, that if a democratic country suddenly got into low water it would at once lend itself to a dictatorship. It would not be true, because the country in question would have memories of certain political institutions brought about by

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wealth and experience of certain ways in which things were done. These memories are commonly known as tradition. From this it seems to follow that democratic institutions without wealth and a tradition of democracy are on a very shaky basis. The fate of the Weimar republic in Germany appears to illustrate this quite clearly, though a close study of any country in Central or of Eastern Europe would reveal the same truth.

Following this argument we can attempt to describe democracy — at least from the point of view of national unity — as a dictatorship characterized by the moderate use (or abuse) of force, because for reasons connected with wealth even moderation can maintain national unity to satisfaction.

This very rough generalization, however, is one which shows an intimate connection between democracy and capitalism, which are really contradictory to each other. At least in theory democracy is impossible under capitalism; in practice, however, the issue is different. In a country where there is enough wealth to gloss over, to offset, to counterbalance, the essential contradiction between capitalism and democracy, there can be democracy in practice. A non-capitalist, and therefore universally valid, definition of democracy would be an even more difficult job, beyond the beautiful but somewhat vague Lincolnian phrase: 'Government of the people, for the people, by the people.' The two questions that in this connection immediately jump to mind are: 'Who are the people?' and 'What people?' The first is comparatively easy to answer; the second, however, happens to reveal the greatest problem of our time. Lincoln was an American, and generally speaking there would be very little disagreement over the fact that it is a good thing to be an American (or an Englishman or a Russian); the problem is for *whom* is it good to be an American (or an Englishman or a Russian)?

From our generalization that to a certain extent every nation-state is a dictatorship, a concentration camp or a prison, some people may conclude that the majority of public opinion to-day



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in every country seems to favour this dictatorship, concentration camp or prison, simply because it knows no better. It would be perhaps nearer to the truth to say that because it knows no better, majority public opinion in the world to-day wishes to have things both ways. People who express majority public opinion wish to prosper, to be happy, to live their lives out to the full; in other words, they wish for democracy. They, however, do not seem to realize the essential conditions for the fulfilment of this aim.

The necessary condition for democracy is the integration of the whole world.

Some people no doubt realize this condition but are unwilling to pay the price; the price of democracy (or if preferred: the price of peace). And it is on this point that people knowingly or unknowingly begin to insist on having things both ways. This insistence in the political sense results to-day in 'socialism in our time', which thus means *national* socialism in our time.

In another chapter we shall attempt to discuss the question of who is responsible for this anarchic condition in which the world to-day finds itself, which in turn results in the absence of peace. Here, we shall continue the survey of the problem of national unity. We have already said that the difference between democracy and dictatorship is a difference of degree, and not of clear, sharp, contrasting opposites. The means and the forms of government are basically similar in every state; the difference is in the use of these means. A dictatorship in a way is nothing more than a form of national government in a country where, for various reasons, there was not enough national unity or spontaneous cohesion available, and where a good deal of political freedom had to be sacrificed in the national interest by forceful means. The emphasis is on the words 'good deal'; *all* political freedom indeed cannot be taken away from people even with the strongest system of Gestapo or Ogpu. If the worst comes to the worst, no dictatorship could really prevent a revolution, which conclusively shows that a



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dictatorship has to rest on public opinion to the same extent as a democracy. There is, however, another aspect which reveals an even closer identity between democracy and dictatorship, namely that blind obedience to the state, or to the rulers of the state, is not enough. The state must generate a great measure of enthusiasm towards itself, whether it is a democratic state or a dictatorship. The state achieves this essential through two means, both of equal importance. First it must confer material benefits on the citizen, and second it must have an ideology.

In this chapter we are dealing with the second essential: the ideology and the means through which the state expresses and inculcates its ideology to the members of the nation.

In the cultural sphere the principal agent of national unity, or of the national ideology, is education. Before the advent of totalitarian dictatorships private schools flourished in every country, and universities, in particular, everywhere enjoyed a degree of autonomy. In the final analysis, however, education is in the hands of the state in every country, which does not mean that the state need actively control all schools in the land. A negative control is enough because no state would tolerate instruction contrary to the national spirit. In fact, the state everywhere insists that instruction should be given in the national spirit, and it is largely the state which decides what the national spirit is.

The fostering of nationalism through education is achieved everywhere by the same means. History and geography are taught from a strictly national point of view, directly and indirectly: directly through emphasis on the national interest, the result of which is that the Fatherland emerges as the finest country on earth, and indirectly by teaching history and geography at the expense of world history and world geography. Literature is another subject through which the doctrine of national character is inculcated.

These are the main school subjects through which nationalism can be fostered by direct and indirect means, but it can be injected into any other subject of the school curriculum.



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It is an interesting fact that the emphasis on patriotic education appeared in countries at a time when the need for the further integration of the world became manifest, at a time when (perhaps more in theory than in practice) Lisbon and Peking and Liverpool and Reykjavik became each other's neighbours, and when many superficial differences between nations were beginning to disappear; in short, when the world was beginning to shrink. It is a tempting conclusion to reach that instruction on nationalist lines was everywhere the outcome of the growing fear in the state, or in those who rule the state, that national differences in the end might eventually be reduced to those small differences dictated by the geographical and climatic factor. It was during this period that nationalists in every country began to cultivate the romantic aspects of separatism in order to emphasize national differences. They did this either by reviving or popularizing half-forgotten native customs, such as native dresses<sup>1</sup>, or by artificially creating new differences. An example of the latter is the tendency to nationalize the language. At the very time when Zamenhof made an attempt to cut the vicious circle of nationalism by creating and propagating an international language, Esperanto, the nationalist everywhere did his best to weed out of the mother tongue all foreign and therefore, automatically, evil influences. In Central and Eastern Europe, societies were formed with government subsidies for nationalizing the language. The movements for the Germanization of the German, and for the Magyarization of the Hungarian language were particularly strong. The movement was strong also in Czarist Russia in spite of her pan-Slavonic international aspirations. In Germany and Hungary not only were prizes offered to find a true native expression for new words such as 'auto' and 'radio', but words that had already been in use for a generation were officially discouraged. Thus 'orange' in Germany became

<sup>1</sup> The kilt in Scotland was neither general nor fashionable until Queen Victoria's visit to the Highlands, which, of course, does not mean that it was not worn before or that she put it on the map. The Queen's visit coincided with the period when native dresses were revived all over Europe.



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*Apfelsie*, 'station' became *Bahnhof*, and 'telephone' *Fernsprecher*. Some of these new and 'truly' German expressions stuck, because they were short, concise or melodious; some, however, were so patently ridiculous and cumbersome that no amount of official backing could domesticate them.

In France and Britain the nationalist concentrated himself on preserving the traditions of the language. In France this was done officially, in Britain through private enterprise. The Académie Française has a large committee to decide what words are French and what are not, and there is a good deal of truth in the French witticism that in France grammar and syntax are regulated by government decree. In Britain the maintenance of the traditions of the English language — by unofficial bodies and busybodies — mostly means protests against Americanisms.

School education is not the only agent of nationalist propaganda, but it is the most powerful one because it is general, because school attendance up to a certain age in every country is compulsory by law, and because it catches the individual at an impressionable age. The other means are the newspaper and the radio. Both of these are under state supervision even in the most democratic country, and the freedom of the Press from the point of view of national interest is an illusion. Democratic Britain banned the *Daily Worker* when the government decided it was disseminating anti-British propaganda, and any American broadcasting station would have been closed down the moment the American authorities had decided that it was emitting anti-American propaganda.

Control of the Press and radio, in democracies at least, is merely a feature of conditions of national emergency (war). In peacetime most newspapers foster nationalist propaganda for other reasons. One of these is the service of powerful private interests under the cloak of national interest; another is economic. Newspapers, and authors of books — just like politicians — realize the potentialities of the already existing nationalism and cash in on it. A good deal of the newspaper's



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popularity rests on the fact that the condition of man under our civilization is frustration in search of individual personality. In this respect the number of the unsuccessful is legion, and by constantly playing on the motif of the collective personality, the nation, the newspaper supplies a certain amount of compensation. In other words, the popular newspaper encourages the more gullible reader to live at second hand, by inviting him to share in the prestige and the power of the nation. A successful man with a strong and well-developed personality naturally rejects such offers of second-hand living, but the number of such people is small.

Nationalism can become a drug in the same way as religion can become one. Artificial fostering, however, can render nationalism a dangerous drug, and if one feels bitter about this subject — as the more old-fashioned materialist invariably does — we might go as far as to say that, while in the old days it was the priest who doped and misled the public, to-day it is the state which peddles dangerous drugs at a handsome profit.

The argument against the old-fashioned materialist is no longer the line that 'supply is impossible without demand', but the fact that drugs are to a certain extent necessary, and that they are not always habit-forming. Nationalism, as such, can be a good cure for certain ills, even though its myth, its mystery, are less deep than those of religion. It, however, can also produce the same maniacs as religion, and it gives the same satisfaction. It assures the believer comfort and emotional compensation on condition that none of the dogmas may be questioned. Granted that condition, the nation can become a substitute for God and nationalism a substitute for religion, but only then. A little scepticism is enough to do irreparable damage.

The very moment war is threatened the Government Stationery Offices in every country begin to print the forms and literature necessary for organized hate. Among these, every one of them prints the letter of sympathy from the head

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of the state to be sent to the next of kin of the glorious dead. The text of these communications is shockingly similar whether they bear the signature of Roosevelt, Mussolini, Kalinin, George VI or Hitler. The majority of the recipients are deeply touched reading these certificates of sympathy, and few of them would in the first moment think that they were printed well in advance along with ration books and leave passes, that Hitler is sending the same message as Roosevelt, and that the head of the state in question cannot possibly know much about the individual glorious dead. Such scepticism would at once damage the compensatory element of faith in the same way as if the man about to depart this world reflected, while the priest is busy administering the Last Sacrament, that the oil used for the purpose comes from a wholesaler and costs three and fourpence a pound.

The old-fashioned materialist — within limits — is right when he talks about dope, and he might be right comparing the priest with the state. The state, however, has to go much further than the priest. It has to promise far more than the immortality of the soul. The state has to promise old age pension and, what is more, has to pay it every week.

Because the difference between dictatorship and democracy is in the difference in the extent of force and not in force itself, or in the purposes for which force is used, it is obvious that the means of achieving national unity by political propaganda are also identical. Propaganda is merely an activity to influence human behaviour: to induce people to love their fellow men, or to refrain from committing adultery, to buy a certain brand of underwear or toothpaste, to vote socialist or republican and, finally, to unite for a common cause which is served by the nation-state. Since the aim is to influence man's behaviour to do something or to refrain from doing something, it is obvious that all propaganda that aims at being efficient must follow the same method, namely it has to play on certain strings in man's mind. These strings are the so-called 'basic instincts' of be-



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haviour, which Pavlov calls 'absolute reflexes', such as fear, hunger, sex and so on. Propaganda is a means of conditioning these absolute reflexes, which are common to men and animals alike. For a dog it is a basic instinct (i.e. an 'absolute reflex') to salivate at the sight of appetizing food, and if the conception of appetizing food is associated in the dog's mind with another sensory impression (the ringing of a bell was Pavlov's classic experiment), the dog after a time would salivate at the mere ringing of the bell, even if there is no food offered to him. This phenomenon is called the 'conditioned reflex' and it is done by constant repetition of the conditional sensory impression (bell-ringing). Constant repetition is the most important feature of propaganda.

Efficient and successful propaganda, therefore, is an activity in the field of collective, objective psychology, which latter (as contrasted with subjective, individual psychology) is recognized as a science (to which Pavlov, Coutrot and Chakotin are the best-known contributors). Propaganda, in other words, is a scientific activity.

Hitler and the Nazis gave proof of a considerable scientific skill in their achievements on the field of propaganda. It is immaterial what purposes their propaganda served. The point is that their propaganda was successful simply because they drew the correct conclusions about the basic instincts of man and of how to make an appeal to these instincts.

As a contrast to the propaganda methods of the Nazis, and for that matter that of the nation-state in trying to achieve national unity, the socialists lost the battle all along the line as long as they stuck to genuine socialism — that is, international socialism. It has sometimes been said that a good deal of socialist propaganda was dull and doctrinaire. This is partly true, but not relevant. The truth is that genuine international socialism could not make a successful bid to public appeal because it could not successfully condition the absolute reflexes in man. In plain English, it could offer no myth like Christianity or the nation could. The Red Flag has not the same

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emotional appeal to the masses as any of the national flags<sup>1</sup>, the Internationale cannot stir the masses as successfully as National Anthems can. Socialism can only succeed when it propagates socialism in connection with the nation-state, and when it invokes its powerful array of national myths. This, however, means for socialism a repudiation of its essential condition, its substance (internationalism). Once again we arrive at 'Socialism in our time'.

<sup>1</sup> 'National' flags as such are comparatively new. Before the eighteenth century most countries used royal standards. National Anthems are also mostly post-eighteenth century. Dr. Bull's 'God Save the King' is one of the oldest in Europe.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE BEST PEOPLE

THE crisis in our civilization of which the Second World War is a mere symptom is caused, according to the finest minds of our time, by the revolution of the masses. In order to understand the fundamental facts of the revolution we must first try to define what the masses are. The mass-man is an individual, who is often called 'the ordinary man', 'the average man', the 'man in the street' or, more recently, 'the common man'. These expressions are polite alternatives to the word 'mass-man', just as 'watering the horses' or 'seeing about a dog' means 'going to the lavatory'. The word 'mass-man' is in disfavour, and the adoption of code language to describe a social fact seems to prove my personal definition of democracy in our time as 'capitalism with apologies'. The word 'mass-man' is tabooed by those who like to regard themselves as progressive, and by those who pretend to be progressive, in the same way as the word 'gentleman' became taboo by members of the upper classes and of the intelligentsia of Britain after 1918. 'The masses' and 'mass-man' are expressions now used by Communists, social scientists, by those who are not familiar with the rules of the game of democracy and by those who do not like to look on democracy as a game. The masses, however, are a social fact, regardless of what name we give them.

One school of sociologists tries to define the mass-man as the individual who is incapable of independent thinking; another concludes that the mass-man is the 'unqualified' man; others describe the masses as 'passive' or 'amorphous', that is unorganized, who must be led and guided by others.

A good description of the mass-man comes from Dr. Serge Chakotin who, in his book *Le Viol des Foules*, an interesting analysis of the psychology of totalitarian propaganda, estimates

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the proportion of the mass-man to people of independent thought as ten to one. His view is that the mass-man is a person who offers no resistance to propaganda because his whole attention is absorbed by the hardships of everyday life, because he is tired out, or simply because he is lazy.

Ortega Y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher, whose book<sup>1</sup> is one of the most important contributions to the background of the revolution of our time, implies that the mass-man — regardless of the causes of such behaviour — does not demand more of himself than the rest, whereas the élite makes great demands on himself. The mass-man, therefore, is the man 'for whom to live is to be every moment what he already is, without imposing on himself any effort towards improvement'.

This is a very important definition, all the more because it at once dispels all illusions as to the relationship between the categories of mass-man and social class. Many people, indeed, incline to think that a member of the upper class is automatically a member of the élite, whereas a man from the working class is automatically a mass-man. The truth on this point is that, for obvious reasons, there is a stronger probability of finding people of independent thought among the upper than among the working-class people or among peasants; but this, of course, does not prevent us from finding a large number of mass-men among the members of the upper classes and a large number of people who ought to be among the élite among those who do not even know the word 'élite'. We do not know to what extent the differences between mass and élite are due to intrinsic, physiological factors, that is to say, to pre-natal influences; we presume the extent is small. But we know, or at least guess, the part played by post-natal influences, that is, environment and education, in the fact that one man becomes a member of the élite and the other 'just one of the masses'.

The reason the word 'masses' is tabooed by people who like to regard themselves as progressive is that it implies an unfavourable judgment; it implies that the mass-man is deficient

<sup>1</sup> JOSÉ ORTEGA Y GASSET: *The Revolt of the Masses* (Allen & Unwin, 1932).



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as compared with the élite. The progressive person naturally knows that the masses are deficient, but he does not like to admit it because he fears that the admission of the truth in this respect is 'careless talk' which would only help 'the enemy'. As a matter of fact, 'the enemy' — or at least a large proportion of the enemy — would at once attack the progressive should he blurt out the truth. The 'enemy' also knows that the masses are deficient because they are susceptible to propaganda, but he certainly does not want his vested interest (the deficiency of the masses) to be exposed.

Since I myself hold the view that the mass-man is deficient I must, before I proceed any further, give a clear indication that I use the word 'deficient' in a strictly scientific connotation, in the sense that someone can be deficient in red blood corpuscles, vitamins, calcium. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was lame, was certainly deficient as regards locomotion compared with a man who could walk unaided. The mass-man's deficiency is neither a physical nor a biochemical one, but an emotional deficiency. He is for the most part completely unaware of his deficiency; in fact, powerful vested interests encourage him to regard his deficiency as an object of pride. In the long run it is very largely this deficiency which prevents him getting on in the world.

My own criterion of the masses is a deductive one and the method I employ in defining the mass-man is the 'Who done it?' method of the police. My view is that the man who thinks that the nation-state is the moral absolute is a mass-man regardless of social class. Such a man, naturally, is a danger not only to himself but to the whole world.

It is true that many such people cannot put their belief about the nation-state into such academic form; in fact, the majority cannot. Yet they believe it in their own minds without being able to put it into words. Some of them may be so ignorant that even their own belief — the belief of the masses of the world — namely 'my country right or wrong' is unfamiliar to them, though when they hear it they may think they have coined it

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themselves. Their belief, translated into academic terms, is that the nation-state is not a historical accident, but a supernatural fact; that it is the last word in human achievement beyond which there can never be any further development, and that it is an essential condition that the nation-state always remains the sovereign master of its own destiny, in every single respect. It is in that the mass-man is deficient. His *Weltanschauung* towards the greatest problem of our time, the problem of living together in peace, is an anti-social one.

The familiar retort to such an argument usually is that the mass-man has no *Weltanschauung*, that is no ideology. This contention is a common fallacy because the belief described above is a *Weltanschauung*; in fact it is the typical ideology of the masses all over the civilized world. The *civilized* world! This is a very important operative adjective. It shows the real extent and frontiers of our civilization. This is indeed the respect in which our civilization is a failure. It cannot solve the issue of living together in peace.

From the above it seems clear that the ignorance of the mass-man in this matter is a specific ignorance; it is simply a respect in which he is not civilized, actually the most important respect. It is furthermore not a negative ignorance, like that of the primitive races who still live in the pre-nation-state period and do not quite know what foreigners are — their own neighbours of the next village or the inhabitants of a distant continent. On the contrary, it is a belief of a wrong sort: belief in something that looks like a true fact without being so. Never indeed, it seems to me, in the course of human history has it been more true that in this 'a little learning is a dangerous thing'.

Some people say that the mass-man's mental age is fourteen. If we try to express this deficiency in mathematical symbols we might as well use another set of symbols: one in four figures instead of two. The figures I suggest are 1848. If we say that the mass-man's mental development was arrested in the year 1848, we arrive at a new and, for our purposes, practical definition of the mass-man. The year 1848 ironically enough saw the



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publication of the *Communist Manifesto* ending with the words: 'Workers of the world unite.' It was, however, the very year when nationalism first found wide popular expression, and the time when most people believed that the nation-state was the moral absolute. My summing up of the mass-man is that his mental development was arrested by the ideology of the nineteenth century, and that he either comes to enjoy the dangerous drug of nationalism or is encouraged to use it as a compensation for his ills and for his inadequacy. It is this historical split which is the most disastrous split in our civilization all over the world.

Many people would find fault with my definition on the ground that it is not inclusive enough, or on the ground that I follow the deductive instead of the inductive method, that is to say I reached my conclusion from an *a priori* premise. My excuse for this is that I am writing this book immediately after the Second World War, when the greatest problem of our time has become more burning than at other periods. We can, for that matter, try the inductive method: the final conclusion of the social scientist on such lines is that the mass-man is ignorant of the system in which he lives. He thinks he lives in a natural system, and he takes that system for granted, whereas he lives in a highly organized, highly artificial, man-made system. The mass-man, therefore, cannot help developing a selfishness towards the system in which he finds himself. Thus the birthright he demands is at the expense of others; and not only at the expense of the members of his nation, which does not matter much, but at the expense of the whole world, which does matter. It caused the war of the twentieth century.

Apart from the fact that we do not know the precise extent to which the mass-man is, or is not, responsible for his deficiency, he is receiving all the time a dreadful punishment for his fallacious belief. The connection between nationalism and democracy is enormously strong. One depends on the other and the two together form a vicious circle of terrible strength. Nationalism makes democracy impossible, because democracy is *ab ovo*

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international; its very essence is that all men are equal. The mass-man does not want internationalism; he does not accept the equality of man beyond his own national frontiers. This is what makes exploitation of the mass-man comparatively easy. It was formerly believed that the capitalist exploited nationalism in order to curb the masses. This is certainly true. The capitalist, in fact, often went as far as fostering nationalism for this purpose. It is, however, becoming clear to-day that the exploitation of the nationalism of the masses by a ruling group need not be confined to a capitalist ruling group. We are seeing this now that capitalism is being slowly transformed into another economic system, and we shall see it later when that new system emerges more clearly. Sovereignty, indeed, is an institution which always maintains a system of class relations. But class need not be on a capitalist basis. It is, in fact, not on a purely economic basis, even in a capitalist society. The love of the masses for their country seems to be so strong in our time that it can provide an excellent foundation for an autocracy, not by the country but by a group of people who run the country. Many people may think all this is the 'masses' funeral'. If so, they are in error. It is not the 'funeral of the masses' but the funeral of the world. No country to-day can live unto itself in all respects, and the fact that the masses are exploited in a country would automatically be reflected in the country's foreign policy. It is indeed time for us to realize that Burke's famous dictum: 'The denial of rights abroad would sooner or later lead to the denial of rights at home' is true in the reverse sense, too; the denial of rights at home would lead to the denial of rights abroad.

Even though I used the word 'deficiency' in a purely scientific connotation, I committed myself to a particularly severe judgment, and for this reason I find it important to give more accurate indications as to who the masses are, and as to where and how we find them. It should be at once clear that my definition of the masses renders dogmatism about the relation



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of mass-man and social class, or mass-man and income, very difficult. Many people indeed think that the mass-man is identical or roughly coincides with manual labour. This may be true; very great surprises are, however, waiting for the dogmatist the very moment he makes even a superficial examination of working-class mentality. That in the minds of organized labour internationalist or supranational beliefs have at times acquired, and do still acquire, real significance is a fact which is generally known. And still greater surprises are met when examining the ranks of unorganized, unskilled labour. In another chapter I made reference to my personal experiences with unorganized and casual labour in the course of my army service and after. These helped to strengthen my belief that there must be a large section of people, even among the completely unlettered, who, although they may give the impression that they belong to the masses in many typical ways, yet do not because they understand the most important premises of a true civilization — the interdependence of the world and the conditions for living together in peace. Dress, behaviour, body movements, voice, tone, accent, give little guidance here, nor does the expression of beliefs and opinions in other respects. A man thus might give the impression of a nationalist because he expresses strong feelings and prejudices about his country: yet he is not, because he does not feel strongly about his country in the political sense, which is the vital criterion. Another man, on the other hand, might proclaim internationalism and yet his final tenet is 'my country right or wrong'. This phrase in the final analysis is the slogan of the mass-man all over the civilized world.

Many people who are inclined to agree with my definition would feel a deep sense of contempt for the masses on account of their deficiency. This is an amazing attitude because, for one thing, we do not know to what precise extent the masses themselves are responsible for their inferiority or if they are at all responsible for it; but of this later. In any case it certainly is not a rational scientific attitude. The word 'deficiency', I



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repeat, should be used in a purely scientific connotation, and the attitude (at least, on the part of the student of politics) should be that of a medical student looking at a syphilitic ulcer or a cancerated liver. Such sights may provoke fear, disgust or pity in his mind, but although these are natural reactions, they must not destroy his scientific objectivity. He should study the symptoms, try to find the cause, and then attempt to provide the remedy. Some scientists, as a matter of fact, go to the opposite extreme, which is not a hopeless one even though it is not without amusing implications. Confronted with such a sight they snap their fingers and exclaim: 'What a marvellous ulcer! The best I've seen since I left St. Mary's. . . .'

The attitude of the scientist tempered with humanity is the only correct attitude towards the masses. We must realize that the source of the danger is their limited outlook, and that they are limited in outlook very largely because they have been limited in opportunity. Their outlook, furthermore, is one which, to a very large extent, can be changed by education in good citizenship: good citizenship not solely towards the nation-state, because that 'good citizenship in privacy' has been taught intensively all through the last seventy years and has landed us in a dreadful mess, but good citizenship towards the world. They should be taught that the social instinct is a powerful and characteristic instinct of man, that it has always been so and will probably always remain so. Nevertheless, the social instinct never told man to form himself into groups like Wessex and Scotland, Castilia and Aragon, Bohemia and Moravia, nor later — through bitter struggles and bloody wars — into Great Britain, Spain and Czechoslovakia. They should be taught that the nation-state is a geographical and historical accident, just like the lesser units of the pre-nation-state age, and thus it is not the final moral absolute, but an important link in world government which need not be, indeed must not be, destroyed, but must be used for the proper purpose.

They should be taught, furthermore, that change is a



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historic law and necessity, and that change between nations is as important as change between social classes. If change between nations is resisted there is war; if it is resisted between classes there is revolution. It is, for example, no use saying that the Nazis were blackguards — though undoubtedly they were — if the Germans had no other chance of improving their economic situation except by voting blackguards into power.

This, indeed, ought to be the correct line for education in healthy citizenship, and while in our time education is certainly not maintained on these lines, it is by no means sure whether education on such lines may not arrive too late. The masses to-day are on their way to invade public life and it is clear that they are now trying to get hold of functions which were formerly the preserve of the *élite*; functions, furthermore, which cannot be handled without proper qualifications. The only really important functions in this respect are those of government, and the masses — as we defined them — are unfit and unqualified for the discharge of these functions, because they can only think in national terms.

In former times the masses presented a more modest attitude. They were critical of the *élite*, but they left the political issue in the hands of the *élite*. This was, indeed, the ideal situation. It is known as 'democracy'. To-day the situation is changing. The mass is no longer modest in its attitude and it goes beyond criticism of the *élite*: it tries to supplant the *élite*. And here begins the revolution of our time.

Some people say that this revolution is the revenge of history on those who gave the masses unlimited political power but limited opportunities in the economic field; and limited opportunities in education instead of substantial and harmonious proportions of all three. The trend of the revolution, on any showing, is that the masses to-day are revolting, as it were, against their own ignorance. At the bottom of the revolution is the anarchical situation of the world caused by the tyranny of the nation-state. The mass-man, the rank and file of the revolution, as usual does not know the causes which prompt him to



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revolt. As usual he is revolting on account of *symptoms*; he is revolting because he is hungry, or afraid of starvation, or because he is devoid of opportunities. He cannot analyse the causes and cannot find out that he is in the centre of a tragic vicious circle.

The result of the revolution depends entirely on those who capture the masses and lead the revolution. If its leaders have an entirely new programme it might solve both of the problems. The word 'new' in this connotation is the defence of those political philosophers who said that the Russian Revolution was an 'old-fashioned' revolution and thereby ruined their reputations as serious thinkers in the eyes of Right and Left alike. Their remark — it must be said — was much more than a somewhat feeble wisecrack. The Russian Revolution, when all is said and done, was an economic revolution and, as such, it was the repetition of similar revolutions in history. It confined itself to the abolition of certain privileges of individuals; in other words, it was top to toe, a *vertical* revolution, whereas what is needed — if revolutions are the only means by which progress can be achieved — is a *horizontal* revolution which would abolish certain privileges of the nation-state. This is what we meant by the word *new* revolution. We have become, for obvious reasons, too much concerned with the economic issue, the lesser problem of our time, and with the abolition of the privileges of the individual. We have been led to believe that it was the economic inequality between individuals which was mainly responsible for the deficiency of our civilization, whereas, as the revolution goes on, it is becoming increasingly clear that it is economic inequality between nations which seems to be primarily responsible.

This ought to be the direction the revolution of our time ought to take: in fact, a highly desirable revolution. All the trends and portents of our time, however, seem to indicate that such a horizontal revolution is not, in fact, occurring, and that the revolution of our time is an old-fashioned vertical revolution. All it seems to lead to is a fundamental change in the economic



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system as well as a change in the form of nationalism. In the economic field it tends to replace capitalism with an alternative system, while in the political field it tends to replace the present nation-state with large-area amalgamations of sovereignty that, in the language of political science, are called 'the multinational state'. It is not our concern here to attempt to estimate whether the result of the revolution of our time will be a better, or a worse, or a happy world, though we can guess that it is not likely that it will abolish class, apart from placing class on a new, non-economic basis. Yet it is very much our concern to try to estimate whether it will result in a united world and an internationalist society. The answer, as far as present-day trends show, is in the negative. The revolution is likely to change the basis of nationalism in the same way as in the past loyalty to the princes was transformed into loyalty to the king (a more powerful prince). Loyalty, therefore, instead of being extended to the nation-state will be extended to the multinational-state, which is not the whole world, and nationalism — in a modified form — will still remain the most important political factor.

These to my mind are indications that the revolution of our time is an unsuccessful revolution. Far from invading public life the masses seem to be becoming docile tools in the hands of people who make good use of their acquired or intuitive knowledge of psychological laws. These people, who are trying to take over the leadership of the revolution, noticed that, though the masses are individuals of different tendencies and of varying social categories, they share a common attitude towards the nation-state as the moral absolute, and because of this they are willing to tolerate a ruling class on conditions extremely advantageous to that ruling class. These leaders, and would-be leaders, are not slow in drawing the necessary conclusions. They realize that in common English parlance the masses wish to eat their cake and have it: they would like to have social reform without close international co-operation. They are accordingly curbing the masses through the institu-



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tion of an alternative economic system, which in certain respects is bound to be better and bound to be worse than the capitalist system it is succeeding, but the relations of ruler and ruled, and the international anarchy, will be likely to continue on a differently organized basis.

In connection with the ideology of the totalitarian states it has often been said that they represented an effort to put the clock back. This is very largely a matter of opinion. The ideology of the Nazis certainly was not an improvement either on capitalist democracy or on socialism, but it contained elements which had a tremendous appeal to the irrational in man's mind. It is immaterial whether Hitler had studied Pavlov and Jung; the fact remains that he knew all the rules and tricks with which the masses can be curbed.

Let us now consider those who, in the words of Ortega, 'make greater demands on themselves than the rest', and, in the words of Chakotin, are not susceptible to propaganda. These people are as difficult to describe as the masses. They are commonly called the *élite*, which in ordinary English means the 'Best People'.

The function of the *élite* is leadership, and for this purpose an *élite* has always been accepted ever since the necessity for social organization was realized by man. It is a fundamental characteristic of man that he is willing to tolerate rulers or a ruling group on condition that the latter confers certain benefits on him on an increasing scale. These benefits are not entirely material benefits, though they are so to an overwhelming extent. This acceptance of a ruler or a ruling group is a fundamental premise of all governments; it is safe to say it has always been thus and always will be. This is indeed one of the fundamental characteristics of mankind which so far nothing has altered. The French saying, '*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*', has been too often quoted in wrong senses, and thus it has become a platitude. The true sense in which it should be used is expressed in that other corresponding maxim 'History



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repeats itself'; a phrase which has also become a platitude because it is often used in wrong senses. It is not history repeating itself, but the fundamental characteristics of man appearing again and again as a *permanent* motif of history or as a theme on which time plays variations. The way in which history 'repeats' itself is that whenever the rulers do not confer benefits on the masses in increasing measure, there is dissatisfaction, which under certain conditions leads to revolution. The historical role of revolution is thus to dethrone the unsatisfactory rulers. If this happens, however, there is anarchy; that is, the absence of rule, a state of affairs which cannot continue for long but must come to an end. What always happened in history was either that the old rulers forced their way back or a new set of rulers took their place.

Here we arrive again at the truth that rule rests on force only to a certain extent, though it would be extremely difficult to assess what this extent is; or, in plain English, what the real difference is between dictatorship and democracy. According to nineteenth-century political philosophers, rule always rests on public opinion. This view in actual fact is very old. It was first expressed by St. Augustine, and if we search history in order to find out whether it has always been true, we find that it is — on the whole — a piece of historical reality. Rule always rests on public opinion, except at times when there is no public opinion as when force alone rules. Absence of public opinion, however, like anarchy, cannot endure for a long time. Thus, it is obvious that there is public opinion in the U.S.S.R. and that there was, in fact, public opinion in Hitler's Germany. The difference between these two states and the democracies was that public opinion in the former cannot express itself as freely as in democracies, and that dictatorship has more powerful methods at its disposal than democracy to curb, direct or sway public opinion. These methods, however, at certain points exhaust their usefulness and the dictator is forced to change his policy in line with public opinion. The difference in

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methods explains the very abrupt changes of government policy in a dictatorship as compared with the less abrupt changes in a democracy.

The ruling group is a privileged group and its privileges rest on the claim that the ruling group performs greater social functions than those who are ruled. This again is a generally accepted tenet, provided of course the ruling group keeps to the bargain. What then is the extent of these privileges? In former times they meant gross inequalities at the expense of the rest of the community. These in feudal times seemed to have been necessary because the methods of production were so primitive that, if the community's total wealth had been equally distributed, the result would have been very serious setbacks to the advancement of civilization.<sup>1</sup> The élite could not have functioned without comfort and leisure, to mention only two implications of privilege. Such conditions, however, no longer obtain. The ruling group to-day still needs certain privileges, but these privileges need not be a painful burden on the community. And here a very vital factor enters. The community at times feels that although such people enjoy great privileges they do not perform that greater social function which is the fundamental lease of life for the élite; the community feels that the ruling group does not keep its side of the bargain. The conclusion is a question: Is the actual ruling group identical with the élite, are they really good people? In fact, are they best?

If Ortega's words, that the élite makes 'greater demands' on himself than the rest, can mean 'greater demands' for the benefit of the community, then the ruling class — *en masse* — is not really identical with the élite. Some of the members of the ruling class do not fulfil great social functions. A good many of them are in the ruling class by accident of birth and wealth,

<sup>1</sup> The best study on the effects of privilege is Thorndsten Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), in spite of the fact that it treats a highly exciting subject in an unexciting manner, and that some of its phraseology to-day sounds frankly funny.



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or by wealth alone. We need not waste time discussing the members of the ruling group by virtue of mere birth or of mere wealth, because their social function is not in proportion to their privileges. It is, however, an entirely different proposition when a well-born and/or rich person is discharging a valuable social function. Some of the rich are not the least 'idle', even from the point of view of the community, though at the present stage of capitalism there is a strong tendency for some rich men to withdraw almost completely from management and, at most, to limit themselves to the chairmanship of their companies, preside over annual meetings and read the reports written for them by somebody else. This is an attitude known to social science as 'absentee ownership'. Some of the rich are technical experts of great skill and importance, greatly needed by the community, and their wealth sometimes is a mere additional factor. They are people who would be important even if they had no wealth worth speaking of. A good many rich people, on the other hand, are firmly convinced that they deserve every penny they possess because they work hard for it. This, on the face of it, appears true enough. Some of the industrious rich work ten to twelve hours a day; they lose weight and become genuinely sick from exhaustion and worry. Some, quite truly, work themselves to death. (Diabetes and various cardiac diseases are often the 'occupational diseases' of the industrious rich.) At the present stage of capitalism, when the system is violently contracting, when the frightened capitalist does not know whether his real enemy is the poor or merely the rival capitalist, the maintenance of great wealth is a burdensome business. He cannot trust anybody, because most people seem to have a vested interest in taking away his wealth. He will spend weeks and weeks trying to get information about reliable investments, then months and months trying to find a reliable accountant who will rack his brain to find convenient loopholes in the law to evade as much income tax as possible. Besides, he is frightened to death by the prospect of war, simply because war is no longer the paying proposition it was in the 'good old'



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nineteenth century, or in the beginning of the twentieth. In short, the frightened capitalists worry and work themselves harder than any of their employees to ensure that their capital shall bring in the biggest profit. But their activity, no matter how hard they work, is not a great social service, because though they create wealth the community sees little benefit from it.

Can members of the aristocracy of birth be regarded as *élite*? Some of them can by all means, and not 'in spite of being aristocrats' (as inverted snobs often would say) but because the environment in which they were brought up is more conducive to the creation of an *élite* than poverty is. Thus, Toulouse-Lautrec, the painter, was by every standard a member of the *élite*. Lord Acton is the school example of the true aristocrat. In our days Bertrand Russell and the famous French physicist, the Duke of Broglie, are certainly members of the *élite*.

Pareto, among other sociologists, held that it was a necessary condition for the *élite* to 'circulate', that an aristocracy, titled or untitled, should receive fresh blood all the time by the absorption of originally non-aristocratic elements. Otherwise the ruling group degenerates and ceases to be an *élite*. The typical sign of such degeneration is that the ruling group is unable to accommodate itself to social change, and its main consideration becomes not social service, but the preservation of its privileges. Such a group might be called a ruling class, but strictly speaking it is not an *élite*.

From this it is clear that the political *élite* to-day is not identical with the group of people who are in political power. The proof in the last analysis is in the fundamental function of the *élite*: to confer benefits, material or non-material, on the community on an increasing scale. To-day it is becoming clear to steadily widening ranges of the public that the present-day ruling class cannot do this, even if they happen to be Russian, because they are trying to serve the interest of their nation alone, and that in the long run is an impossibility. The nation,



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after a time, can only be served at the expense of peaceful relations with other nations, and finally at the price of war.

Where is then the political élite? Are they suppressed, are they in some concentration camp, unknown, obscure men living in poverty? Not at all. A few men of the real political élite, even of Germany, were never sent to concentration camps (if they did not happen to be Jews or did not criticize the Nazis), and most of them certainly do not live in great poverty. Often they are quite well-to-do persons; in fact, their income might even exceed that of a European stage-actor whose fame is a hundred times greater than theirs. In this case I am thinking of members of the political élite who are professors at various universities, or those who can live — more modestly — on the proceeds of their books, or have some private income. A man like this is not in hiding and his ideas are by no means secret. He is to be seen and heard four or five times a week lecturing to eighty or a hundred people. His ideas are available in books which are on sale and are to be found in libraries, available for anybody . . . No, here is the crux of the matter: his books are *not* available for anybody. That they cost money is the lesser part of the problem. Books can be borrowed or stolen. The point is, however, that the things he says are beyond the reach of the majority of grown-up people in every country. Such people recognize that the book is written in their mother tongue, and yet it seems to be written in a foreign language. It *is* written in a foreign tongue. Let us take a sentence at random from one of the books of the English political élite. 'The nation-state as a political and economic unit based upon private ownership of the means of production has had results that even our rulers can hardly fail to perceive.' This is a statement which is in simple English free of obscurity or of technical jargon and yet, for a large number of grown-up English men and women, it sounds highbrow. To understand a book from which this random sentence was taken needs a mental training, which need not be formal and need not be expensive, but still a mental training that even the richest and

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the most brilliant pupil cannot acquire without an effort. And — this is important — the sentence quoted above was taken from a popular book which was written for the so-called layman. On those grounds that book is a masterpiece, but there are ideas which simply cannot be rendered easy with the best of good-will. Popularizing things, writing down to the public has its limits, beyond which the aim defeats itself. Strangely enough politics is the very science which lends itself less easily to popularization, and to the typical form of popularization which is platform oratory, than any other science. What actually happens is that for obvious and important reasons politics are popularized and the public is flattered into the belief that it understands politics, which are a science quite as complicated as medicine or physics. As a science politics involve more auxiliary sciences than any other. For the understanding of politics a good grounding in historical research, economics and psychology is needed. Apart from this, politics touch life at all points, the consequence of which is that most people are more concerned with political salvation than with political knowledge, and the scientific approach — the only sensible one — is easy to lose.

A man who left school at the age of fourteen can take up the study of politics if, after leaving school, he continued his education on his own, and had in the course of this developed a certain discipline of mind and a certain talent for reading books. I use the word 'talent' deliberately. It has often been said that certain books need 'talented readers', which is just a witticism for the old expression 'acquired taste'. These 'certain' books, however, belong to *belles lettres*, to imaginative literature, where writing becomes an art form, and where the 'talented reader' experiences a pleasure on a higher plane than the untalented reader. We are, however, not discussing enjoyment, but knowledge, and knowledge can only be gained through talent for reading. This talent, however, can be developed out of something which in the initial stage seems surprisingly small, and, provided it exists, it can be developed



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by sheer hard work, with sweat and clenched teeth. These biochemical and physical accompaniments are not essential conditions to learning, but all the same take nothing away from the value of the accomplishment. Many scientists and learned men, indeed, clench their teeth and chew their pens (not at the same time, of course) and wipe their foreheads or fiddle with key chains, though they have already developed a talent sufficiently big to read difficult books and to assimilate difficult facts.

Nevertheless, the development of talent and the acquisition of knowledge are not easy for a man who has left school at the age of fourteen and has little leisure; or for a man who has spent seven or eight hours a day doing hard physical or easy but monotonous work. When he finishes his day he feels inclined to look for compensations which he needs or which he thinks he needs—cinema, pub, racing, football pools, dancing or just walking out with his pal. On reflection he might decide to sacrifice these compensations, but there are other obstacles. The decision to take up studies might also involve giving up his mates or postponing marriage. Finally, there are obstacles inherent in his environment. A working-class environment is often stubbornly conservative, which in more brutal language means that it is full of prejudices against a man 'setting himself up'. Against the son of the family taking up studies of such things as politics, working-class families often have the same strong prejudice as that of a Victorian middle-class family whose daughter set her mind on a stage career. These are some of the facts which so successfully prevent many a man from making 'greater demands on himself than the rest'. And these 'great demands' are merely the basis of that barrier that separates the working class from the intelligentsia. Between these two there is the educated working class.

That barrier then can only be abolished through social reform. Ignoring it, explaining it away, will not help, though this is very fashionable in Britain, among other countries, nor



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will attacks against the prestige of learning. Attempts in this field are tragic and pitiful. Many intellectuals join in that suicidal game which is known as 'highbrow baiting'. Some of them do it because they feel a genuine guilt towards the proletariat on account of their own capital of knowledge, as a millionaire might for his ownership in the means of production. A millionaire with a guilt complex can easily satisfy the pangs of his conscience by giving away his capital; the intellectual with the same complex, however, cannot get rid of his intellectual capital, and that is why some of its members resort to self-abuse. Others do it to gain popularity, which is a particularly nauseous way of unfair competition at cut prices. Besides, both of these forms of self-abuse are dangerous because there is a third reason, a third basis for attacks against the prestige of learning, but this does not come from intellectuals. It comes from a group of people whose representative's slogan is: 'When I hear the word "culture" I reach for my revolver.' That man has a very good reason to reach for his revolver at the mere mention of the word 'culture'. Culture is the pen which is mightier than the sword, but (and this is vital) only in the long run; not in the short run. In the short run the revolver can conquer culture and the sword can conquer the pen. Books can be burnt, and men like Galileo Galilei can still be forced to withdraw their scientific discoveries and swear that the earth does not rotate round the sun. And the best way to deprive people of knowledge is not to make knowledge forbidden or difficult of access, but to make it ridiculous, to attack its prestige, to harness the bitterness of the masses against it. It must be admitted that the ground is ready all the time. During the Industrial Revolution there was no need for reactionary vested interests to organize the mob to destroy Arkwright's mechanical loom; the mob did it without instigation, in what it believed to be its own interest. Similarly, it is possible even under a democratic system to stifle the voices of science and truth. Illiterate farmers can use their democratic rights in America to suppress scientific teaching contrary to



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their prejudices. The famous Dayton Case in the early nineteen-twenties against Darwinian evolution clearly shows that a democratic principle that knows no limits can obstruct scientific learning, even though it can never do as much harm as a dictatorship.

That in the end the pen will conquer the sword and tyranny will crumble to pieces is all very well, but this belief in ultimate progress is but little comfort to those who wish to avoid conquest and tyranny instead of waiting until it crumbles to pieces; and all the more because a well-organized and streamlined tyranny can endure for a surprisingly long time.

From this it seems to be clear that the real political élite is a different set of people from the ruling class, even though they may not be different groups in many other respects. The ruling class and the real élite overlap at many points. These points are their social origin, their upbringing, their education, and quite often their standards of living. Furthermore, members of the élite quite often become members of the ruling class. In our time, however, a member of the intelligentsia, if he becomes a member of the ruling class, usually is forced not so much to compromise as to prostitute himself, and thus he ceases to be intelligentsia. The number of those who are willing to leave the ruling class and give up power of their own accord, if and when they find that they have to prostitute themselves, is very, very small. Power, indeed, is one of the most dangerous, intoxicating drugs that ever existed.

Should one need a generalization to sum up the difference between the intelligentsia and the ruling class, the following might be accepted as a guiding principle: the intelligentsia is *aiming* at finding the absolute truth; the ruling class is *succeeding* in finding the relative truth.

It is one of the tragic features of life in our time that in the struggle for truth there is no room for the intelligentsia — the real political élite, almost the only group which knows the truth. It is no wonder that the intelligentsia in our time

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incline to become bitter and irresponsible like an author, not so much one without a public but one who can only make money out of his books without the slightest noticeable influence on his public.

In the above I offered new categories for mass and élite. These categories are necessarily arbitrary and forced; they are generalizations and I offer them as such. Classifications relating to human relations and human nature are always arbitrary and, to an overwhelming extent, are always generalizations. As an aid to thinking, however, it seemed to me that it would be perhaps worth while to attempt to divide humanity into two groups according to their attitude towards the greatest and the most important problem of our time: the problem of living together in peace.

But there is a third category: the man who is making 'greater demands on himself than the rest', the man who thinks along independent lines, the man who is not ignorant of the most important problem of our age, the man who, in fact, very often knows most of the truth and thus ought to belong to the élite. Such a man indeed often claims to be a member of the élite, but his claims are based on false pretences. He knows that the sovereign nation-state in its present form is the enemy of progress, and yet he is doing his best to maintain it without change, because he has a vested interest in it. This vested interest quite often is not an economic vested interest which in our time has a great, though gradually diminishing, tendency. He has reason to believe, however, that with the weakening of sovereignty his vested interest will be jeopardized. He is, furthermore, a man who — often unconsciously — has a great responsibility for the fact that the mass-man, as I described him, is to-day a danger to the community. I shall, accordingly, devote the following chapter to this third category.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GREAT BETRAYAL

IN 1928 a French writer, Julien Benda, published a book dealing with the part played by modern intellectuals in fostering nationalism.<sup>1</sup> Its title was significant: *The Treason of the Clerks*. This book, called in the English translation *The Great Betrayal*, defines the 'clerks' as those who 'speak to the world in a transcendental manner', which, at first blush, means the poet, the writer, the artist. Benda mentions very few of such 'clerks' in his book. He makes a passing reference to Kipling and D'Annunzio, then he enlarges on three French writers, Barrés, Peguy and Maurras, the last of whom, a fanatical hater of England, turned collaborator and was sentenced to death in 1945.

It is not a matter of curious chance that these three French writers are known outside France only to students of modern French literature, because a writer, who feels his main function is to champion his country, as a rule remains the private concern of his country. In fact we may go a little further and say that for a man who feels his main function is to extol his own country, it is extremely difficult to remain an artist in general and a writer-artist in particular. Patriotism, Catholicism, Socialism, Communism, etc., are not truths, but ideologies; furthermore, they are ready-made or *a priori* conceptions. And a true artist can never start out with ready-made conceptions, because his very job is to create conceptions in his own way. Such conceptions can by implication be patriotic, catholic or socialist conceptions, but they have to be the writer's own original conceptions, not consciously or unconsciously borrowed from anyone. In this way there are several writers who are patriotic by implication; who, in other words, express their

<sup>1</sup> JULIEN BENDA: *La Trahison des Clercs* (Gallimard, Paris, 1928).

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love not so much for their country as for a particular part of their country. This usually is the writer's own surroundings, the place where he grew up, or the place he knows intimately, but this is not the same as the geographical or ideological conception of the nation-state. Indeed, most good writers belong to this category. Most of them have deep roots somewhere, and they communicate their love of, and their intimate feelings about, their little corner to their readers.<sup>1</sup> The corner, however, has to be little: a town, a county, a region. A whole country is too large and a nation as such is impossible to know. A commercial traveller who knows his country from Land's End to John O'Groats, or from New York to San Francisco, may have the material for the journalist but not for the writer, which shows that the difference between the journalist and the writer is not essentially that of imagination, approach, style or technical equipment. Nobody can possibly know a whole country or a whole class intimately.

Experience shows that from time to time we come across true writers writing *a priori* patriotic stuff, but this we have to regard either as a commercial, professional, or spare-time activity. The reader would feel that the poem or the story was written by someone who is otherwise a good writer. He would appreciate his style, his power of argument, his technical skill, but if the reader is searching for art, he would look elsewhere.

On this point Rudyard Kipling is an example. When all is said and done, in a bad period for literature Rudyard Kipling was a good writer and a very important literary innovator in style, matter and form. There is much in his large literary luggage which will be read as serious literature in years to come: practically all his children's books and some of his stories. At the same time, however, few writers have harmed their literary and artistic reputations in their own lifetime in the eyes of the discriminating as much as Kipling. His praise

<sup>1</sup> The most vital and creative influences in a man's life are supposed to be the *surroundings* in which he grew up, regardless of his racial origin or of his actual birthplace.



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of the South African War discredited him in the eyes of serious readers before the war was finished, and for the rest of his life all he could achieve was money, popular success, the Nobel Prize and, finally, a society whose aim was 'to do honour to, and to extend the influence of the most patriotic, virile and imaginative of writers who upholds the ideals of the English-speaking world'. For many discriminating readers Kipling's name still remains associated with a brilliant cartoon of Max Beerbohm's in which this 'most virile and imaginative of writers' is depicted as a stunted little proletarian, blowing a paper trumpet on the 'bloomin' 'eath', dressed in a vulgar check suit on the arm of Britannia, a beautiful slender maiden twice his size, who is looking with utter resignation in front of her.

There were other things, too: Kipling almost managed to discredit the conception of the English regular soldier. He used his very superficial knowledge only to vulgarize and misrepresent them. But this is a minor point and is only partly responsible for the fact that the *Barrack Room Ballads* are examples of the depths to which English poetry could sink in a bad period.

Patriotic poetry has two pitfalls. The first is that it defeats itself, so to speak, by losing its nationality. Take Rupert Brooke's famous lines in *The Soldier*. If 'forever Bulgaria' is substituted for 'forever England', or 'Bolivian heaven' for 'English heaven', *The Soldier* would be assured of an easy success in translation in wartime among the more literate masses of any country. It could become as much of an international export commodity as a piece of English underwear or a piston-ring. *The Soldier* thus is an English poem, solely because it was written in the English language. It could have been — indeed, had been — written by any versifier of any nationality. If the word 'English' is substituted for another nationality, it is child's play to translate it into any other tongue. It would lose nothing, because it has nothing to lose.

How much more 'English' than *The Soldier* are the lines of

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any really good war poet, such as Wilfred Owen, Sidney Keyes or, for that matter, Sassoon's famous line — 'Good-bye, old chap, and give my love to God.' But then, no good war poet or any poet, indeed, has ever been patriotic on ready-made lines.

The other pitfall is that the patriotic poem becomes an illustration to a thesis in verse form. The standard type of this kind of poetry is found in the lines familiar to travellers on the London Underground during the Second World War in which 'Billy Brown of London Town' exhorts:

'I hope you'll pardon my correction  
That stuff is there for your protection.'

These pitfalls, of course, are open to anyone who starts out with any *a priori* conception, and therefore to the anti-patriot too. Many poets have sung in condemnation of their own country, usually on the lines of Marxist dogmas, and their poems share with *The Soldier* and with *Billy Brown* the characteristic of standing outside literature. The bore of the 'universal embrace' is as much a bore as the patriotic bore.

A writer can still remain a good writer, even a great writer, if he has written propaganda stuff in his spare time, or because he was paid for it, or simply because he just liked doing it, but his merits as an artist would have to be judged on his other stuff. Furthermore, he could retain his nationality to the full. Thus Shakespeare's Englishness does not depend on those unfortunate if very pretty lines in *Henry V* and *Richard II*, which could have occurred — and did occur — to any versifier in any country, but on his outlook and his conception of England expressed indirectly and by implication through his genius. Shakespeare is admired abroad not only for his lines of tragic passion and for the supreme beauty of his poetry, but, to a lesser extent, also for his 'Englishness'. This, however, has nothing to do with lines like 'this happy breed of men'. His Englishness, like the Germanness of Goethe, the Americanness



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of Whitman or the Frenchness of Balzac, radiates through mysterious vibrations from his personality. This is the true nationality of an artist, if an artist has any nationality. The consideration of geographical curiosity offers an additional explanation for the great international success of a writer like Dickens. One of his attractions for readers abroad is his Englishness. But this is a radiated, unconscious Englishness and does not start out from *a priori* conceptions. When it does, as in the *American Sketches*, Dickens cannot avoid the pitfalls and becomes vulgar to a degree.

From the above it is clear that, even though it is not impossible for the writer-artist to indulge in patriotic propaganda, it is very difficult, because he is then always on the point of ceasing to be an artist, in the same way as if he were writing a detective story, pornography or an essay on bee-keeping. And this point is very important. The journalist can reiterate the truth or echo the truth; the artist must find it himself on his own. That is the artist's main function, regardless of whether in his spare time he indulges in propaganda, poisons his mistress or collaborates with the enemy.

For the 'clerk', therefore, we must find a wider interpretation than that of M. Benda. It seems that the journalist has a much stronger chance of becoming a traitor; indeed, so has any intellectual or semi-intellectual who has the requisite skill to exert influence over other people. In a way it can also be said that the *a priori* patriotic (or internationalist, Communist or Roman Catholic or Protestant) writer automatically leaves art for journalism.

But when we talk about journalists in the strict professional application of the word (i.e. newspaper journalism) we must make an important distinction. The writer is, to a certain extent, independent; in very important respects he is his own master; the journalist is only rarely so. At worst the journalist is a hireling, at best he enjoys a conditional liberty, and this is a natural corollary to the fact that a book is a one-man show, and a newspaper is not. The journalist has to fit in, and quite

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often he is forced to do things against which his good taste, his conscience, or his idealism revolts. An *arrivé* journalist, of course, is in a different position. He enjoys a certain amount of prestige; he may have a certain amount of capital behind him, a large degree of journalistic competence, quite often good specialist knowledge; and these factors enable him to resist far better than his less well-equipped brethren. These latter, however, are the majority in every country. The majority of journalists, all over the world, are conditioned by training and an iron discipline to reflect in their lines the policy of the newspaper for which they are working. The newspaper's policy is that of the proprietor, and when all is said and done his employees are expressing his opinions, some being allowed a longer rope than others. This means that the freedom of the individual journalist is conditional. Let us now inspect the freedom of the Press beyond the control of the proprietor.

This freedom is relative as freedom always is. Under a dictatorship freedom of opinion is driven underground. Complete freedom, however, cannot exist anywhere because it would defeat itself. Under democracy the freedom of the newspaper is greater because it is subject to lesser and different limitations. These limitations are present even though they may not at once be obvious. In some countries governments and political parties either maintain newspapers to disseminate propaganda for themselves or subsidize papers for the same purpose. In others governments or political parties find a way to influence newspaper proprietors, who are, of course, all the time influenced by their advertisers.

Government influence over newspapers varies a good deal in every non-totalitarian country, from great subtlety to heavy-footed clumsiness. There are hundreds of ways in which government departments in general, and Foreign Offices in particular, can exert influence or pressure on most newspapers. And there are hundreds of ways in which they can give emphasis to their displeasure. They can close their keyholes, they can stop their 'off the record' service, or their carefully calcu-



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lated 'official indiscretions department' to newspapers that do not play the game according to government rules.

In wartime the position in a democratic country is very similar to that under a dictatorship; the Press to a great extent is muzzled, apart from the absolutely necessary censorship on war news. There are always government-inspired lines which the paper cannot resist as successfully as in peacetime.

Other business considerations are present besides the influence exerted by advertisers. Amalgamations and trusts, which are as common in the newspaper world as in the tinned meat or cough-cure industry, are a serious limitation to diversity of opinion.

It is natural that every newspaper on earth is propagating a policy, a line, but it is extremely difficult to say whether the paper is deliberately fostering that line, pressing it on its readers whether they like it or not, or merely trying to increase its circulation with a line which is supposed to be already popular. Popular newspapers in every country do both, and that is the reason why their policy so often appears undecided, obscure, even contradictory. Not only may the policy change from one day to the next, but one single issue of the paper often reflects two contradictory lines, for which the editor cannot always be blamed.

The fostering of nationalism is the policy of newspapers all over the world from both these points of view. Through it the paper courts popularity by pandering to popular taste; on the other hand it tries to force a policy on the public for other reasons.

Nationalism is typical of those described in the previous chapter as the 'masses', for a multiplicity of reasons. Perhaps the most important is that the 'mass-man' is not analytical. Also he needs compensation, and there is no mental drug in our time which gives so much compensation as nationalism. Nationalism, indeed, gives free self-respect to people to whom circumstances, mostly economic, have denied everything. This

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is the pathological aspect of nationalism. It lulls people into a dream, it encourages them to live their lives at second hand, and it gives them a community feeling on false pretences. It is the strongest and the most widely used mental drug in our time. Needless to say how dangerous a drug it is.

André Malraux, in one of his masterpieces, *The Human Condition*, has said that life is not tolerable without drugs. This is a shattering statement on the part of one of the greatest novelists of our generation, all the more because Malraux often reveals that he understands nationalism. The truth is that it is overwhelmingly the anarchy of the world which produces the human condition that forces men to take drugs to put up with life.

The classic line in every country in which nationalism is offered to the reader by the popular Press as a popular drug is the line of 'national character', which is made out to be permanent and unalterable. Racial myths and national heritage are things in which the masses in every country like to believe, and the popular Press does its best to reinforce and to maintain that belief. What helps it enormously is that the masses all over the world like simple easy rationalization, which reduces everything to categories of black and white. This fact is greatly encouraged by newspapers which act on the principle that everything can be simplified and presented in a form in which everybody can understand it, whereas the truth is that there are a large number of important issues which cannot be simplified, which are neither black nor white. International politics is prominent among these.

The belief in an unalterable national character is as strong as the belief in an unalterable individual character. This is the reason why the simple-minded novel-reader shows an overwhelming preference for the old-fashioned novel with its clear-cut character drawing. That novel, evolved in the nineteenth century, achieves easy success by its technique of simplification. It makes great sacrifices of truth for clarity of character, for figures who are plastic and memorable and stand



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out. The popular entertainment industries of our time are still largely based on this assumption of the public that people are either good or bad. Film studios insist on novels whose character drawing is strong, even if the plot is mediocre.

The newspaper, the wireless and, for that matter, the author who wishes to gain a safe basis for popularity can easily exploit this popular and world-wide belief in national character.

Nationalism acts as a drug in many ways. It can act as a simple stimulant, or it can act as a sedative. It can also produce a morbid state of mind: xenophobia, the hatred for foreigners. Xenophobia is the result of simple rationalization, namely the provision of a suitable scapegoat. Quite often it is nothing more than an element of compensation for the ills the individual suffers at the hands of his own countrymen. He therefore vents his anger on someone weaker than himself, like the office boy who kicks the office cat after having been reprimanded by the boss. He cannot hit the boss back, nor can he always successfully hit his mates, especially if they happen to be stronger than he is. The cat cannot hit back. The difference, however, is that the foreigner — unlike the cat — *does* hit back, though not always immediately.

Economic or social inequality can produce xenophobia in another way — through imitation, namely social learning. One generally imitates three groups of people: (a) people older than oneself; (b) people whom one regards as one's intellectual superiors; and finally (c) people whom one regards as one's social superiors. This last is the result of social or economic inequality; and at the bottom of imitation, in all cases, there is always the motive of social-economic reward, or at least the avoidance of punishment.

The attitude towards foreigners in every country is to a large extent inspired by the socially or economically superior group. It is an attitude which is easy to observe and imitate, and this is a very important factor, because the imitator usually 'takes off' such features of his superiors as are easy to observe and easy to imitate. Therefore he imitates externals, and where his

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imitation becomes a caricature is the point where it becomes obvious that the attitude on the imitator's part is on a non-existent basis. Thus it is interesting to watch the attitude of the English 'mass-man' towards foreigners. It is quite often the result of social imitation, that is the imitation of the pre-First World War ruling class, sometimes that of the splendidly isolated bourgeois of Victorian England. This attitude still survives to a certain extent among mass-men of all classes, at its most painful among mass-men of the depressed bourgeoisie, penniless gentry, and the decrepit professional class. The splendidly isolated Victorian was often ignorant, had a frequent contempt for non-applied intelligence, and, as often as not, he felt a sense of inferiority, either because he was *nouveau riche*, or because he was forced to marry into the *nouveau riche*. He was, however, certainly a man of position, and his England was indisputably the most important and most powerful country on earth. His views in general, and his views on foreigners in particular, were adopted first by his domestic servants and then by those in contact with his servants. What a painful caricature this attitude becomes when it is adopted sixty years later by people who have only one single element in their lives to prompt such an attitude — their sense of inferiority. They certainly have not the economic superiority of the type they imitate, nor is Britain any longer the richest, most advanced and most powerful country on earth.

The time-lag between has interesting consequences. Descendants of the class whose attitudes are thus imitated have given up, or thoroughly modified, the prejudices of their grandfathers. In order, however, to maintain the respect of the imitator group, the ruling class (at least when in contact with it) often readopts the old prejudice in which they themselves no longer believe. For instance, it is interesting to watch the official class — say an M.P. making a speech at the village hall with direct and indirect references implying that foreigners are inherently inferior. Then, on the way home, he tells his foreign visitor who happens to be staying with him: 'Thank



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God, that is over. Didn't they remind you of cabbages?' One would think such a scene could only happen in England; it can — and it does, however — happen everywhere in the 'civilized' world. The only 'Englishness' about it is, perhaps, the word 'cabbage'; in other countries there is a stronger tendency to use the word 'sheep'.

Another line of nationalism on which the newspaper can successfully play comes from the same root as snobbishness, and like snobbishness is not merely a simple and ridiculous affair. The common root of snobbishness usually is a feeling of inferiority. The individual feels that he is inferior, or that he is being defeated. He tries, therefore, to look for compensation. Let us take an example of a common case of snobbishness very prevalent in Britain up till the Second World War, that is, title snobbishness. The person who feels his inadequacy (it is immaterial whether it is justified or not; the criterion is that he feels it) blatantly or skilfully boasts of aristocratic friends because he feels he does not possess any other ground on which he can stand out. He advertises therefore — regardless whether it is true or not — the fact that he was at school with Lord Quorn; that he is asked to week-ends at Great Warren, or that he calls the Earl of Gin and Lime by his Christian name. We find this ridiculous because aristocracy of birth is fictitious: a romantic and decaying survival; in other words, we find it ridiculous because it is an old-fashioned snobbishness. The man who boasts of the friendship of a commoner millionaire, or, still more up to date, the man who boasts of spending week-ends with Political Power or Executive Power is not necessarily ridiculous in our eyes. We may still laugh at him, but how uneasy, how unspontaneous, how self-defencelike our laughter becomes when we discover that 'he is not a liar, after all, damn it'. This is the point when we discover that snobbishness is not always romantic or innocent. And this is the point where the nationalist-snob enters the field. He feels that he is inadequate, frustrated; such a nonentity that he has no other ground to

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stand on than the fact that he belongs to the nation that invented the steamship or artificial silk, or the most popular or the most expensive car, or has the biggest army or the most gold, the longest history or the oldest traditions. This sort of snobbishness, naturally, is not valid for home consumption and in domestic relations; it can only be used against foreigners. And one does not laugh at the spectacle. Unlike territorial titles, powdered footmen, coronets, lions rampant or regardant in vert, gules or azure, stars and ribands and genuine or bogus ancestors, the object of the snobbishness, the nation-state, is neither innocent, nor romantic, nor old-fashioned, but a brutal piece of up-to-date reality.

These failures and prejudices are the ones towards which the popular Press in every country has to make concessions, but it fosters nationalism also on its own for other purposes. In a capitalist country it does it in order to provide a scapegoat, lest the public should try to question the bases of capitalism and inquire into the workings of the order the paper helps to maintain. In the only state-capitalist country in our time it provides the scapegoat lest the public should try to question the bases of state capitalism and inquire into the workings of the Communist Party.

Thus the Jingo Press and the Jingo journalist is a typical international institution. It exists in every country. Ilya Ehrenburg, Col. McCormick, William Barkley, Léon Daudet, Charles Maurras and many others have more in common with each other in mentality than their readers might guess. Their attitude towards foreigners is abuse, condescension or vulgar patronage in varying degrees, calculated to go down well with the unenlightened reader and his prejudices.

In connection with the problem of the clerk as a writer or as a journalist, the clerk who is a foreigner in the country in which he lives is also a vital factor. Generally speaking the foreign clerk has no better equipment than a native clerk, but he is bound to have better standards of comparison. Because he



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knows at least two sub-civilizations he can be a more unbiased judge than a native clerk. Therein lies the foreign clerk's chief merit, or chief attraction.

But there is another side to the question. Because the foreign clerk has better standards of comparison, he has a better equipment for seeing the universal in man, the things held in common, the identities. The foreign clerk, therefore, has not a better but a bigger equipment for discovering the truth.

The question remains now whether the foreign clerk does his best to find out the truth and does he communicate it to his audience? There is no doubt that in the majority of cases he does find the truth, although he very often refrains from telling it. Let us see why.

He lives in a foreign country usually for three reasons:

(a) Because he prefers the country to his own, often for semi-irrational reasons. These he usually sums up in the words 'mental climate'.

(b) Because of economic advantages.

(c) A refugee, looking for protection.

All these three reasons contain very solid grounds for emotional bias to prevent the foreign clerk either from seeing the truth or from telling it as he sees it. The clerk in the first group is, in a way, in love with the country in which he is living, and that tends to cloud his vision and prevent him from seeing the truth, regardless of whether he loves the country for the right reason or for the wrong one. The other two groups, however, while they may possess no blinkers in the same direction, cannot help developing blinkers in another; that is, they cannot help developing a loyalty to the country that provides them with a source of income or gives them shelter against persecution. Strictly speaking this loyalty need not be bigger than the loyalty of the native clerk who is also provided with a source of income and with shelter. Under actual circumstances, however, the foreign clerk is expected by that mysterious entity, the general public whose real composition and real mentality we do not know, to have a kind of super loyalty to the state in

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which he lives. This means, in terms of unwritten law, that he must not go as far in telling the truth as the native clerk, especially if the truth happens to be unpleasant, though he need not praise the country if he does not wish to.

These are very serious limitations which at times threaten to offset the inherent and potential advantages with which the foreign clerk starts out. As a rule they render him a negative factor. There are, however, other factors which can transform the foreign clerk from a negative factor into a conscious or unconscious traitor. This is the case when the foreign clerk suppresses or distorts the truth either through fear or for purposes of gain. He discovers, for example, that flattery pays dividends, and he discovers, furthermore, that he, because of his inherent and potential advantages, can flatter with more authority and to better effect than a native clerk.

In this respect we might as well leave category (*a*) alone. He is a comparatively rare, though international, case. His love for an adopted country, whether for right or wrong reasons, ought not to give him so strong a bias of fear, as is present in the case of classes (*b*) and (*c*). Let us, therefore, survey the two latter categories of foreign clerks — those who live in a country for material advantages, or because they are refugees — especially in Britain and in the U.S.A.

The refugee clerk in America has every reason, and in Britain has very good reasons, to feel grateful. He had been given shelter against a brutal tyranny and he had chances of earning a livelihood; in certain cases a livelihood bigger than in his own country. Under such circumstances he feels that he cannot possibly tell what he considers to be the truth, even if he is burning to tell it. Instead he feels he must express his admiration for the country.

This conclusion can come from another source — and this is the point where the refugee clerk is in danger of becoming a traitor in Britain or in America. In Britain he often discovers that the poise, the calm, the steady assurance, the apparent self-complacency of individual Englishmen are quite often



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nothing but a façade, a pose behind which there is — justified or unjustified — a painful sense of lack of confidence, inferiority, defeatism or honest doubt.

In America he discovers other senses of inferiority under the surface, the painful newness of the gold or the recently acquired world-powership, the hitherto not yet complete integration of the nation, the sense of *nouveau richesse*, etc.

If he is a good psychologist — and writers often are — he usually diagnoses the case correctly. (Besides, he usually is a Jew, and among Jews there is a greater incidence or higher frequency of good psychology than among non-Jews.) And the case, as he soon sees, creates as good a demand for relief or for flattery as the excitement-starvation of the shorthand typist for purple passion or for the ultimate triumph of virtue over vice. He feels that the English need reassurance and the Americans need flattery. He, therefore, rushes in and reassures them at cut prices.

The clerk who does this is not really a traitor. He is merely a prostitute; at times a *poule de luxe*. There are some clerks who play only an occasional hand at prostitution or at the black market of the spirit. The foreign clerk, however, becomes a traitor to the cause of the world, to truth and to the integrity of the spirit, when he lends his pen to hate-campaigns against other countries, regardless of whether the country in question is his own country of origin or not. It is immaterial what the springs that prompt his action really are; whether they are fear, a sense of revenge, hate, envy, chances of gain, chances of livelihood, publicity or qualifications for British or American citizenship. Emil Ludwig's book, *How To Treat The Germans*, is a good example of the Betrayal of the Clerk. Concessions must be made for the fact that Ludwig is a German Jew who has suffered directly, or by implication, by the fate of his race, and concessions may be made for the fact that Ludwig must feel uncomfortable when practically every review of his books in serious papers tell him directly or by implication that he is not a writer but a journalist. Concessions must be made,

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furthermore, because Ludwig has published a book in praise of Mussolini which he may feel he must live down by turning *volta fascist*. Ludwig, on the other hand, is a successful journalist, whose books are read by the thousand by the semi-literate, and such a person must have a sense of responsibility for his power over others. *How To Treat The Germans* belongs to the wildest example of the 'Let's be beastly to the Germans' school in Britain or in America.

An entirely dispassionate outlook is almost impossible for the refugee clerk, because he cannot forget he is a refugee. If, however, he really feels he loves the country, or has a reason to love the country and be loyal to it, if he feels he has a cause for gratitude, he could not perform a greater service to that country than by telling the truth. To tell the truth as such may be dangerous even for a writer whose ancestors had entered Britain with William the Conqueror, or America with William Penn, but there are ways and means. It is more often not so much a case of compromise as a case of tact and of skill. If he is a clerk, he can often find those ways and means. There are any amount of technical tricks which would enable him to convey what he wishes to convey without upsetting natural and obvious prejudices on the part of the frustrated members of the public or jealous members of his own profession. He must not be tactless in telling the truth; thus quite often he must not put on paper what he really feels like telling the reader. I admit there must have been an enormously strong temptation on the part of refugee clerks in Britain in 1940 to put in print what they felt about internment in the form they felt it. Here is an obvious formula:

Question: What happens if Private Rosenzweig of the Pioneer Corps is killed by accident or in action?

Answer: The War Office would put the following facts on record: 'Private Rosenzweig killed in action; *next of kin have been interned.*'

I admit that this, as puns go, is really a masterpiece. It may also correspond to an aspect of the truth, but that aspect of the



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truth must not be used to slap the face of not so much a country as what a number of people associate with the country. That aspect of the truth could have been conveyed in another form, not only more tactful, but, perhaps, by implication more shattering because more artistic.

It is true that the job, even on technical grounds, is not easy. A foreign clerk has a lesser chance than a native clerk in telling the truth through the mechanism of a language not his own. It is as a rule not very easy for him to tell the truth between the lines; to condemn in an unrelated clause, to hide a good deal of irony in a semicolon, to express a burning, honest doubt by a certain arrangement of words. The language — especially an old and traditional language like French or English — proves itself a very hard and resistant medium for a foreigner to become naturalized in. No matter how well he knows the inner and deeper secrets of grammar and the real differences between adjectives, there remains always something in the language for the outsider to which his ears are deaf. Granted the foreigner is not the only outsider in this respect, but all the same he is an outsider, more or less like an illiterate native, though for different reasons. A language thus does not give away its final secret to the outsider in the decisive moment. And for the writer, as Alexander Márai so clearly observed, every moment of creation is 'the decisive moment'.

In this respect it is interesting to read Robert Neumann's novel, *The Inquest*. I am not now discussing whether as a novel it is good or bad. It is actually good. I am merely reviewing one aspect of it, which is that among other things Neumann sets out to tell the truth about England during the invasion scare, tactfully and through literary means. He is a good literary technician, but he often fails in driving home the truth by implication simply because he is not really familiar with the English language. This is not because he is not an Englishman, but largely because he has not lived in the English language long enough. The result is crabbed prose and an overload of adjectives which would not matter, but those

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passages wherein he ought to convey the truth fall flat for every reader except those who translate certain apparent oddities back into German, the language in which Neumann unmistakably thinks. Then the reader understands with the smile and the excitement of the amateur detective that Neumann here meant a rebuke in an unrelated clause; there he meant to put irony into an ingenious play with adjectives. The intention, however, fails on account of the author's insufficient knowledge of his medium for the purpose.

The true meaning of the word 'clerk' is not exhausted by the writer and journalist, who might conveniently be called the scribe. The 'clerk' is a term which should cover all those who have access to the truth and those who are influencing public opinion, a group of people larger than the intelligentsia proper. It comprises, naturally and obviously, the priest, the politician, the teacher; it should, however, comprise also the ruling class as a class which certainly has access to the truth.

We have made frequent references to the fact that the dynamic of nationalism works in the form of a vicious circle of great strength. This aspect of nationalism is particularly true of the relations between ruling class and mass. There is no doubt that the latent or potential nationalism of the masses (social instinct and the necessity for finding a myth as a substitute for God) has been, during the past centuries, greatly encouraged by the ruling class. In our time the ruling class has an enormous potential vested interest in the nationalism of the masses. Those members of the ruling class, however, who to-day, along with most of the intelligentsia, would like to run away from nationalism and experiment with a new political system, are faced with a formidable difficulty, because the masses whose nationalism has been inflated by the propaganda of the past, as well as from the benefits conferred on them by the ruling class acting as the state, offer strong opposition. How strong this opposition is we do not know, but it is likely to



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prevent or to frustrate attempts at 'misleading' the masses, as it were, for the first time in history *in their own interest*.

It seems there are but two ways out of this tragic vicious circle. The first is a highly democratic one: the education, or rather the re-education, of the masses. This is a highly desirable solution of the problem, but quite frankly it is a Utopian one. For one thing, it needs an understanding and unity of purpose of which the victors of the Second World War are totally incapable. Besides, education or re-education takes time, and time may be too short. The other way is the way of historical precedent: conquest, and the liquidation of the ruling class of the conquered country either by killing it off, buying it off, or rendering it impotent. If this is done the conqueror in question is faced with the leaderless and amorphous mass of the conquered country which, if satisfied with the treatment accorded in return for advantages, develop a loyalty towards the conqueror. This is a highly undesirable way, but it is a way which has often been followed in history. This was, in fact, the historical process which helped to give birth to the nation-state; and it is, furthermore, the process which seems to be happening under our very eyes in the Russian zone of influence. I shall discuss this problem in detail in the final chapter of this book.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GREAT ILLUSION

THE most typical and the most important fact about nationalism is that it is urgently separatist in character. This means that the greatest problem in the world to-day, a world-wide political and economic organization, is very difficult to solve; not because nation-states are fundamentally different from each other, but because in this most important respect they are fundamentally similar, in fact identical. Some of their inhabitants, individually, may want close international co-operation, but the nation-state as such wishes to be independent. In order to be independent it must also be strong and prosperous, and this, in the end, inevitably happens at the expense of another nation-state. Thus there may not be too much irony in the application of a scientific observation to the case of nation-states, according to which 'opposites attract but identities repel'.

The strength of the nation-state to insist on separation and independence, to insist on being the sole judge in its own cause, is based on various factors. The first factor is the physical, or armed strength of the nation, that is force. This is essential, but it is not enough. The nation, in common with other forms of organized society, also needs certain ways of feeling and thinking, conceptions of acceptable truths, in order to maintain itself, and these are called ideologies. These are, as it were, the purpose of the nation, without them the nation would cease to exist.

These national ideologies — just as ideologies in general — are not based wholly on scientific foundation; in other words, they are not based on the absolute truth. They are expressions of relative truth, national truth, private truth. They are truths partly because the nation wants them to be truths, and partly



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because the nation believes them to be truths. The typical fact about national ideologies is that in every country they parade in the guise of the absolute truth; most people in every country believe that they are universally valid and are based on scientific facts.

The form of national ideology in which every nation expresses its differences from other nations is the conception of national character which, like other ideologies, is a collection of truths and a collection of myths. The current belief on the part of most people in every nation is that national character is fundamentally immutable, that it is not subject to gross changes. This belief is partly based on physical facts and partly on precious and beautiful mysteries that 'foreigners can never really understand'. It is something like family affairs. It is true, of course, that not all members of the family share the secret. Uncle John, most regrettably, has been removed to a mental home; Cousin Roger, on the other hand, married below himself and left the family, and worse still . . . well, the less we talk about Dennis the better . . . but otherwise we are still together, sixteen of us, and our family secrets and family affairs are our own and have nothing to do with the Blennerhassetts next door or the Thynne-Stapletons opposite . . . In any case we have always been the same, and always will be, and there always will be war because 'our enemies' would always 'will' war deliberately, because it has been proved by great historians that they are 'fundamentally beastly' and that they always liked war. . . .

'National character' also means that our own nation is either 'effortlessly superior' to other nations (this is the most frequent case) or if it is not, then things went wrong because 'our enemies' made use of our 'fundamental good nature' and 'stupidity'. Yes, we have to confess we have been stupidly honest . . . We were prevented from becoming superior because we had to bleed for two centuries to defend Western culture against the Eastern invader . . . In spite of the fact that we are the greatest nation on earth we could never attain their high

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material prosperity because we have been defending the cause of democracy in the two greatest wars in history, and we have been all the time deprived of the fruits of victory . . . We, on the other hand, have been dragged into the two greatest wars in history by that selfish, small-minded mob, who made us sacrifice the flower of our youth for their bloody imperialist interests . . . Whereas we, we have been encircled and when we protested they said it was we who encircled ourselves. But we will not rest; truth will prevail and one day we shall be victorious, and if we are defeated, defeat will be only temporary. It cannot crush our undying spirit, our unity of purpose; it will only steel our will and determination. We shall rise again as one man . . . We certainly are the greatest nation on earth, and even our enemies have to acknowledge our power, but we have to be on our guard because they envy us. We shall have to fight to preserve our greatness . . . we shall fight on the beaches, on the landing grounds, in the air; we shall never surrender . . . And if we do, it is only a temporary surrender due to the treachery of those whom we trusted. We shall rise again. We never, never, never shall be slaves. . . .

These words 'never, never, never shall be slaves' are the most concise summary of the national ideology in the international sense. In the last analysis it is every nation's motto. In time of war it captivates the masses as efficiently as the snap of Pavlov's finger caused his dog to salivate, even though the dog did not smell food because there was no food.

National ideology based on the myth of 'national character' is naturally not the invention of totalitarian thinkers. The German Nazi merely carried to its logical conclusion an idea which is universally present in every nation-state. Given the chance and the circumstances it could everywhere be carried to the same conclusion. Fascism is not implicit in race or in climate, or in the wickedness of man; it is implicit in the nation-state. Far from being a foreign idea it is the native idea of every country. It is nothing but a national ideology carried to extremes.



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The ideas and the desires that bring about national ideologies are as old as the myth of national character, and in a sense older than the nation-state. In the beginning they took the shape of tribal ideologies and tribal character, and they led to war between tribes and clans. When the tribes and clans were united into nation-states (which meant that they no longer fought each other, but fought other tribes united into other nation-states), the tribal ideologies changed into national ideologies. They exercised little influence on nations, at least in Europe, while Europe was united by a universal Church, but they became strong when the Church lost its power. For centuries these ideologies were little more than innocent day-dreams based on bits of half-truths, until in the nineteenth century they were promoted to the rank of science, because the ruling class in every nation-state discovered that they had political and economic value. It is often believed that national ideology was invented by Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The truth is that it certainly had been *invented*, but not by these two nineteenth-century writers. What these two men did was to rediscover something which was very old. They were pioneers in one respect only: they laid the foundation for the intellectual organization of international political hatred. They soon made disciples in every single country.

The mainstay of all these national ideologies is that both individual and collective character are determined by race; in other words, national character is derived from common ancestors. For such a claim there is no scientific evidence to be found. People believe in national character because certain half-truths at the bottom of it make generalizations possible, because it suits the interest of the ruling class, and, finally, because most people have need for a myth. Myth and totem are as old as man.

What are the half-truths? A very convenient example is the climatic factor. Climate, as is well known, is responsible for striking differences both in physical and mental features between human beings. Climate is in fact responsible for race,

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and in a way it is not an exaggerated conclusion to reach that history in one respect is little more than variations on a climatic theme. Climate is responsible for colour and other physical features and for behaviour. The piece of truth which in connection with climate helps the racial theorist, and for that matter anybody who wishes to evolve a racial theory of his own, is that climatic influences are to a certain extent hereditary. Science acknowledges this although it does not know to what extent these climatic influences are hereditary. It certainly is true that descendants of negro immigrants still display typical negroid features even after a century of residence in the temperate zone, but would it be scientifically correct to say that colour corresponds with mental characteristics and that the mental characteristics also remained typically negroid? It would if colour always, or in the majority of cases, corresponded to mental characteristics. But it does not. In fact, science has proved time and time again that even hereditary mental traits would soon disappear if the individual was moved into a different climate. At the same time it is a common observance that geography and climate are factors of steadily diminishing importance.

Another piece of half-truth is the frequency of certain patterns of habit and behaviour within the nation-state. There are many of these: tea-drinking in Britain is an example. These observations encouraged many people in every country to believe that there is a solidarity between the members of the nation: uniformity of thinking and uniformity of behaviour. The truth is that the members of no nation display a complete uniformity of behaviour, but all the same isolated existence within the frontiers of the nation-state do in varying degrees result in a certain measure of uniformity and in a spontaneous cohesion. In certain countries this is greater than in others. It is always stronger in countries which have lived in isolation behind strong natural frontiers. The strongest natural frontier being water, cohesion is slightly stronger in Britain than in the rest of Europe, and stronger in Japan than on the Asiatic



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mainland. A really strong solidarity and cohesion, however, has never existed by any other means except force. This fact is clearly demonstrated by a great national emergency such as war. In time of war the spontaneous cohesion of the nation-state is at its highest, but even then it would be ridiculous to claim a really strong cohesion and solidarity. As an example, take Britain, where spontaneous cohesion is comparatively high. It was not high enough in 1914 or 1915 to make Englishmen volunteer in sufficient numbers for the armed forces and the lack of cohesion had to be made good by force through the introduction of conscription. Nor was cohesion greater in Britain during the Second World War. The mere existence — as a threat in the background — of the Emergency Powers Act, which means the partial suspension of the Constitution, was not in itself enough. It had to be brought into use to enforce national cohesion. Persons had to be detained without trial, a Member of Parliament had to be deprived of his special constitutional privileges, newspapers had to be banned, the right of free discussion had to be partly suppressed. In a dictatorship the cohesion of the nation is apparently greater than in a democracy, because the force used for the purpose is greater and the state machinery is specially equipped to enforce cohesion. Where democracy detains without a trial, dictatorship would kill, and dictatorship has a larger and better equipped secret police for political purposes with more efficient methods, instead of the 'plain-clothes' methods of democracy with their half-hearted, half-concealed, clumsy, apologetic brutality.

Even the means at the disposal of the totalitarian state do not supply sufficient deterrents to a group of individuals who are disloyal to the state. Indeed, the totalitarian state is forced to organize 'purges' from time to time in order to ensure the necessary solidarity of the nation. They cannot take chances. After the liberation of Western Russia and Poland a few thousand Russian and Tartar quislings had to be shot. They had collaborated with the Germans. The extent of the collabor-

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ation is difficult to assess, but incidents like these cast a significant light on the fact that the Soviet Union is misleading its ignorant masses to the same extent as other countries mislead them. This is one of the real reasons why U.S.S.R. citizens cannot travel abroad, except on business; why foreigners are kept under strict supervision and why illustrated magazines coming from abroad are often confiscated. The fact is that Russia cannot afford its masses to find out that capitalism is not yet dead; at least, not dead enough not to provide a far larger quantity of consumption goods than the Russian masses at present can call their own. That the Soviet Union in time will produce these goods and make them available to her masses is not in the least doubtful; the fact is, however, that she is as yet unable to do so. Because of this an uncontrolled talk by a foreigner, or even a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post*, might become a piece of seditious propaganda against the unity of the U.S.S.R. Some Russians might laugh when they hear that the chairman of the Chase National Bank or of the London Passenger Transport Board does *not* beat up his employees regularly with a whip, but there is a danger that some might believe that he does not. And similarly there may be any number of credulous Russian workers who might believe that practically every English working man can afford to buy a bicycle and that there are thousands of workers in America who own a car, a refrigerator or a radiogram. Patriotic U.S.S.R. citizens, of course, would smile contemptuously when they heard such calculated capitalist propaganda, but there is always the danger that there are many who are not patriotic enough.

National character, by those who claim it exists and propagate it as truth, should mean that at least the majority of the nation would display a uniformity of character, conduct, emotion and thought, and that these components are essentially different from those of other nations. This is not the case. Not only is there no uniformity of character, but there is little



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uniformity of national behaviour beyond the pattern produced largely by the artificial means of education and propaganda. This uniformity of behaviour can be strengthened by a greater use of the state power in educational and propaganda methods as in the dictatorships. In fact, these methods might even have a lasting effect on people's minds. They might — indeed, they do — produce mental habits. We all know that slaves who suddenly regain freedom for the first time in their lives often do not know what to do with it. The immediate reaction of the convict to freedom, after a long term of imprisonment, is very seldom an outbreak of joy over liberty regained. It is interesting and very typical, however, to recall how quickly individuals and masses recover from certain influences that have produced mental habits. The Russian masses of the Czarist regime were held to be as deeply, exclusively and uniformly religious as the Spanish masses of the Monarchy. Yet when religion was officially abolished in both countries considerable sections of the masses quickly forgot all about the Church. Similarly when the churches were allowed to function, large numbers of 'Godless' Russians returned to the Church.

Some people modify their belief about national character and say that it is liable to changes in various periods of history. They say, for example, that the English national character was merry and music-loving in Tudor times, whereas in modern times it is moderate and supposed to be unmusical. This is a contradiction in terms. The national character of England, or that of any other country, never changed because it never existed. What has changed, and is subject to continuous change, is the behaviour of a large section of the population, or the behaviour of the ruling class, with which the British nation is as much associated as foreign nations are associated in Britain with the behaviour of one class — usually the ruling class. Ruling-class ideas certainly influence the masses in varying degrees, and this influence certainly lasts for periods of varying lengths. The behaviour which foreign contemporaries

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observed in the English during various periods of history, and what the English contemporaries observed about foreigners of the past was true about the section they observed. It was, however, always a section, and this section was as often as not the ruling class. The common man collectively would have presented as colourless a picture as he presents now in every country. His general behaviour is colourless because he seldom goes to extremes, and in fundamental respects he acts and reacts very much alike all over the world. His fundamental wishes, desires and interests are the same all over the world and have been so in all times: food, shelter, clothes, security, leisure and liberty to develop his personality. It is also a fundamental fact about the common man in general that he does not really care under what government he lives as long as his wants are satisfied on an increasing scale. These fundamental wishes and interests of the masses certainly go into the making of the unity of the nation-state, but in reality they are factors of the unity of mankind. These factors are characteristic of mankind because they are not subject to change. In this connection, however, it is obvious that we can only talk about human character and not about national character, and about human unity instead of national unity. National unity is temporary and it is much less than human unity, but it looks more real because national unity is organized and because the social instinct of man in our time is being exploited by the nation-state. In the last analysis people are members of the nation-state only partly through their free will, partly because, under the present state of our civilization, it is impossible for them to leave the boundaries of the nation-state except for the boundaries of another nation-state. The nation-state is thus a prison for mankind, a prison with large and small cells. Many people feel this vaguely but very few of them know it consciously. And if some of them were to become conscious of this human bondage, they would often be tempted to think that it is a law of nature: it has always been so, and cannot be altered.



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When we discover a trait which seems characteristic of one nation we soon discover that it is also characteristic of another nation, or of several nations. Then we suddenly discover that the trait in question is characteristic only of one section of the nation or of the nations concerned. Let us take the well-known English trait which is supposed by many to be deep in English mentality: that the English are so sure of themselves that not only do they tolerate but definitely like criticism and even encourage stories at their expense.

The truth is that those who are sure of themselves may like and encourage criticism against themselves. But who are these? Upper-class individuals no doubt display such an attitude when they are really sure of themselves, or may make a show of such an attitude even if they are unsure. The same is true of the intellectuals. But this is a trait which is typical of corresponding groups of people all over the world. It is certainly not true of groups which are not sure about themselves, or are less under the influence of the *élite*; in fact, at the present stage, it is as typical of the English masses as it is of masses in any nation-state to feel offended if their country is criticized by a foreigner or even by a compatriot. It is a question of degree. This attitude, in fact, expresses itself in violent intolerance of criticism in the case of people who are unsure of themselves and who, in order to gain assurance, use nationalism as a means of emotional self-defence. We have already said that for certain sections of the community in every country nationalism becomes as much a question of bigotry as religion. In certain respects it is more satisfying and more realistic. The doctrine of 'the sun never sets' and the fact that the British are effortlessly superior to other races are easier to believe in than the Immaculate Conception or the Holy Trinity.

It is true that sometimes sections of the English community who are not the least sure of themselves display this attitude, because they have neither social position nor education nor money. In their case the attitude is often nothing but social learning: imitation of the *élite* without understanding why the

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élite is so tolerant in this respect. It is a convention; it is 'done'. Thousands of people do not know why the upper classes do not eat peas with a knife, and why 'smart' people take the spoon out of the cup when they drink their tea, but all the same they imitate such manners either because they expect social rewards or try to escape social punishments.

In an earlier chapter it was said the three groups of people we usually imitate are those older than ourselves, those we regard as more intelligent, and those we regard as more socially prominent. But there is also a fourth group. This fourth group is not a clear case of imitation, because although at the bottom of it there is the motive of reward, there is no motive of admiration. On the contrary, those who indulge in this type of imitation quite often look down on the group of people, some of whose ways and opinions they imitate or pretend to adopt, because they know that the ways are out of date and the opinions are false. The attitude, if one is charitable, can be called concession to democracy; it can also be called democatitis — a malady which is not dangerous like tuberculosis but unpleasant and ludicrous like gout. In many cases it is nothing but the Great Betrayal: the Treason of the Clerk. These attitudes of inverted social imitation are typically displayed by some members of the ruling class who are directly or indirectly in contact with the masses or who are in the public eye. Much of it is innocent and amusing, such as the deliberately plebeian way of dressing (certain types of clothes, certain types of hats, Albert watch chain across the waistcoat, etc.), or deliberate ignorance (reference to the Continent as 'Europe', or mispronunciation of foreign words, whose correct pronunciation they know only too well). These engaging little examples of the 'common touch' which, at times, so successfully create the impression in the charwoman that the duchess is 'just like ourselves', are comparatively harmless ways of vote-catching. When, however, inverted imitation comes to the adaptation of the prejudices of the group which is limited in outlook because it is limited in opportunity in the field of foreign affairs and



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displays an appalling ignorance about countries foreign to ours, the vote-catcher becomes a traitor.

Another example is the question of national opera in Britain. The accepted tenet is the following: 'The English do not like opera, therefore there is no regular opera in England.' The truth, on the other hand, is that no country likes opera sufficiently to make it a paying proposition. There is not one single country on earth where permanent opera seasons would pay. As a result, operas are organized on two lines: either there is a state subsidy, or there is a group of rich people who are fond of music, or who are snobbish enough, or public spirited enough, to subsidize opera seasons out of their own pockets. The famous opera lovers, the Italians and the Germans, would go without opera if the state did not use a small portion of the budget every year to subsidize opera-houses. In America private enterprise still reigns supreme, at least as far as the Metropolitan Opera goes. In Britain, however, the old British tradition of struggle against a permanent opera is threatening to be countered by state subsidy. Since the nineteen-thirties a regular yearly pittance is being given to the Vic-Wells managements. This is the thin edge of the wedge, and if defenders of British freedom from opera are not on their guard, it may happen that in a few years' time there will be permanent opera seasons in Britain giving performances of high quality at popular prices.

Still another popular fallacy — which the Second World War might have helped to correct — is the belief in Britain that foreigners in general, and Poles in particular, are born linguists. The shred of truth on which this belief may be based is the fact that the Polish upper class, in common with that of Central and Eastern Europe, brought up their offspring from an early age to speak one or two foreign languages. This in Western Europe was not necessary, except in the smaller unit. But it is only true of the Central European upper or middle classes with which the whole nation is associated. The majority of Poles speak English after several years of training and

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residence in this country with the same difficulty as an Englishman would speak Polish under the same circumstances.

That the English, on the other hand, are no linguists is another traditional and quite silly prejudice. In the heyday of Victorian prosperity the learning of foreign languages was not necessary, and consequently only a small layer of the British upper class kept foreign governesses. For the class under the upper class it was, for one thing, far cheaper to imitate those of the upper classes who kept no foreign governesses than those who did. Social imitation is often imitation of negatives.

Talking of national traits there is the Englishman's deep and traditional love of freedom. So much has been talked about it for so many years that foreign observers were and are ready to be suspicious of or to poke fun at it, especially if they know the extent of freedom existing in Britain to-day. The most merciless satire on British freedom is Voltaire's English sailor who is proudly singing the praise of English liberty while he is being forcibly taken by a press-gang to serve in the Navy. Indeed, in the end many people, some English included, are quite ready to believe that freedom was invented by the English in the same way as the family must have been invented by the Americans. The truth is that every nation is freedom-loving to the extent that no people likes excessive interference. The Germans, the Italians, the Russians are no more fond of dictatorship than the British, although large sections of them voted for it and/or accepted it because of historical circumstances. A few millions of the friends of freedom, of course, are in concentration camps in all dictatorships. When the dictator was a success in the field of foreign policy, large sections jumped to the conclusion that dictatorship was a blessing after all. When, twenty years after the brutalities of the blockade enforced on Germany, the Prime Minister of England began to kowtow to Hitler, the Germans naturally forgot that they were not free. And unthinking millions thought quite naturally that Hitler was God when France fell twenty-two years after Foch's proud boast that 'Germany is no more'.



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To some observers the loud and excited talk in Britain about freedom is highly suspicious. They think it covers a good deal of justified uneasiness. Their opinion is that under the present dispensation it is impossible to check the growth in the power of the state anywhere, and Britain is no exception. In their opinion there is a good deal of anxiety behind the songs of British freedom over the fact that Britain is not in the least unready for a form of dictatorship. They feel that the British tradition of freedom — long and distinguished as it is — is not in itself enough. Their interpretation is that the common man is ready for a totalitarian system when he complains about lack of leadership, and they think the common man does not know much about the real nature of dictatorships, with the exception of organized labour, which knows one really significant feature of Fascism: the dissolution of trade unions. The common man, generally speaking, associates dictatorships with outward and visible details: party-badges, uniforms and symbols, goose step and forms of salute, concentration camps and brutality. Without these, it is admitted, it is difficult to organize a dictatorship, but by no means impossible.

The British race, of course, never invented freedom and democracy, but it contributed much to both. In the course of history the British certainly evolved ingenious, practical improvements on institutions already in existence elsewhere, such as parliamentary government and constitutional monarchy. The explanation, it seems to me, is the survival in England of constitutional forms from the Middle Ages, which in most countries, though more in Central than in Western Europe, were destroyed by the new monarchy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These things, all in all, certainly created something like a national tradition of freedom in Britain. Nevertheless, there is a national tradition of freedom in every country, and there is little disagreement between nations about the fundamentals of what freedom really is.

Thus it is of no use saying there is no material for a dictatorship in Britain, as we know full well how many people were



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ready to lend themselves to Fascism in the mid-thirties, and how many more would have been ready if a more popular or more promising personality had led the movement, not counting those careful enthusiasts who, like some German Nazis, would have joined the movement at the eleventh hour. To say that Mosley failed solely because he took a stand against British tradition is wishful thinking, to say the least of it.

It is often said that national unity is broken by class differences and that money frontiers are stronger than national frontiers. This argument is impossible to deny, but not too easy to accept. On the one hand the Marxian prophecy that the nation will be superseded by class is not true in our time; on the other hand, class is not identical with income. Income is, without doubt, the most important factor in class stratification, but not the only one. Social differences between individuals are not entirely economic. Other elements also play important parts. Thirty years ago an English naval officer and a veterinary surgeon with identical incomes did not consider each other as social equals. To-day the overwhelming majority of naval officers and vets are both advanced enough not to think of such idiotic nonsense, and yet they are not likely to have much in common, except if they both happen to share some common interest, say stamp collecting or fly-fishing. The difference here is functional. There are many people to-day who do not attend school or regimental reunions, and if they do often only out of pure and understandable curiosity. Further, even at an age when class differences were more naked and harsh than they are to-day, people very often had nothing whatsoever in common with their ex-schoolmates, colleagues, or fellow members of the same club, nor quite often with members of their own family.

It is as true that class is not entirely based on social-economic foundations, as it is true to say that it is based on the foundations of social and economic privileges. In the last analysis it is



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privilege, or rather unjustified privilege,<sup>1</sup> which renders class a problem. A classless society really means a society without unjustified privileges enjoyed by a group of people.

Nothing depresses the nationalist more than the discovery that a national institution or a piece of national philosophy dear to him is also a national institution or a piece of national philosophy of another country, except the subsequent discovery that the things in question are not borrowed or stolen from his nation, but came about through natural causes. He is depressed because he wishes his country, its institutions and its expressions to be different from others. Thus, it is always embarrassing for the metropolitan-regionalist to find that what he thought typical of Paris or Berlin or London is in fact typical of all big cities. Thus, the spirit behind the Cockney legend is not fundamentally different from the spirit behind the legends of Metropolitan Man all over our civilization. What it is, however, different from is the spirit of the countryside. A typical piece of Cockney wit is better appreciated in New York or in Paris or in Berlin, that is, by the first cousin of Metropolitan Man than, say, by the inhabitants of Cheltenham or Market Harborough, who are first cousins once removed of the Cockney. It is easier to translate Cockney into argot, into Berlin or Brooklyn dialect, than into Leicestershire dialect. Stories like 'Albert and the Lion' can be enjoyed by Metropolitan Man abroad, who might even regard them as his own. Some of the best examples of genuine Cockney wit I heard when I was fourteen years old from hawkers and street vendors in Budapest.

We need not waste words on the 'deep and mysterious' national spirit (which no foreigner can hope to understand) as reflected in proverbs. Some of the best, and most expressive proverbs are entirely international.

<sup>1</sup> Thus nobody would be hurt by the fact that persons over the age of sixty-five enjoy a privilege in the form of the Old Age Pension, that a lame person is not subject to service in the Armed Forces, or that a blind person would be exempt from paying a fee for his radio licence.

## CHAPTER X

### THE POLITICS OF ECONOMICS

THE two problems of our civilization, the political and economic problems, are intertwined at so many points that it is extremely difficult to separate them. This is the reason why so many people assert that they cannot be separated, and that is why they talk about the 'twin' problem, instead of the 'two problems' of the world.

These two problems, however, can be and, for scientific purposes, must be separated, for then we can see the political and economic factors in their correct proportions, and we discover at once that the political problem is slightly bigger and more difficult to solve than the economic problem, and not the other way round, as most people think. For this mistaken belief there are very powerful reasons, and these explain why there are more discussions, more newspaper articles, more books about the economic problem and more economic than political experts. In view of the fact that the political problem is rather more important, it is really ludicrous that at most universities politics are treated as a branch of economics, or of law, and seldom have a separate and independent school or faculty. These reasons also explain the great confusion in terminology between politics and economics and the compromise designation: political economy. Most people who describe themselves as political reformers (such as the Labour Party in Britain) hardly realize that they are really economic or social reformers in political isolation.

What are the reasons for these mistaken beliefs? My view is that there are two main reasons. First, politics are still regarded through nineteenth-century spectacles, which means that a large number of people still believe that man is largely governed by conscious reasoning. This means that most people do not



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realize that, political activity being a human activity, it inevitably follows biological conditions and is the result of biological processes, that — in short — politics are a form of biological behaviour. One of the jobs of the political expert, therefore, ought to be to try to find out why the problem of the world cannot be solved in economic terms alone, and why the war of the twentieth century broke out the very moment the world became interdependent, and for the first time in history was ready for an intelligent economic solution.

Secondly, the economic problem of our time is the one which is visible in the foreground, whereas the political problem for the most part is hidden. Consequently the economic problem appears very much out of its correct proportion, like hands or feet when nearer the camera in a badly focused photograph. It is thus easy to believe that it is the economic problem which hurts, whereas the truth without much exaggeration is that the economic problem is not much more than an agency through which the political problem causes pain. To believe that the economic is the major problem is more than a mistaken belief; it is a tragic belief, because we in the fifth decade of the twentieth century are witnessing the fact again and again that the solution of the economic problem in the splendid isolation of the political frontiers of the nation-state is no solution at all, but at most a treatment of symptoms.

We look upon liberalism as a politico-economic doctrine which in its heyday meant the supreme good, trying to create order in a threatening anarchy; a doctrine, however, which in the end was defeated by the very same force it helped to release. Liberalism insisted on the free interchange of goods, and it conferred great blessings on the world for a time. It created a hitherto unexperienced prosperity, and an international division of labour which ultimately is bound to unite the world. Liberalism, however, released the forces of nationalism. Nations were not satisfied with being independent (in which they were

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quite right, because independence by itself alone is worth nothing); they yearned to be strong. They became jealous of each other in general and of Britain in particular — the first country which industrialized herself and became wealthy and powerful as a result. In varying degrees they all began to imitate Britain's example of large-scale industrialization. However, in order to ensure success, they returned to tariffs — an invention of the Mercantilists of the sixteenth century — which meant, in so many words, putting the clock back. Tariffs were a defensive measure against liberalism (internationalism), and in the parlance of the twentieth century became known as economic nationalism. This happened particularly in the United States and Germany, two countries which, for geographical and geological reasons, were Britain's principal rivals. That fifty years later it was Germany and not the United States which found its problem impossible of solution without recourse to war was the consequence largely of particular geographical and historical circumstances, though emotional reasons played a part in the matter too.

The principal argument abroad against Britain or against liberalism was that Britain was exchanging her industrial output with her rivals for other goods on terms which were *too favourable* to Britain, and that she could more than afford to maintain liberalism (free trade) because of her wealth and industrial progress. Unless, therefore, her rivals imposed tariffs in order to foster their infant industries they would never reach the same standards of prosperity and power.

The result of this reasoning abroad was economic contraction in Britain and, after a time, in other countries. To counter this, imperialism was the obvious measure. Britain's imperialism was, in turn, followed by her rivals, and the rest of the story is too well known to merit repetition.

There was at that time no restrictive influence between nation-states as indeed there is none to-day. International ethics being non-existent, every state resorted to unfair and dishonest



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methods in the interest of their national ethics. They raised their tariff walls high, they dumped, they rationalized, they engaged themselves in sordid imperialist struggles in order to gain or to maintain prestige. Germany's case was not really a special case, but a case which was the result of particular circumstances. The Germans were forced, through their geographical position of a landlocked state with a permanent sense of suffocation plus the permanent pressure of Russia on her eastern frontiers, to go much further in rivalry than the United States. The rivalry between Britain and Germany and Britain and the United States in the early nineteen-hundreds was almost identically sharp. It is true that the President of the United States did not send a congratulatory telegram to Kruger, as the Kaiser did. But had Theodore Roosevelt done so a similar section of America's population to that which, in Germany, applauded the Kaiser's act would have applauded his. As it happened, that section in America thoroughly approved of Theodore Roosevelt's publicly expressed view that the United States would sooner or later *have* to go to war with Britain for Canada. Had Britain gone to fight the United States in 1914 (not unlikely on the side of Germany) British publicists could have quite comfortably provided as much historical evidence for the inherent beastliness of Americans as they provided for the 'inherent beastliness' of the Germans. What finally decided the issue in the early nineteen-tens was Germany's comparative smallness, her closer geographical proximity (which meant greater and more immediate danger), and a closer identity between America and Britain, very largely on account of their common language.

The conditions for that 'war' which began between the great powers early in the nineteen-tens, were the beginnings of imperialism. The interdependence of the world before the nineteen-tens, however, was not yet complete and thus the absence of armed conflict between the powers easily persuaded their populations that there was peace in the world. Looking back on the 'good old days' of the age of imperialism, we

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cannot help feeling that, compared with the twentieth century, those days were normal and idyllic, with all their brutality.

Economics is a science, whereas nationalism is an irrational force, and the result is that nationalism all the time tends to defeat the scientific character of economics. The nationalist wants economic self-sufficiency regardless of whether it is possible or not from the scientific (economic) point of view. It is child's play even for a man with an elementary knowledge of economics to prove that tariffs, for example, are detrimental in the long run, and even though they would lead to higher wages they would not, in the end, lead to higher *real* wages, that is purchasing power. The nationalist, however, would brush this obvious truth aside and marshal powerful emotional arguments in defence of protectionist measures. Why should we eat Californian apples? What a shame and what idiocy! We could grow our own. It is old-fashioned nonsense that our climate is unsuitable, and even if it is unsuitable (even if the apples give diarrhoea) they would be true British apples and their cultivation would provide employment for true Britishers. This is the essence of the argument of economic nationalism — identical everywhere in the world. It is very easy to realize how irresistible the nationalist's argument might prove for (a) the poor, (b) the uneducated, and for (c) the entrepreneur, who may be quite rich and well educated and not necessarily a strong nationalist. He observes that nationalism creates an opportunity which he ought to seize because if he does not somebody else will. The sad consequence of protectionism is first, that other countries follow suit; and secondly, that it is extremely difficult to stop it, because returning to peace (protectionism is *war*) would violate vested interests grown up under its shelter. It would violate the vested interests of capital and labour alike and, in a roundabout way, real national interests.

Protectionism, however, is not only practised in industrial or agricultural production. It is also practised in the field of



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labour, where it takes the form of the ban on foreign immigration. The fact that the United States, the main outlet for the European unemployed before 1914, was forced to impose a ban on foreign immigration in 1920 greatly added to the problems of the world which the Peace Treaties, on the whole, made worse than they were before 1914. The world crisis of the 'thirties was mainly caused by the fact that economic factors could not be co-ordinated because of the force of nationalism. This force caused the First World War; then instead of abating nationalism the war made it grow stronger. The Peace Treaties restricted themselves to establishing an armed truce, because the nationalism which dictated the peace blinded the peace-dictators. After the illusory and artificial prosperity of the mid-twenties, the unsolved political problem provoked financial nemesis, which produced unemployment and a further increase of nationalism (Fascism). Under the circumstances every state tried to defend itself against the slump in the only way it could, regardless of consequences; that is, by further protectionism. The Second World War was a logical and inevitable outcome. It may be open to argument whether if this or that political step had been made, war might have arrived a year or two earlier or could have been delayed by a year or two. Given the anarchy of sovereignty, the Second World War was impossible to avoid.<sup>1</sup> The ifs of history are interesting but futile. It has often been argued that if France and Britain had allied themselves with Russia, Germany would not have dared to proceed any further, and war would thus have been avoided. The truth is that if such an alliance had been made when there was a chance of it, war would not have arrived at 11 a.m. on Sunday, September 3rd, 1939. The rest is open to conjecture. A pact, in order to be effective, would have meant more than a paper peace signed by Chamberlain, Daladier and Stalin. Russia would have made demands on Britain and France; in fact, fairly strong demands (she held excellent cards in her hands),

<sup>1</sup> Just as to-day we seem to resign ourselves to the fact that a Third World War will follow as soon as it becomes technically possible.



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and the satisfaction of her demands would have entailed vital changes in Britain's economic structure, changes Britain would have been unwilling to make. In this connection too much emphasis has been laid on the fact that Britain was, and still remains, a capitalist country. Differences in economic structures are not the primary differences which separate countries and prevent their co-operation. In the same way it is a very one-sided point of view which blames the capitalist alone for the Great Slump. The responsibility of the capitalist for the slump was nothing more than the fact that the capitalist had exploited the already existing international anarchy. The slump was an inevitable consequence of political disintegration and lack of international economic planning; in short, of unscientific economic activity, and thus it would have come after a time even if all countries in 1930 had turned socialist in political isolation.

On the other hand few well-informed people to-day would blame the capitalists for the Second World War. It is clear and self-evident that, contrary to his attitude towards wars in the past, the capitalist from 1930 on did his level best everywhere to prevent the war, because far from being a paying proposition, war — quite correctly — seemed to him most dangerous to his interests. He is to-day therefore in an ironical situation, and one that becomes more ironical as the state gradually realizes that war is too serious a business to be left in the hands of capitalists, who are unwilling to finance it because it no longer pays them, thereby endangering the country's war effort. The result is further encroachments by the state on the preserves of the capitalist.

From the above it is clear that the solution of the problem of the world is planning both production and consumption on an international or world scale. It is also clear that this solution demands enormous sacrifices all over the world in general, and in wealthy countries in particular. From the point of view of common sense, therefore, we can thus easily explain the war of the twentieth century by the following sweeping



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generalization: the war broke out early in the nineteen-hundreds and it will continue throughout the century because the nations of the world seem to think that the sacrifices entailed in establishing peace would be heavier than the sacrifices entailed in continuing war, in other words because war seems cheaper than peace.

In the following chapters in general, and in the following two chapters in particular, I shall enlarge on this generalization.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE FOLKLORE OF SOCIALISM

WAR is the inevitable consequence of the fact that a healthy economic and social organization for the world is impossible because of the disintegration of the world into sovereign nation-states. Economic and social organization is the outcome of sovereignty: a result of a country's domestic policy being carried out regardless of the interests of other countries, or of the interests of the world. By maintaining its sovereignty to the full, by not co-ordinating its economic policy with others in order to put its national interests first, each country is, in the long run, defeated by its exclusive economic policy; in the end by its own sovereignty. From this it is clear that no country, not even the very richest and the most powerful, can finally solve its own economic problem. All a country can do is to carry out a form of solution in isolation, a private solution independent of others, which will tide things over for a time; then difficulties in various forms will begin to manifest themselves. These difficulties are not of a transient nature; they are inherent in the nature of sovereignty.

This failure of the nation-state to solve its problem has nothing whatsoever to do with the scale of the reform, the political ideology behind it, to whatever extent it has been carried. Later on in this chapter we shall see that communism, in itself, is hardly more of a solution than capitalism. Nor would the issue be solved merely by all countries of the world adopting the same economic system, say capitalism or socialism. Let us try to picture what would be the consequences of, say, socialism being adopted. Let us assume that the programme, that is the establishment of a democratic society, of the present Labour Government in Britain is carried into effect without much opposition. The great fortunes and inequalities would disappear from



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English life, together with the gross injustices created by privileges. Class, therefore, would become more of an occupational than a social or economic division. The result of this extension of welfare and happiness to the many would inevitably be a high degree of devotion not so much to the Labour Party as to the British state. Under such circumstances there would be an even closer national unity and cohesion between the members of the nation than there was either in 1914 or in 1939. War would follow just the same, not *because* of the reform, but *in spite* of it. And the same thing would happen if all countries of the world were to follow Britain's example and put socialist or, for that matter, communist governments into power. All that the change in party ideologies would involve would be that in Britain (and everywhere else) a larger number of people would have a more precise idea of the things they were fighting for than before. The British, as well as their adversaries, would be fighting for bigger things than they had been fighting for in 1939. Instead of the dole they would be fighting for full employment, instead of slums they would be fighting for happy garden suburbs. They would be fighting so that the higher standards of life in Britain would still continue to be higher than in other countries which are able to put into the field armed forces as big as, or bigger than, Britain can. They would not need carefully elaborated slogans about the beauties of democracy because they would have a direct experience of those beauties. They would not be fighting for promises because the promises would have already been fulfilled. They would, however, be fighting because the economic system of Britain — and of other countries — was still organized on national lines: that is in the national interest, in political isolation, and, therefore, at the expense of other countries. (In plain English this means that those wicked, large and powerful 'other countries' would attack peaceful and democratic Britain with its millions of happy children living in their happy little homes surrounded by happy plastic furniture with fumed oak trimmings and happy little aspidistras, simply because those wicked people had not got



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happy little homes with the same gadgets, and the only way for them to acquire them is to give up for a time butter for guns, then to drop little doodle-bugs and dainty little atomic bombs on the happy homes complete with aspidistra and fumed oak.)

The tremendous complexity of the economic system makes complete economic independence and self-containedness impossible even for the very richest country. Every country is in need of certain raw material, not to speak of the inequalities of income between nations. It may be assumed, perhaps, that under a socialist government the very richest countries may not attack others for raw materials, but that they themselves might be attacked by poorer countries, or by combinations of poorer countries. Social and economic reform in itself, therefore, is no remedy against economic crises and war, if it remains reform in isolation.

Socialism and communism under the existing system of sovereign nation-states can only be international in theory, which, as the past history of socialism has amply demonstrated, is not only different from, but often the opposite of practice. It has frequently been said that socialism is only international because capitalism is international; that internationalism in socialism is nothing but the heritage of *laissez-faire* liberalism, and that the socialists have treacherously let down the cause of internationalism. The first two of these statements have little bearing on our subject, but the last, about the 'treachery' of socialists, is one that must be examined closely. When it came to the realization of their programme — that is the just satisfaction of social and economic demand on a world-wide scale — socialists were faced with a dire dilemma. The creation of the world-wide order they strove to achieve involved the abolition of sovereignty, or at least important restrictions of it, and that would have meant not only a revolution in the state of which they were individual citizens, but a revolution in every state. Thus, the socialists in the nation-state were met by a formidable obstacle, the strength of which had not been correctly assessed by the founders of socialism. Not only was the nation-



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state older than socialism, but it was an institution that had enormous emotional forces at its disposal. These forces exercised an almost overwhelming appeal to all that is instinctive in man; whereas what the socialists could offer appeals only to common sense and intellect. The nation-state has a tradition and a prestige which is four hundred years old. To say the least, it is very much an existing concern, a religion for the poor, a dope for the ignorant; not so much the last retreat of the scoundrel as a kind of permanent retreat for scoundrels. It is also an enormous vested interest for a ruling class, or for a would-be ruling class which, as I shall later show, need not and will not rest on the basis of wealth or on private ownership of the means of production. In contrast, socialism is hardly more than a hundred years old; it has few traditions and little mass appeal, it can offer nothing but the thin little tune of reason, played on a penny trumpet, as it were, against the tunes of unreason rendered on a huge Wurlitzer organ.

Some socialists reached a bold conclusion and decided on world revolution, but the majority preferred to achieve change by peaceful means; that is, by bringing about socialism in each state first and then federating the states. It was on this point that socialism, from an international ideal became more and more national socialism, the private affair of individual states. The result to-day is that instead of socializing the world, what became socialized was the sovereign nation-state. This aspect, indeed, is the most interesting, most exciting and most tragic chapter in the history of nationalism. It shows how a fundamentally correct and fundamentally good intention was frustrated, how an idea meant to make the world peaceful and happy worked out in practice by plunging it instead into greater unhappiness and more terrible wars than man has ever seen.

Those who charge socialists with 'treachery' have a powerful argument at their disposal. It is this: the socialization of the nation-state, a development that took place by a gradual process during the last sixty years or so, was very largely the work of socialists, and to a lesser extent that of the liberals. It was the

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work of the socialists even in countries where they were never in power. Apart from Russia, where the socialization of the state was completed through revolution, the socialist parties in every country worked hard for long periods for social and economic reform, and called the attention of the ruling class as represented by the government to the crying needs of the masses. The result was that in varying degrees the ruling class was forced to pass measures that meant more and more socialization of the state. In every single country in the last sixty years or so the state became more and more a so-called 'positive' state. It became more and more a socialized state, even in those countries where socialists were bamboozled or suppressed and murdered. In Fascist countries the socialization of the state was carried out by the dictator with his party. Thus, there was a good deal of what to-day is socialism in practice in both the Italian Fascist and the German Nazi programmes, though some people prefer to call it rather 'political radicalism' than socialism. The point, however, is that the socialization of the state all over the world inevitably brought with it the greater cohesion of the state, and the result to-day is that the 'workers of the world' are united more strongly than ever . . . not with each other, but with their own individual nation-states, and thus *against* each other. Socialists all over the world have been accused of not being patriotic, whereas the tragedy is that it was largely due to them that nations to-day have a much greater unity of purpose and much greater patriotism than ever before.

That there was a certain degree of internationalism in socialism, and there still is, is a fact which cannot be denied, but this internationalism is little more than theoretical. That socialists and organized workers are people who recognize in each other all over the world a common humanity is not a mere theory; that trade unions all over the world are interested in the rise of wages and in the improvements of the workers' lot, not only in their own country but in other countries as well, is also not mere theory. Socialists or trade unions of one country



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sometimes help strikers in another country with money; they give shelter to refugee workers or socialists; they carry on agitations for their comrades in other countries. At times individual socialists are ready to die for the workers' cause in another country, as the history of the Spanish war shows. When all is said and done, socialists all over the world supply the largest element of the population supporting organizations aiming at peace and security. All this internationalism, however, even though at times practical, amounts to very little, although it may far exceed the international efforts of non-socialists. In practice socialists are predominantly nationalists. Some of them are as narrow, as intolerant and as xenophobic as the most ardent anti-socialist. These, however, are in the minority. The majority of socialists all over the world, in the words of Franz Borkenau, 'have a sober consciousness of the predominance of national interests over the international ones'.<sup>1</sup> This 'sober consciousness' inevitably leads to war.

It is indeed very difficult for a socialist not to put the interest of his own country first, even apart from the constant criticism and the agitation of the anti-socialist who is attacking him for not being patriotic. He is in the centre of a tragic vicious circle. He knows that economic nationalism in the end defeats itself, but he also knows that economic internationalism is a long-drawn-out process which can only achieve its goal through a series of crises, uncertainties and wild opposition. He knows furthermore that the social-economic conditions of his own country in the beginning of internationalism cannot improve with the speed with which the masses of his own country would wish them to improve. This is particularly keenly felt in countries whose standards of living are higher than in other countries. What it boils down to in practice is that an English worker would have to wait, perhaps for years and years, until standards of living in other countries are nearing the level of his own. This in itself would not matter so much if the rate of progress were not so incalculable and so mysterious on

<sup>1</sup> FRANZ BORKENAU: *Socialism, National and International* (Longmans).



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account of the agonizing complexity of economic life in the modern world.

The worker would not be readily content to wait patiently even if he could thoroughly understand the trends and factors, but he has neither the learning nor the experience for this. Indeed, few people are capable of enough discipline of mind or enough objectivity for thorough understanding, and certainly none whose critical and associative faculties are blunted by the social conditions under which they live.

It is in this single respect that there is some truth in the old saying that 'the working man is his own worst enemy'. Truth indeed there is in that saying, but even so it would be extremely difficult to find out to what precise extent the working man could be blamed for this attitude. It is an attitude easy to see in practice. Who is more of a patriot, the employer who is quite willing to employ foreign workers if the foreign worker is willing to work for him cheaper than the native worker, or the native worker who invokes his birthright to urge the government to keep the foreigner out? So far in most countries it is the working man who has won; the foreigner is kept out. He remains in his own country working for starvation wages, which do not enable him to buy commodities turned out by, say, the British worker. On the contrary, because he works for starvation wages, in the end he creates unemployment in the country which has higher standards of living. Under such circumstances, therefore, improvements in the standard of living in the richer country are temporary and highly insecure, and even for these temporary and insecure improvements there is a terrible price to pay in the form of war, and in the form of a peace which is not always easy to distinguish from war.

And what adds to the difficulties of understanding the already fantastically complicated nature of economic interdependence is that effect does not immediately follow cause. The results of nationalistic policy appear very often only in the long run; indeed, a time lag is usual. A tariff policy, an exclusionist policy, might bring in temporary rewards; then, after a



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few months, maybe a year, punishment follows in the shape of falling prices and unemployment. And when these come it is not only easier to blame the foreigner for them, because a scapegoat must be found, but the dreadful habit-forming nature of living in a nation-state and knowing no wider allegiance begins to assert itself. The foreigner is not always blamed; people see that the policy of their own government is at fault, but all the same they do not object if their own government proposes measures at the expense of other countries. The psychological roots behind this attitude are very complicated indeed and make dogmatism impossible. Yet one thing is typical: these roots are identical in every country, which fact again demonstrates the very nearly universal character of nationalism. These psychological roots vary not so much according to individuals, as according to class, income and occupational groups. It would, however, be incorrect to say that motives are typical of one group. Thus, the ruling class is not the only group within the nation which is alarmed by the implications of a federal structure because they are afraid it might involve loss of power for them. On the other hand those with limited educational opportunities are not the only group which is strongly influenced by the emotional prestige of the state and of the government of their country, nor are they the only ones who are incapable of intelligent analysis. Finally, there is a general attitude of fear, or at least of unwillingness to criticize institutions whose workings for the most part they do not understand and institutions they have been taught directly or indirectly to respect. This fear or unwillingness on the part of individuals is not the least unnecessary or unjustified. The penalties that the nation-state can inflict on the dissenter are by no means restricted to that social disapproval which is the natural reaction against one who violates the unwritten law; punishment according to the written law can also be invoked. And both these sets of laws protecting the unity of the nation-state are naturally strong, too strong to encourage more than isolated attempts of individuals. All these psychological facts

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contribute strongly to that inertia which, in this respect, is typical of the citizens of the contemporary nation-state all over the world.

Sovereignty in practice means more than a few lines or chapters in a country's constitution. In fact, most countries have not even got these lines because it was found quite unnecessary to dot 'i's' and to cross 't's'. Practically every inhabitant of the nation-state to-day has a very clear idea as to what sovereign independence means *the very moment sovereign independence is questioned or is in danger*. This, in practical terms, means that if a parliamentary candidate were to declare that the nationalization of Britain's mines is an urgent necessity, not only from the point of view of the British miner but of foreigners, he would be howled down. And if he were not howled down at once because the audience did not understand what he implied by this reference to an international issue, he would be howled down the moment the audience understood the implications. Even a British communist is forced to talk about national interests and remain somewhat vague about the international issue.

It is sometimes said that the working class in general, and the British in particular, is not imperialist but would be quite content to give the Empire away. This is a painfully superficial representation of truth and more misleading than is generally believed. Because the very moment socialist reform is put into practice, with the result that the wealth of the colonial Empire is better shared between the social classes, the common man will at once begin to take an interest in the Empire in a big way.

The reformist politician is compelled to make use of the forces of nationalism in order to win his electorate, in almost precisely the same way as the politician who is defending the *status quo*. He is forced to talk about the machinations of 'international capitalism' and the 'lack of patriotism' of the native capitalist who is investing money abroad instead of spending the money



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on the improvement of conditions at home. He is forced to make an appeal to the patriotism of his electorate.

What are the justifications, then, of the political parties in each country in the international sense; what are their justifications in order to avoid war?

It is clear that the defender of the economic *status quo* has no justification in the international sense, because he makes war inevitable so to speak. In other words he guarantees war in the national interest, though whether, in truth, such a war would be in the national interest is open to question. The economic reformer, on the other hand, does not guarantee war, but the danger of war in the true national interest still remains. Because what assurances are there that under the present system of national sovereignties the socialist would still continue to be internationally minded when the main reason why he may feel inclination to be internationally minded now has disappeared? He may be internationally minded to-day very largely because he has a common cause with other economic reformers in other countries: he wishes to overthrow capitalism or to reform capitalism.

To illustrate the fact that economic reform, as long as it remains economic reform in territorial isolation, cannot possibly prevent war, let us take the example of the U.S.S.R., a country where capital has been subjected to complete state control, where there is no private enterprise and where subsequently there can be no private interests under the cloak of national interest. The U.S.S.R., however, still has national interests, no matter how genuine they are, and her national interests are not confined to the domestic sphere. Russian foreign policy, therefore, on all lines that matter, cannot be different from the foreign policy of any other sovereign state regardless of economic structure. It can only be different in volume, and volume is in proportion to the power of a country and to nothing else. Russia, in proportion to her power (the combination of manpower plus economic potential) exercises a greater influence in the international sphere than a less power-

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ful country (and less than a more powerful country). Russia still has to maintain her national interests just as Portugal has to, but because she is more powerful than Portugal she can maintain them more forcefully. The difference between Portuguese and Russian national interests is a matter of degree: that Russian national interests are *true* national interests and Portuguese national interests are *less true* national interests is completely irrelevant.

When the U.S.S.R., in the autumn and winter of 1939-40, attacked Poland and Finland she did a very typical thing. She started an aggressive war against two other sovereign states. That Russia was justified in her aggressive war is another consideration. She was justified — as events proved with rapidity later — because she was forced to make herself as invulnerable as possible to attacks from abroad. She had to resort to power politics in the same way a capitalist state would have had to resort.

Many people say that Russia is pursuing an 'imperialist' policy, that each and every one of her acts in the international field are manifestations of power politics. This is entirely true. She is forced to engage in power politics in her national interest.

Through the Teheran Agreement the U.S.S.R. is pursuing the policy of 'spheres of interest' in Europe. Not only is she trying to regain the Baltic coast, and to revive France so as to secure her position in all directions, but she is also trying to obtain oil concessions in North Persia. The expressions 'sphere of interest' and 'concessions' have sinister imperialist-capitalist associations, yet communist Russia is up to the neck in them. Nobody outside a lunatic asylum would say that there had been some 'sinister' private interest behind Stalin, egging him on to sacrifice the lives of unfortunate Russian soldiers for selfish private interests under the cloak of national interests. In the case of Russia we have a state whose national interests are genuine enough. Her national interests, and why she is resorting to precisely the same moves and tactics as the ones previously associated with capitalism, are those of defence. Her



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specified fear at the present moment is that American capitalism may rebuild Germany. She must protect herself. There can be no greater and truer national interest than that.

The only great power which at present disapproves of 'spheres of interest' is the United States. Her disapproval, however, is subject to misinterpretation. What Americans actually mean is that they do not want spheres of interest in Europe. Yet, generally speaking, in continents other than Europe they have very typical spheres of interest; the Monroe Doctrine is one and the Panama Canal is another. As an independent sovereign state the United States is as much justified in having these as she would be to have others. The point is that at present the United States is engaged in other fields. Power politics is a factor which is conditioned by a country's internal circumstances, and the internal circumstances of America are not likely to be the same in the future as they are at present. It is too early, and therefore impossible, to prognosticate about the future of American foreign policy, but it seems in the long run inevitable that the United States will be forced to be more imperialistic than at present. Her moral superiority, her detachment, her idealism, her great humanist principles, her championship of small countries — the relics of a liberal tradition — are perfectly genuine, but they are based on America's present-day position and present-day requirements, and there is no guarantee that these two factors will continue to be the same as they are to-day. Past events have already shown that the United States has had to change some of its principles. After the First World War it had to curtail immigration and put an end to the 'free for all' policy. Actually the restriction was made necessary by fear of unemployment, therefore by a true national interest. An individual may be self-sacrificing for the benefit of his parents or, for that matter, for the benefit of total strangers; a nation cannot be. A man may lose his life in an attempt at rescuing another man from a river, but a nation cannot sacrifice itself for other nations.

We have then to view the past and present of imperialism

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from the point of view of national interest. Imperialism in the past led to war and it led to war for narrow private interests. But did it really? Socialists claim it did. The truth, however, is that imperialism has benefited the whole community, but not in proportion to the efforts of the community, because there was a gross inequality of sacrifice. Still to a certain extent it benefited more than the capitalist class, and indirectly in a small way it benefited the whole nation. And — this is more important — imperialism has greatly contributed to what appears in international blue books and statistics under the heading of 'national wealth'. This national wealth to-day is largely in the hands of a comparatively small group, but it is national wealth all the same and, as such, it is claimed by the Socialists to be used for the benefit of the whole nation. And it is here that the domestic socialist is in the most awkward dilemma. If he insists on the nationalization of this wealth (colonies, colonial investments, etc.) for the benefit of the nation, he does become a benefactor to the nation, but in doing so he excludes other nations from these benefits. Thereby he does nothing to avert war, which would naturally follow, because the unequal distribution of the world's wealth would still continue. If, on the other hand, he insists on the internationalization of the national wealth now in private hands for the benefit of the whole world, that is, if he does the only thing that would ensure peace, he would be howled down.

This is the dilemma which confronts the socialist all over the world, but especially in Britain. This is the reason why 'out-and-out socialists' like Shinwell get up in the House of Commons and sing the praises of the British Empire in almost the same tones as did Cecil Rhodes. And this is the reason why the socialist propagandist feels he must resort to slogans which are at times almost as jingo patriotic as the slogans of the imperialist expansion era, which he so profoundly condemns.

The socialist argument, of course, is that reform must start first in the domestic sphere, but what are the guarantees that socialization in the domestic sphere would lead *automatically* to



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world socialism or world organization? In other words, what are the guarantees that world organization would be possible if the world turned socialist?

In such a connection one is amazed to read an English socialist pamphlet, like John Strachey's *Why You Should Be A Socialist*.<sup>1</sup> It is good journalism, easy to read and to the point. It contains nothing original, but it puts the main lines of the socialist case really well. The book, however, reads as if its author had never in his life been outside England and had never heard of any other country save Russia. There is not one single hint in the book that, without international co-operation and planning, socialism is nothing but a very creditable failure. On the contrary, Strachey lays particular emphasis on the fact that a socialist Britain must 'if it exists in a hostile world, take extremely good care to maintain command of the sea and air routes round it . . . As the capitalist world is beginning ruefully to recognize, the establishment of a socialist economic system immensely strengthens a country. . . .'

This is the truth. Strachey is dead right in his conclusion, and this is why he is violently wrong when earlier he says 'socialism can abolish poverty, war and insecurity from the face of the earth. It can do no more but no less than that'.

Now socialism in theory might be able to do this, but socialism in practice, socialism, which 'immensely strengthens a country', cannot do this with the best of good-will. It cannot do it because, under the present-day structure of the world, socialism must become isolated socialism, private socialism, national socialism. What this socialism (that is socialism in practice) can do is simply this. It can abolish poverty *in Britain*, it can abolish insecurity up to a point *in Britain*, but by no means from 'the face of the earth', and it certainly *cannot* abolish war. War cannot be abolished even if all countries, or the large majority of them, turned socialist, as long as they remain in political isolation, as long as they maintain their sovereignty to the full.

Strachey suppresses even the little ray of hope that is implied

<sup>1</sup> JOHN STRACHEY: *Why You Should Be A Socialist* (Gollancz, 1944).



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in socialism, that tiny little ray of hope that (apart from scientists and certain artists) organized workers are the only people who recognize in each other a common attitude to political and economic problems as well as a common humanity, and are, therefore, more likely than others to forget national differences. It is true that English socialism is older than Marx, and, consequently, solidarity with foreign workers is not as strong as, say, between a German and a Swedish socialist, but still it may be presumed to be true that the British worker would accept a foreign worker as, shall we say, a step-brother. One does not know what to think about a man like Strachey. He is too intelligent to have fallen victim to that occupational disease of reformers that makes them believe that a piece of reform would have automatic consequences (as Bentham so tragically did). At the same time he is too honest to suppress, to twist, to forge by omission, to join the ranks of the 'traitor clerks'. All that is wrong with his pamphlet is that a page is missing. What actually has happened in his case is that he feels 'one has to be careful'. His attitude in this case may be summed up in the following: 'I'm not responsible. Nationalism in general and British nationalism in particular is a *fait accompli*. It's the typical folly and the characteristic of the age in which we live. I cannot kick against it. I am writing for the masses, that is for the unschooled British worker, well meaning but ignorant and prejudiced like the masses everywhere. Not inherently, of course. He is ignorant and full of prejudices because of English history and because of the harshness of the English class system. Under the circumstances the only way for us socialists is to go slow, make the worker's life more tolerable, first in political isolation, then when that immense job is done, try to settle the international political issue. In view of this I have to make use of his patriotism, in fact I have to flatter him, not in the same unscrupulous way as the Press lords do, but I have to flatter him just the same. I can't tell him the truth because he could not grasp it.'

The tragedy, of course, is that to tell the worker the truth



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later may be too late. He will get used to the benefits socialism conferred on him and he will not be willing to co-operate with others because co-operation would mean sacrifices, and he will be less willing to co-operate later because his nationalism in the meantime has every reason to grow. He will 'immensely strengthen the country', and that immensely strong socialist Britain, solidly united for the first time in history with all her sons adoring her, would go to war in a true 'people's war' with another country, fighting for true national interests.

The criticism of socialist leaders on the ground that they are narrow-minded and insular is not restricted to British socialist leaders. It is a charge which is made against leaders of socialism and trade unionism in every country so very often that it seems to imply that narrow-mindedness and insularity are inherent in socialism. This is not true, although narrow-mindedness and insularity are often inherent in the environment in which socialists and trade union leaders are living. A politician who comes from humble surroundings has a stronger chance to become insular than a politician from any other class,<sup>1</sup> which does not mean that he would inevitably become so. The influences of the so-called 'formative' years usually count for more than even the socialist leaders would care to admit. If he comes from the working class he very often has had to put up a formidable fight to educate himself; he has had little opportunity to travel, and the atmosphere of the prejudices in which he grew up is not conducive to a clear and fair appraisal of the ways of foreigners. If on the other hand he comes from the middle or from the upper class, with a better opportunity to acquire a broader vision, he is in a difficult position when confronted with socialists of lesser educational opportunities, in whose eyes his broader vision is often as much a reason for suspicion as his personal habits or ways of speech. And if there is no suspicion there is jealousy, and jealousy, on quite a solid

<sup>1</sup> Regardless whether he actually represents the workers or the employers. There are men of working-class origin (not many of course) among anti-socialist politicians.

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basis. (The better man gets on better regardless of where his quality comes from.) For the narrow insularity of the politician of bourgeois origin with good educational opportunities there is no excuse whatsoever.

It seems increasingly clear that the solution of the problem is not the socialization of the nation-state, but the socialization of the world, which in economic terms would mean internationally planned production for internationally planned consumption.<sup>1</sup> In another chapter we shall return to this subject; but here we must continue our survey of the relations of nationalism to party politics.

The implications are these: socialism is the only hitherto known political and economic theory under which the ideal goal, a classless, democratic and international society on a world scale, is possible. Socialism so defined, however, does not seem possible of achievement in our time. This negative seems to be amply indicated by the fact that there is no country in the world to-day where socialism is practised at present, or is likely to be practised in the near future, regardless of whether countries directly or indirectly look upon or even call themselves socialist or not. Socialism, we repeat, is by definition a classless, democratic and internationalist society, and in no country does such a society at present exist. It is not our concern in this book to examine the extent to which the U.S.S.R. is a classless and democratic society, though we know that the abolition of capitalism does not necessarily involve the abolition of class and the establishment of democracy. Our main concern is whether the U.S.S.R. is an internationalist society, and the result of the inquiry is negative. From this and from other evidence it seems clear that the efforts of socialists all over the world do not lead to socialism (a classless, democratic and international society) but to an *alternative system*. This system in the long run might or

<sup>1</sup> Economic interests to-day are already largely organized on a supranational basis, or at least they already overlap and are so mixed up that it is difficult to sort them into national bundles. Economic groupings, however, still leave enough room for conflict; in fact, they still contribute to the war of the century.



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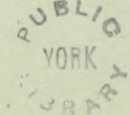
might not become truly socialist. For this, however, in our own lifetime there is not the slightest indication or the slightest hope. This nameless alternative system is neither capitalist nor socialist. I hope I am succeeding in making myself clear on this point: I am not trying to argue for or against socialism, or for or against capitalism or the alternative system (the Russian variety of which is usually called by political scientists 'Stalinism'). I merely state that the latter, in view of the definition of socialism, is not socialism. I am not concerned here with a discussion whether, and in what respects, such a system will create better or worse conditions in the individual country. Nor do I wish to try to persuade the reader to fight for or against capitalism, socialism or the alternative system, especially as the arrival of the alternative system is indicated by world-wide trends, and because its arrival can be postponed and delayed but not prevented. This alternative system will — it seems within our own generation — arrive in every country, though its development and its form will allow wide variations according to the individual country. This alternative system will arrive regardless of whether we fight for or against it, because it is part of a world-wide process that has already gone very far. Ironically enough it would arrive even if every country imprisoned all its socialist leaders, or if these leaders suddenly gave up their social principles and joined forces with the opposition. Such developments would merely cause temporary delay in its arrival. The process, that is the socialization of the state, is already so much under way that it seems fairly clear that in many countries (such as the democratic countries of Western Europe or the United States) this alternative political system will not arrive through violent revolution as it did in Russia, but will appear as the further extension of a process which started after the First World War. Its social and economic features will include the following: capital will be subjected to state control, which of course does not mean that the capitalist will be liquidated, banished or reduced to impotence. What is likely is that there will be a split among capitalists on the pat-



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tern of what Berle and Means in their brilliant joint work<sup>1</sup> call 'the separation of ownership and control'. Ownership of the means of production will be vested in the state, but capital will continue to be partially controlled by its former owners. The developments in this respect will be somewhat similar to those in the Middle Ages which resulted in the transformation of feudal society into capitalist society. Some of the feudalists were defeated and banished, but others continued to rule not as feudalists but as capitalists in the new order. Similarly some of the capitalists of the present day will be part of the coming system, not as owners of the means of production, that is, not as capitalists, but as technical experts, bureaucrats, executives, and so on. The economic and social aspects of this coming alternative system are not our main concern here, though I cannot resist the temptation to say that the growing extension of state control cannot be prevented and that from the scientific eye-view it is immaterial which political party will finally rule the state. The power of the state to control will grow and, because in our time such developments take place with greater speed than in previous centuries, it will grow fast. Our main concern here is to examine this new type of society from the point of view of nationalism. It is true that the economic and political structure of the nation-states will not be as different as they were, say, in 1914 (since which time the structures of Russia, Germany, Britain and the United States have grown in similarity to each other). The new type of society, however, cannot help but develop a greater devotion to the state, which is a gain on the swings and a loss on the roundabouts. Of the hitherto known political theories only a socialist system could result in the solution of the problem of nationalism; that is, socialism seems to be the only known theory which could neutralize nationalism and take it out of politics, turning it into a question for the individual conscience — as religion is to-day — but socialism in our time cannot and will not arrive. This is not

<sup>1</sup> BERLE and MEANS: *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1931).





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to say that socialism cannot and will *never* arrive. It is merely an indication that the political system which is under way will be as far from socialism as it will be from capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Under the dull title, *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*, Berle and Means, two American social scientists, in the nineteen-thirties made a discovery almost as epoch-making as the theory of the conditioned reflex. They justified Marx in the only field wherein Marx was prophetically right, namely in the field of economic theory. Monopoly capitalism after a time, indeed, reaches a point where it can no longer be controlled by the capitalist himself, unless he happens to be something like a superman. Thus he needs a superman, and this is the person James Burnham calls 'The Manager'. Burnham's theory of the Managerial Revolution is partly built on Berle and Means' discovery, though Thorsten Veblen, around 1900, had already noticed a social phenomenon termed 'absentee ownership'. The difference between capitalist and manager is that the manager is *indispensable*. The capitalist can be murdered, banished and liquidated, whereas it is only the individual manager who can also be murdered, banished and liquidated, not the manager as an institution, which means that if a manager is murdered another must be found, and that is not easy. According to Burnham's theory the manager would assume power on a socialist programme, which is a 'managerial' ideology in the same way as Protestantism was a capitalist ideology, then he would curb the masses. The masses would enthrone the manager, or at least accept him, because he abolished capitalism together with its burdens and disadvantages. There will be, however, no change in power. With capitalists the power was based on ownership of the means of production, whereas the manager's power rests on his ownership of certain important abilities.

What Burnham does not make quite clear is why and how the manager would curb the masses; in other words why he would continue to maintain a rigid class system on a non-capitalist basis. My own theory, which I have already made clear in this book, explains this by the intimate connection between nationalism and class. The manager soon finds that the masses do not want internationalism, and this would at once arouse the lust for power even in the most democratic and public-minded manager. A man who is a nationalist, who loves his country, automatically issues an invitation to some of his compatriots to be trampled upon, to be subjected to a class system. Needless to say, not all managers are democratic and public minded. A good many of them already see a vested interest in the nationalism of the masses in the same way as the capitalist saw it, and are making use of it.

## CHAPTER XII

### CONDITIONS OF WAR

THE years since the First World War saw an important change in the field of politics. Nationalism reached a state in development on almost exactly the same lines as capitalism. In the economic field we talk about monopoly capitalism, meaning the accumulation of economic power in fewer and fewer hands. In the field of nationalism we are witnessing a similar phenomenon; monopoly nationalism, that is the accumulation of political power in the hands of fewer and fewer states.

This development is entirely new. Between Great Powers and lesser powers there has always existed a certain measure of difference. Great Powers in the past were not in a position to disregard smaller powers as completely as they can to-day, when the sovereign independence of all but three or four nation-states is almost entirely illusory. During the last century, neutrality in war of the smaller powers was an accepted political principle, not so much because during that period the Great Powers acted on higher moral and ethical principles than to-day, but simply because the economic capacity of small powers made it possible for them either to defend themselves successfully against Great Powers or to maintain an important nuisance value. During the First World War the violation of Belgium showed that neutrality was fast becoming a principle without any solid substance behind it. During the Second World War, strictly speaking, there were no neutrals in Europe. Not only did Germany actually invade the major part of the Continent, and the United Nations, in turn, Iceland, and Greenland, but neutrality as such was not enjoyed by those states which actually escaped invasion — Sweden, Eire, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Turkey. While Germany was in a position to do so she exerted great pressure on these states; when,



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in turn, the fortunes of war put the United Nations in a superior position, there at once followed *démarches* about wolfram, ball-bearings, and sanctuary rights, and at the same time a sudden retrospective 'discovery' of their disapproval of the neutrality of countries like Eire or Argentina.

The factor responsible for the gradual disappearance of neutrality, and for the enormous disparity between Great Powers and lesser powers, is the revolutionary advance of scientific technology with special reference to the military and economic field. This means that to-day small powers simply cannot afford to defend themselves, and since the greatness of Great Powers is in their war-making potential, they emerge as national or political monopolies in the field.

Monopoly capitalists are not always necessarily the rivals of each other. Thus, a big chemical combine does not necessarily try to get hold of a big railway combine, because in their respective fields they have few points of rivalry. Monopoly nationalists, however, are rivals at practically all points of contact and their interests are essentially antagonistic. This fact is inherent in the international anarchy which is the direct consequence of the sovereignty of the nation-state. In this connection we are, perhaps, justified in finding another expression, an expression which is more plastic, though admittedly more confusing than 'international anarchy'. This expression is 'state of war'. This state of war between nation-states varies in intensity from time to time, and from time to time it flares up into actual armed conflict. At other periods it closely resembles peace, mostly because it is usually fought with weapons other than the customary and recognized weapons of armed conflicts. These other weapons are political and economic. Tariffs are as typical weapons of 'state of war' as machine guns are of armed conflicts. Diplomatic representations or *démarches*, on the other hand, are as efficient as incendiary bombs. The misleading factor is usually that this state of war continues for the most part in secrecy, with a veil that can only be penetrated by the few. The lists of its casualties are similarly kept secret and are never



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published except in places inaccessible to most of those who are deeply concerned in its actual events. From this it is obvious that a large number of the casualties of the permanent state of war between powers—killed, wounded, missing, people suffering from loss of memory and millions of displaced persons—never realize that they are the casualties of a war because they are not aware of the existence of this 'state of war'.

There are many reasons why this state of war is not easily detected by the general public. Most of the time it is reduced to no more than a theory, especially where the relations of small powers which are situated far from each other are concerned. The interdependence of the world to-day is complete but not always discernible, and thus the mutual relations of, say, Switzerland and Nicaragua, are friendly enough. But it becomes more than theory when we survey the relations of the Great Powers to each other and to other nations. Between Great Powers this state of war is painfully obvious all the time and it continues when most of their inhabitants imagine they live at peace. On the other hand, it assumes amazing aspects when it comes to the actual outbreak of hostilities. Thus, the state of war between Great Britain, the U.S.S.R. and the United States continued between 1941 and 1945 all the time they were actually united to fight against an analogous combination of Great Powers. What actually happened was this: during the year 1941 Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R. were forced by circumstances to form a temporary and partial alliance for one single purpose: to defend themselves against two other Great Powers (whose unity with each other was slightly looser than theirs). As a result of this temporary and partial alliance, the so-called 'United Nations' temporarily surrendered tiny and carefully limited portions of their sovereignty to each other. This surrender of sovereignty was minute between Britain and America and microscopical when it came to their relations with Soviet Russia. The details of this are well known: an American citizen was accepted as supreme commander of the Anglo-American forces, and Allied soldiers



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on British soil were taken out of British sovereignty. As regards Russia and the two Anglo-Saxon powers, a few military secrets were exchanged between them and a certain amount of material help was rendered to the former, naturally not without grave anxiety on the part of Britain and America. Such gestures (this is really the correct term for the realities of the alliance) are not new in history and the United Nations did not go, in this respect, much further than the Allied and Associated Powers of 1914.

Apart from these gestures, the state of war continued between the temporarily and partially United Nations. Their citizens, in view of the common danger, could not help sinking *some* of their differences, but as nation-states each could not avoid secretly wishing that the other two should be beaten by the enemy, but not so soundly as to endanger their own cause. This attitude on the part of the three nation-states varied with the fortunes of war; and naturally it was not noticeable all the time, not, at least, to most of their citizens who were too much engrossed with the events of the other, more dramatic and, therefore, apparently more real war with the official enemy. If some of them did notice it, they were silenced by regularly organized torrents of oratory praising the unity of the United Nations. Besides, there is such a thing as tact, a thing necessary and attractive, but nevertheless a great enemy of scientific truth.

During the years between 1941 and 1945 there was, indeed, no need to listen in to the *Deutschlandsender*, which naturally could not let slip by such a splendid ground for propaganda as what, with pardonable understatement, was referred to as the 'division' between the Allies. It was easy for those who managed to retain their spiritual independence to see that it was not really a case of 'division'. Some people tried to liken the unity of the United Nations to a marriage of convenience. This was a gross exaggeration. Marriage, whether of love or of convenience, is an enormously concrete term with vital and important legal implications, involving private property, common law and

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public morals, apart from other implications. Nothing so concrete and important ever existed between the United Nations. For those who are fond of allegories and comparisons I offer the term 'casual co-habitation' as a perhaps more accurate description. Even this term, however, is subject to strong reservations. The Big Three did not for one single moment forget that they were sovereign, independent nation-states. Their national interests came first, and their carefully limited and temporary partnership was, naturally, influenced all the time by this piece of reality. It was painfully obvious that some of the victories of the Totalitarian Enemy were made easier or, perhaps, rendered possible by the fact that the United Nations could not for one single moment forget their sovereignty and their respective national interests. The state of war between Britain and the United States was strong, but even stronger was the state of war between them and the Soviet Union. The circumstances that caused this difference in intensity arose partly from the differences between the economic structures of the U.S.S.R. and the other two. But this point must be seen in its proper perspective, no matter how difficult to find that proper perspective.

The economic structures of Britain and America are, if not identical, very similar, and, furthermore, the two states speak a language which most of their citizens understand with little difficulty. They also possess some common institutions. Nevertheless their separate — and therefore necessarily antagonistic — national interests erect a permanent wall between them. It is an amazing wall. It seems to be made of a glasslike material, because it is transparent. It lets through light, sound, electricity, even a certain amount of heat, but it never lets through those short, colourless, all penetrating rays, which science calls ultra-violet. And these are perhaps more important, because the contact made between the two Anglo-Saxon powers was largely illusory.

We have no need here to enlarge upon the signs, portents and manifestations of the state of war between the three United



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Nations. The more accurate details of the story in the delay of the opening of the Second Front, the long refusal of the U.S.S.R. to declare war on Japan, the inner story of Lend and Lease, the real background of the various charters and agreements are official secrets and will only be available to the public when they can no longer serve as useful information and guidance for the future. It is part of our tragedy that whereas the true story of the past for most people is a book written in a foreign language, the story of the present is written in invisible ink.

In any case, it is clear that there is not the slightest chance for that idyllic Utopia, namely a real and permanent alliance of the United Nations, to come about. We need not waste words (or alternatively become bitter) here by visualizing what such a thing would mean. It would in the end mean permanent world peace and an almost overwhelming state of prosperity and happiness for the whole world. I am, however, forced to enlarge on the negative side of this problem a little longer because there are many people who feel alarmed and bitter on observing that the Big Three are getting divided again. Such a view is a natural result of the wholly false assessment of the original situation. The Big Three are not becoming 'divided again', because they were never united except for a specific purpose on a carefully limited field. They had never been united because they had never felt the necessity of being united. Never in their greatest plight have they been forced to sacrifice to each other really substantial parts of their sovereignty or their national interests. On the contrary, even in the moment of danger they were in position to play power politics against each other. Churchill's offer of common citizenship to France is an interesting case in point. This offer was the most desperate step a national leader could ever take in our time. It was, for this very reason however, made so late that it proved unacceptable. To-day there are thousands of Englishmen who give thanks to God in secret that Churchill made this offer too late, as it is obvious that an Anglo-French Federation would have only



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proved a blessing in the long run. At the time it might have caused riots, perhaps civil war, and would certainly have caused much suffering and a number of suicides. This step, however, if it had been made in time, would have proved a magnificent eye-opener for humanity in the end, because it would have at once revealed what is genuine and what is mythical concerning the value of the nation-state. The lesson of other federations, like Switzerland and the United States, largely falls flat because their national unity is so old that even their own inhabitants are inclined to regard their countries as creations of nature instead of being what they are: creations of man. It would have proved a magnificent eye-opener because it would have revealed all the dirt that for centuries had accumulated under the solid walls and bastions of sovereignty. It would have revealed small and fat and ugly little insects under the stones of national independence which, dazzled by light and fresh air, would have moved about in excited helplessness only to perish after a time because of the hopeless degeneracy of their fat bodies and weak little legs.

This permanent war between Great Powers shows quite clearly that Great Powers are actually the greatest potential enemies of progress and peace. They have, however, an enormous excuse on their side, if excuse is the correct word. That much-relished alliance or federation between the Big Three, which is the only condition of permanent peace, is impossible for overpowering reasons. Nothing short of a substantial surrender of sovereignty would make a real alliance possible and this would mean tremendous sacrifices for each of the three Powers concerned. First of all, there are the immense psychological implications: the fact that the good results of the sacrifices would only manifest themselves after a time, say twenty, say thirty years hence which, to most grown-up people in Britain and in America, means scarcely within their lifetime. These psychological implications appear to be stronger than the actual sacrifices the pooling of the sovereignty of the three states would entail. It is obvious that common citizenship, abolition of



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frontiers and mutually planned economy would mean suffering, riots and revolutions in all three states. Their economic conditions, their standards of living and, therefore, their national ways are so vastly different that a step so bold is naturally out of the question. Since, however, such a bold step is necessary, it could be made by gradual means, and spread over twenty or thirty years, but even that would prove to be unacceptable to all the three concerned. It is clear at once that the main obstacle to such a scheme would not be so much America, her typical American ways, her lack of co-operation or the peculiarities of her economic system, but mainly the height of her standards of living. America to-day is conscious of her power and is convinced that if the worst comes to the worst she would be able to cope with the situation without making any sacrifice of her present standards of living. Should she at a later eventuality need Britain's help, that help, she is convinced, would be at her disposal. The only dangerous contingency for the United States, namely a close federation between Britain and Russia, is out of the question for precisely the same reason that causes her to reject federation with Britain on mutually agreeable terms: the difference in standards of living. It is obvious, therefore, that the United States sees neither reason nor necessity for any co-operation with her so-called allies.

It is true that the respective economic and political structures of the Big Three are no longer as different from each other as they were say in 1910, when all three were still *laissez-faire* liberal capitalist states in which the power of the state was largely negative. To-day their structures are far more similar, because all three are examples of various forms of what to-day are termed 'Social Service States', or perhaps the beginnings of what Burnham calls 'Managerial States'. The differences, however, are still enormous. Russia is the Social Service State in its most advanced contemporary form with a high measure of economic and practically no political democracy, and with standards of living still on a low level. Britain is a Social Service State less advanced than Russia, but far more advanced

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than America, which to the superficial or the embittered observer presents the spectacle of a *laissez-faire* liberal state. America is no longer quite this, in spite of the most violent endeavour on the part of her ruling class. In both Britain and America there is a high degree of political and a lesser degree of economic democracy; but this contradiction is countered by wealth and advanced industrial development, which attempt to smooth out the contradiction between liberty and equality. This contradiction between two classic requirements of democracy is present because it disregards the third requirement, namely brotherhood (internationalism). Tocqueville, who with Lord Acton shares the distinction of being the most profound political philosopher of the nineteenth century, saw quite clearly that freedom is at the expense of equality because man is not willing to accept the third tenet: internationalism.

The 'state of war' between the Big Three, therefore, continues. It is visible at its clearest through the policy of Spheres of Interest, which is the latest development of nationalism: its monopoly stage. To say that the Sphere of Interest policy was started by the U.S.S.R. is to say that the Second World War was started by Britain, because in actual fact it was the British government which declared war on Germany first. On such terms it was actually started by the U.S.S.R. The U.S.S.R., however, had vital justification for such a policy — her individual security. Russia was trying to make herself safe and secure, because she is as much afraid of her allies as they are of her. Some people consider that this mutual fear has little to do with capitalism and communism, and therefore the ideological difference is of secondary importance. These people exaggerate, but not to excess. The naked facts are that the Big Three are afraid of each other basically because of each other's power, and thus the ideology motive is of *lesser*, but *not* of secondary, importance; it greatly increases an already existing fear.

Ideological differences between Russia and Britain do not make a great difference in Britain's traditional, and justifiable fear of a single Great Power dominating the European Con-



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continent. The France of Louis XV was not ideologically very different from that of Queen Anne's England, nor was the Kaiser's Germany as different from George V's Britain as was the Third Reich from George VI's Britain. The greatest power on the European Continent to-day is the Soviet Union, which is forced to make herself safe and, therefore, powerful on the Continent. It is facts such as these which show very clearly that Britain is primarily a European power. Because she is so, she feels she must try to return to the old tradition of the balance of power in Europe. The result of this would inevitably be a truce between Britain and Russia over spheres of interest in Europe.

It is often said that the makers of the peace treaty at the end of the Second World War will commit the same mistakes as did the makers of the last treaty. It seems clear that certain mistakes in small details may not be repeated, but that the main principles of the treaty will be the same. This view, while it expresses a deep and genuine concern for our future, is a wrong expression of the truth in the use of the word 'mistake'. It might have been said with some element of truth that Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Orlando and Wilson made a 'great mistake' at Versailles. Such an assumption, however, is certainly not true of the makers of the new treaty. The statesmen responsible for the new treaty are not making a mistake; they are concluding a treaty with no solid basis because they are bound by limitations which are to a large extent outside their control. They have certainly profited by the experience of the past, but they cannot use the experience for any other purpose than to refrain from committing a few minor technical mistakes included in the last treaty. The leaders of the Great Powers are not entirely free men, but to some extent prisoners of the passions of their own nations. One might be tempted to say that they are prisoners of ideas which they themselves created. This is an exaggeration, however, no matter how well it looks in print. The ideas were in powerful existence long before the

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leaders of the Big Three were born. The truth is that they maintained and strengthened the ideas, and the strongest piece of adverse criticism that can be levelled against them is that they did so because they are weak men. Even this is an exaggeration. They maintained and strengthened the ideas because such was the essential condition for them, for anybody, to gain power. They could not go against the sovereignty of the nation-state. This is not a question of doing something unpopular. It is much more than that. It means denying the validity of something which is held sacred by the masses. It means that the nation's leader would have to commit high treason; in so many words, *to sell out his country*, regardless of the attenuating circumstance that he would not be selling his country out to another country and that world peace would result. And this he could not do, even if he wished to, because public opinion is not yet ready for such a step. In fact, nationalism at this moment is at a very high level in every country inhabited by the white races, and it is highly unlikely that it will abate in the near future. The mental climate on the whole of the United Nations and their allies is vindictive although in varying degrees. This is a natural consequence. The price of victory has been heavy and will continue to be heavy; suffering has been and will continue to be great; and propaganda has played a very important part in fostering hatred.

About propaganda, just as about nationalism, there is a vicious circle. It is an important war weapon: it is very necessary for maintaining morale at home and for undermining the strength of the enemy. The unfortunate fact about propaganda, however, is its vicious circle or, if preferred, its boomerang nature. In the end it hits those who started it. The fact is that propaganda cannot be suddenly dropped the very moment it has served its purpose and outlived its usefulness. It cannot be dropped and undone even if the propagandist himself would like to undo his own work. It cannot be done because propaganda is, to a certain extent, based on truth, on facts which cannot be denied. If the propagandist suddenly began to go



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back on his line, the public would at once suspect treachery. Its effect, therefore, is lasting. The result is a mental climate which is singularly unsuitable for an intelligent peace treaty.

Let us make a short survey of the bases of propaganda. It has to be based on truth; this is a generally accepted fact which is recognized by all the belligerents. Truth in itself, however, even if it were known, would not serve the purpose. In the end it might produce an atmosphere suitable for world peace but not for war. Propaganda at its best, and therefore at its most dangerous, is the presentation of the truth, or of a facet of truth, for a particular purpose removed from its true context and from its correct proportions.

No one would doubt that the Germans committed in the course of this war a great number of *unnecessary* crimes. This distinction is important. War is an essentially brutal and essentially criminal business, and there is a kind of universal agreement as to what is essential and what is not for the successful prosecution of war. Killing men certainly is necessary, cruelty to prisoners certainly is not. Bombing an aircraft factory is, bombing a church or a hospital is not. During the blitz it was a refrain of the British press that 'a church and a hospital were hit', possibly a cinema too. This is an instance of successful war propaganda. The church or the hospital was really hit, but we could not admit that the Germans hit it by mistake and we could not admit that besides the hospitals something else was hit. The Germans followed precisely the same line in their propaganda. A church or hospital hit in Germany made a headline in German papers. And they could not admit to the German public that we hit it by mistake. The truth is that neither of the belligerents was keen on hitting hospitals, churches, cinemas, war memorials, cemeteries, lost property offices, or the headquarters of a fly-fishers' association, but they were not guided by simple humanitarian instincts or international agreements as to how to conduct warfare. They were actuated by the motive of concentrating on military targets, and military targets are not easy to find. Churches

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and war memorials may be camouflaged, military targets *always* are.

The problem for anyone who insists on finding the 'unnecessary' war crimes is to draw the line of distinction between the necessary and the unnecessary, which is impossible; impossible because he cannot take an unbiased view of what was political or strategic necessity for the Germans.

Let us reverse the process. If we in Britain had tried to suppress German atrocities, instead of giving them publicity, some of the British public might quite reasonably have asked, 'Why are we fighting the Germans?' And belligerents have to be very careful about the skilful organization of hate, because there is always the danger of fraternization between the soldiers of two countries which are fighting each other. It often happened during the last war that enemy soldiers were found making friends between the trenches. This sort of thing cannot be allowed. War is a serious business, so serious that it must be left neither in the hands of generals nor of capitalists. It has its rules. An English officer might find something in common with a German officer, but the common man must not find his opposite number in the enemy country. If allowed to do so they might come to some understanding, and that would be highly undesirable. They might even make peace over their leaders' heads.

In 1945 no national leader need have feared such a contingency.

There is no reason why the Germans should have committed *all* the atrocities of which we and our allies accuse them. In point of fact they did not commit them all, though the systematic extermination of Jews must for a long time defy the most unbiased political scientist. Propaganda, however, which makes every German equally responsible for the deeds of some, can only be swallowed by the common man on the ground that the Germans are inherently different, and by the half educated on the ground that Nazi propaganda made them all equally beastly. Certain layers of the British public and certain sections



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of the German public know about each other's culture. This must be counteracted; hence the theory of a 'streak' of cruelty in *every* German.

Yet hate breeds hate. The humiliation the Germans suffered at the end of the last war had far-reaching consequences in the long run. It was a first-rate piece of capital for Hitler. Every little humiliating detail was dug out, magnified, embroidered and publicized. The Germans, for that matter, did not need to exaggerate much. The blockade affected practically every German who, at the time Hitler came to power, was over the age of twenty-five. The Allies may have thought that it was highly impertinent of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German delegate at Versailles, to make a reference in his speech, when he signed the Treaty to 'Justice which was guaranteed to us by the agreement relating to the basis of peace'. Yet there could be no denial that the Allies had not kept their word. Germany remembered.

In view of this it was natural that many Germans rejoiced when revenge came, even those who regarded the Nazis as rabble. When Pétain, who appeared such a powerful marshal of victorious France in 1918, became a broken old man, whining his speech into the microphone, Germany was naturally feeling jubilant and heard with dilated pupils the story of how the defeated French were made to go and sign the Armistice Treaty in the forest of Compiègne, inside the same railway carriage in which Foch, in 1918, displayed such a haughty attitude towards the German delegates. All these acts were deliberate repetitions of history. The French made Bell and Müller sign the Treaty in 1919 in the very room where Bismarck crowned William I Emperor of Germany. But before 1871 there had been Napoleon's victory over Prussia at Leipzig. 'Europe is passing towards its grave because of the very richness of her history', says Paul Valéry in *Regards sur le monde actuel*. 'History turns races into day-dreamers and drunkards, it gives them false memories, it renews their old wounds and leaves them no peace; national glory or national persecution



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mania drives them to collective unconsciousness, it renders them bitter, conceited, and generally unbearable. . . .'

Words like Valéry's, like a train whose lights for a moment illuminate the dark winter landscape, enable us to find a momentary orientation as to where we are. It is easy to see that 'war breeds war', and that 'two wrongs don't make a right'. These facts, however, do not justify the belief that people do not learn from history because they are stupid. The part played by the cerebral inadequacies of man as a contributory factor to war are discussed in another part of this book. The fact is that nations do not learn from history for the simple reason that they do not know history. They have never been taught history, and the knowledge of historical facts is only available for a tiny little group. What they have been taught at school was national history in which other nations played a secondary and, nearly always, an ignominious part. At the best they were taught a fairly unbiased history of their own nation or had read privately books like Trevelyan's *History of England*, Seignobos' *Histoire sincère de la Nation Française*, Fiske's *History of America*, or Szekfu's *History of Hungary*. These are certainly serious and reliable books, but they all have a national outlook. True, of course, that all these authors say things between the lines which are a joy for those who know how to read between the lines, but how few such people are.

Our age has seen the invasion of modern scientific discoveries into the field of history-writing: psycho-analysis, behaviourism, the conditioned reflex as well as the discoveries of social science and economics. The result, however, was little beyond turning history into material journalistically interesting. The result of the application of these new discoveries has produced little more than a number of historical 'best sellers'. We have learnt that General Gordon was fond of the bottle and Francis Bacon of attractive looking young boys, that Curzon broke down in tears when he heard that he was passed over for Stanley Baldwin, that George Washington made a mess of his fancy waistcoats when he took snuff, that Mirabeau accepted



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bribes. Besides these engaging human touches we learnt a good deal of truth about Great Men, but we have never been told the truth about our own nations in relation to the world. It is in this field that debunking must start; in fact, more than debunking. We need to know the whole truth, not about Great Men, but about the nation-state. It is amusing to read that Salisbury looked as if he had slept in his clothes, that Gambetta tried hard to conceal the fact that he had a glass eye, that Theodore Roosevelt was greatly peeved over the fact that he could not ride alongside the four kings in the funeral procession of Edward VII, that Marx was a liverish old drunkard, who brought sponging to the same fine art as the poorer members of the European royal families. We must know more than this; we must know the true significance of these men in world politics. The publication of facts, like the story of how President Wilson had to use blackmail on Lloyd George and Clemenceau in order to get them to accept the Covenant as part of the Treaty of Versailles, serves important purposes. A true, unbiased history of the world has never been written, still less has it ever been taught. *The Outline of History*, published by H. G. Wells in the early 'twenties, was an interesting and important attempt on the part of a first-class journalist to present something like unbiased history. It was extremely readable and, as such, a best seller all over the world, but it failed largely because its author was not a historian. It has been said that Wells distorted history too, but that he distorted it in the universal interest of mankind, which was a great advance over the forgeries of the 'private' historian. The chief fault, however, was that Wells' history was based on scientific theories which were already slightly tarnished when he wrote his book. *The Outline* has a grim, slightly out of date materialist outlook, but it is the first book which started out in the right direction. Such a history must be written by professionals and not by one person. The three Scandinavian countries maintain an international commission to rewrite and correlate the history of each other.

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The treatment of Germany (and, for that matter, of her allies) is not an ethical issue, but a strictly practical one. Besides ethics and morality are highly illusory factors evolved by the sovereign state. There are no universal ethics and universal morality, only private ethics and private morality of independent states, which other states accept when it is in their interest to do so, or accept against their interest at the point of the gun. The temptation to take revenge on Germany and her allies was enormous for the Allies had only to consider each other and nobody else. There is no denying the fact that the Allies had a clear chance to revenge themselves, and the temptation was further strengthened by the knowledge that Germany and her allies would have done the same had they been victorious. Yet any revenge on the enemy is a highly unpractical policy, apart from such reparations for war damage as the enemy would regard as fair.

The war-guilt of Germany, the problem of Germany, the treatment of Germany, Germany's responsibility, are issues which continue to occupy a good deal of newspaper and public opinion space, totally out of proportion to their relation to the real issue. The problem of Germany and her allies is only one single problem which has to be settled, and it is not even the most important one. But it still persists and clouds the real and bigger issue. No doubt there are reasons why it is made to persist and made to cloud the real issue. Germany and her allies continue to provide the most magnificent scapegoats for almost any purpose for governments which are not willing, or are unable, to alter the *status quo*; and as long as ignorance maintains nationalism as a political force, foreign nations in general, and enemy nations in particular, will continue to serve as a marvellous boon to impotent, shortsighted or unscrupulous politicians.

This is quite apart from vested interests and national interests. It is clear that economic revenge on Germany and her allies would serve the national interests of the Big Three, and it is also clear that, in this respect, vested interests and



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national interests only differ in question of degree. On the one hand, there is the Soviet Union crying out loud for punishment of Germany. She has suffered a good deal (perhaps *unnecessarily* too much) and she needs a good deal of reconstruction. This reconstruction could easily be effected through help from the United States; Russia, however, is afraid of the consequences such aid on America's part might involve and therefore prefers to get as much out of Germany as her allies will allow and, for the rest, to remain as independent of her allies as they would like to remain of her. In the case of Russia we have the national interest which is largely vested in the nation.

On the other hand the attitude of Britain and America towards Germany (and towards every foreign issue) is national interest coloured by private vested interests. This means that those who influence public policy try to harmonize their own interests with those of the nation. The result of such a policy very often is that the nation as a whole profits more than private interests, with this difference, however, that the nation's profit is divided amongst fifty million individuals, whereas the profit of the vested interest is divided between a few thousand or a few hundred.

That national interests play an enormous part behind the hate propaganda which became particularly strong and vindictive in the last year of the war in Europe is fairly clear, and it is a policy which must inevitably lead to tragic consequences. Whether vested interests ought to be more subservient to the national interest, or should be abolished entirely, is an issue for party politicians to decide. To work up hate propaganda, however, for purpose of material gain even for pure national interests is a shortsighted policy for which suffering in war is no excuse. Leniency to the defeated foe may or may not be a useful policy: revenge is a rock bottom foundation for war.

There is always a potent excuse for failure in making a good treaty, and the excuse has never been so valid as it is now for each of the Big Three. Peacemaking would be a relatively simple affair if one single country were to emerge victorious at the

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termination of a world war. Such is certainly not the case at the end of this war. If there were excuses for the failure of Versailles, there are more magnificent and useful excuses for failure at the end of this war. The chances for making, or at least attempting to make, an intelligent peace treaty in 1919 were to a large extent in the hands of Great Britain. In the days of Versailles Britain had quite a unique position among the victors, even though, it must be admitted, her army was comparatively small. The command of the oceans was indisputably hers, all vital communications and strategical points were under her control, and her economic sacrifices were offset by the seizure of Germany's colonies. Nor was she very much dependent on her Allies. France, in her justified fear of a rebirth of a strong Germany, would have been willing to go to great lengths towards a necessary alliance, and the United States were still far away from Europe. Lord Curzon certainly did not exaggerate when, on moving the address to the King on the conclusion of the Armistice, he said: 'The British flag has never flown over a more united empire . . . Never did our voice count for more in the councils of nations; or in determining the future destinies of mankind.'

It is not my task here to submit the history of the ten years or so that followed that speech, nor to analyse and try to find how it happened that the policy of Great Britain steadily declined 'from the very summit of authority to a level of impotence such as, since the Restoration, it has seldom reached'.

Theories advanced on this subject are many, and like those of Harold Nicolson<sup>1</sup> (from whose book I quoted the above) to the effect that the British Empire 'did not possess an enlightened or continuous will for power'<sup>1</sup> are interesting and plausible. Our concern here is more with facts than with explanations. Great Britain in 1919 was in a unique position. It may not be quite true to say that she could have succeeded in imposing an intelligent and, therefore, lasting treaty on the world. She certainly had both the power and the prestige to attempt to do

<sup>1</sup> HAROLD NICOLSON: *Curzon, the Last Phase* (Constable, 1934).



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so. That attempt was not made and the power that was still in Britain's hands then was not used for the only justifiable purpose for which power should be used: for world leadership.

Of the three victorious United Nations in 1945, America finds herself in the same position as Britain did in 1919, and it is unlikely that America will draw the necessary conclusions.

The great problem for those who argue the great Ifs of history, or for those who believe it is individuals who make history, is to try to give a fair estimate as to what extent the three leading statesmen of the Big Three were responsible for failure, to what extent were they free men and to what extent the tools of the passions of their own people. To this question to-day it is impossible to give a precise answer. There is, however, not the slightest doubt that all three national leaders — whatever their faults — knew full well what the real problem was, and what was the only possible approach to peace. Those who accuse Churchill, Stalin or the late President Roosevelt of not understanding to the full the conditions of a real and lasting peace and the way to achieve it, simply do not know what they are talking about. The leaders of the Big Three, indeed, often gave themselves away in this respect. Passages in Churchill's *Arms and the Covenant*<sup>1</sup>, in Stalin's *Question du Léninisme*<sup>2</sup> and in President Roosevelt's speeches, are painful pieces of 'incriminating evidence' of the fact that all three men knew most of the truth, or at least put it on paper under their signatures.

Was it true — on the other hand — what Keynes said about the coming mental climate of the years after the First World War? 'The shape of the coming years will not be drawn by the deliberate steps of statesmen but by those hidden currents which are in continuous motion under the surface of political history.' These are questions which only the future can answer.

My own personal view is that the historian writing about the Second World War and the peace settlement will be inclined to say that Churchill and Roosevelt were liberal politicians in

<sup>1</sup> W. S. CHURCHILL: *Arms and the Covenant* (Harrap, 1940).

<sup>2</sup> J. STALIN: *Question du Léninisme* (Paris, 1930).

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a world which saw the final collapse of liberalism. Stalin — the first man of the new type of politician — on the other hand was partly impelled by the forces of moribund liberalism to abandon the only political theory in his time which might have presented a tolerable solution for the world's problem.

Hitler was not the only political leader who made the correct diagnosis of the world's problem, but he was the only one who dared to act on his diagnosis. His diagnosis was correct, the world had a great desire to be united, even by force. Hitler failed in his self-imposed mission because, instead of a benevolent despotism, he tried to extol the supremacy of one single race above all others and impose a malevolent despotism. This unacceptable condition was perhaps more serious for the chances of a German victory than those strategical mistakes which he or his general staff did or did not commit.

For those who like to speculate on the great Ifs, I suggest the following line: Had Hitler tried to unite the world under German leadership but not under German supremacy, the likelihood is that he would not have been tolerated by his own people, and as he had been elected under the tenets of racial superiority he could not switch over to leadership without racial supremacy.

The other great If is the attitude of the British Labour Party towards Germany. The Party — as is well known — in the resolution it adopted in 1943, virtually accepted the Vansittartist dictum that every German was responsible for the deeds of the Nazis. I quite frankly do not know whether this resolution, as well as the careful refraining from internationalist implications of socialism during the general election, was an absolutely necessary condition of Labour being elected to power. The current view is that the Labour Party could not afford to 'take chances'.

By 1975 passions that now disturb clear vision about the Second World War will have died down, and charges and countercharges will have been long forgotten. It is highly



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unlikely, for example, that Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in 1975 will be censored for acts for which many progressive people censored them in 1945. In 1975 no historian will be likely to say that these three men were party politicians with hands tied to party or vested interests. The criticism of the future is likely to be that the three national leaders of the 'forties worked themselves to death to put the interests of their respective countries first all the time; in other words, tried to make the best not of a bad but of an impossible job.

## CHAPTER XIII

### RAYS OF HOPE

NATIONALISM is a force based on actual differences between nations, on habit and on artificial fostering. These three main factors are each extremely powerful in resisting the onslaughts of those forces which, in our time, it seems are fighting an unequal battle against nationalism. Nationalism has succeeded in paralysing in turn two movements both aimed at the unification of the world and the happiness of the individual: Christianity and socialism. Nowadays we cannot really talk about universal Christianity or international socialism. These two ideologies have been expropriated by nationalism and rendered the private property of the nation-state. God, in the so-called Christian world, has for all practical purposes become a tribal deity and socialism a force of tribal politics.

The most important characteristic of the forces which are opposed to nationalism is that, unlike the forces of nationalism, they are not organized and, for the time being, remain isolated efforts. What are these forces?

On one side we have the individual who either consciously knows, or feels, that the conditions in which we now live (that is, the interdependence of the modern world) are rendering the sovereign nation-state more and more out of date, because the isolated unit, which claims to be a law unto itself, cannot solve the economic or the social problem. He knows or feels, in fact, that the sovereign nation-state is not only inefficient but dangerous, because it inevitably leads to war.

The number of individuals who hold such views is large in every country. They need not be intellectuals; in fact, all that is needed is a sense of frustration which finds an outlet in a dissenting attitude towards institutions which they have been taught to respect, coupled with some capacity for analysis. This



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attitude which we may describe as 'anti-national', is very different from the attitude of the completely illiterate, though the result is similar. The completely illiterate is quite unconscious of the fact that he is anti-national; his attitude may be described as unnational because in certain respects he lives in the pre-national age. He is a proof that nationalism is a factor whose strength is largely derived from artificial factors such as literacy. He is unnational largely because he does not know what the nation is, and in certain cases he hardly knows what his own nationality is. In this connection it may not be an exaggeration to say that patriotism is almost impossible without universal education. It is by no means certain that the foreign idea of state-capitalism conquered Russia largely because the great majority of Russians were completely illiterate and, therefore, had a limited measure of national consciousness. It is, however, certain that the enthusiasm of the Soviet dictatorship (all dictatorships, in fact) for education was one of the chief factors which brought about the strong national unity of Russia to which the war naturally added a particular emphasis.

The illiterate thus presents a strange paradox. Though his world is limited, he in his own limited way is capable of thinking in terms wider than his own nation, and once universality is understood by him it might arouse his enthusiasm quite as easily as nationalism, though nationalism would naturally make an overwhelmingly stronger bid. The strength and fascination of nationalism is not based on reason alone; it has a powerful array of mythology and irrational symbolism at its disposal. The chief weakness of internationalism in this respect is that it can offer nothing but reasonable argument, and no mythology or irrational symbolism; without which it will be difficult to captivate the masses.

The outcome of unnational ways of thinking has an extremely interesting bearing on the problem of quislings and collaborators during the Second World War. Some students of nationalism are inclined to think that these unnational attitudes were signs and portents that nationalism in certain places has reached its

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climax or, in the words of Prof. Carr, 'seem to mark a retrogression from the unqualified nationalism of the preceding period.'<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed very difficult to find out what psychological motives were at the bottom of the activities of quislings and collaborators. The fact is that impartial information will not be available in this respect for such a long time, that when it arrives it will no longer be useful information. In the case of Quisling himself, or that of Darlan and a number of other prominent or semi-prominent men, the problem seems to be quite simple. They seem to be people whose ambitions have been frustrated by their own limitations, or by factors beyond their control, and who thus became traitors to their countries in order to gain power by the only available means. The problem of collaboration, however, is much more complex. For a man like Quisling who for all intents and purposes gives the impression of nothing but a crooked politician, and who, perhaps, was one, and for a handful of rich people who were anxious to preserve their wealth by all available means, there are thousands and thousands of people everywhere in Europe who turned collaborators for entirely different reasons. Their presence may not have been surprising in countries whose democracy or national unity was weak because it was new like that of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, or in countries with shockingly low standards of life, but collaboration seems somewhat startling in France, Belgium and Holland, and in Norway and Denmark, that is, in countries with old national traditions and strong spontaneous cohesion. It will be interesting to hear the verdict of posterity on these people who, in our eyes, have committed the greatest crime the contemporary state recognizes beside murder: turned traitors to their country. It is not unlikely that a hundred years hence one or two of them will be regarded as martyrs to the cause of a universal world. It is not at all unlikely that among the quislings and collaborators there are a large number of misled idealists, and an even

<sup>1</sup> E. H. CARR: *Nationalism and After* (Macmillan, 1945).



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larger number of people who emotionally still live in the pre-national period. Some of them were, no doubt, led to the path of collaboration by their conscious conviction that the nation-state became degenerate because it became an end in itself. They became so dissatisfied with that prison, with the tyranny of that historical accident, the nation-state, that they were ready to accept anything; in fact, they were ready to give their allegiance to anything that had a faint promise of a world which could solve its economic and social problem. Some of them saw that communism failed as an instrument of world organization, whereas the German New Order offered something like a promise. They felt — and German propaganda had helped to strengthen their belief — that Nazism was not quite as narrow and parochial as when it appeared in the nineteen-thirties. Nor was it entirely an instrument to preserve the privileges of capitalism. They concluded that if it conquered the world it would be forced to become a satisfactory solution. They felt that in the end Hitler — or his successor, regardless of what his previous ambitions were — would, *malgré lui*, become a benefactor to the world. In order to enjoy popularity, or merely to maintain his power, his central government would contrive in the end to satisfy the demands of all countries without favouring one against the other. They felt that Hitler knew he could not maintain his power by force and tyranny alone. Force and tyranny were perhaps necessary in the beginning, but later there might be no need for them because the whole world would be united and demand could be freely satisfied on a total scale. And as for the Germans as a master race of the world, they would behave in a different fashion when victory had been gained, and the world united. After all, they were 'men like ourselves' and would not want to go back to the bad old days of disintegration by uniting the rest of the people against themselves.

No doubt some of the collaborators reflected on these lines, and the large inarticulate majority may have felt along these lines without being able to put their thoughts into words. They



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may have regarded Hitler as 'one of themselves' who, like them, wanted a united world with no war and no unemployment. They were half-educated like Hitler, and they did not much bother about history, of which they knew only a few anecdotes, or about traditional loyalties, which they found as empty, meaningless and unsatisfactory as 'nation', 'country', 'Christianity' or 'democracy'. Their loyalty was towards themselves, to their families and perhaps, rather vaguely, towards the whole world. Home for them meant the place where they lived and they intuitively felt that men all over the world wanted the same thing and were all over the world dissatisfied with war, insecurity, unemployment, poverty, and the lies and unfulfilled promises of politicians. Hitler to them represented something entirely novel and promising: a New Deal on a world-wide scale. That preparations for this New Deal involved monstrous cruelties to Jews was a fact quite often missed by these collaborationists, usually for the simple reason that they were quite unaware of the existence of death factories, or if they did know about them, these means to an end were explained away in their minds with the same readiness with which an enthusiastic apologist of the Soviet Union in Western Europe explains away Russian purges and concentration camps.

Another factor which is often regarded as a force against nationalism is fear of war. This psychological factor, the history of the Twenty Years' Armistice and the short period which has passed since the advent of the atomic bomb have demonstrated that it is not really a force of resistance against nationalism, nor can it do much towards the prevention of war. Defeat in war, and individual suffering in the course of war, would certainly produce a powerful impression on the mind of some people, but never on the mind of the nation.

In fact, we might as well go as far as to say that defeat in war as a rule increases nationalism, and peace is maintained as long as the horrors of war exercise a more powerful impression on the mind of the masses than the horrors of peace. And this is the



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crucial point where pacifist propaganda habitually commits a mistake. We need not here waste time in discussing the school of pacifists which holds that war is the worst evil and who would like to maintain peace at any price. The answer to their tenets is in Madariaga's witticism, that you cannot ban war if you offer nothing else instead. The pacifist with whom we are concerned is the man who is willing to give his thought to a remedy against war; in fact, willing to work out a system which would make peace worth while. Quite often he has something intelligent to offer, but he is in the greatest difficulty when it comes to propaganda. He must make an appeal to the masses; the appeal, therefore, must be partly an emotional appeal with strongly coloured facts calculated to make a powerful impression. For this purpose he cannot very well use his arguments on the positive side (peace through co-operative effort, federalism, the development of backward areas, the increase of consumption and full employment and, therefore, happiness); he is more often induced to use arguments on the negative side, that is, the horrors that would *not* befall the individual and the nation if war is averted. And here the pacifist out of sheer good-will and intention commits his cardinal mistake. He either exaggerates the horrors of war or he draws a completely misleading picture of war. His strongest argument usually is that war destroys civilization. Now, the character of modern war is admittedly extremely destructive because, compared with wars of previous epochs, it is on its way to totality. It imposes almost as much suffering on the civilian population as on the soldier. It cannot, however, destroy even the nation's private civilization, still less civilization in general.

Civilization in the national and in the international sense is a stronger thing than most people, anxious for its future, believe, and a large proportion of civilization is permanently in a sheltered condition where it is quite safe against the ravages of war and the ravages of peace.

It has been said that if Britain were destroyed, her civilization could be reconstructed from the laws of Lord Halsbury, from

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Shakespeare, from the Book of Common Prayer and from the rules of cricket. This, of course, is an anecdote and for that matter quite an international anecdote. It has many variations all over Europe and many in Britain, though most of these variations everywhere certainly include the Common Law records of the country. In any case, much more than such records would survive the ravages of the most destructive war; in fact, much more would survive even from that aspect of civilization which is not in a protected and sheltered condition, for example the human memory.

It was grievous to see the destruction of the Clothiers' Hall at Ypres during the First World War and grievous to see the destruction of the monastery of Cassino, of St. Clement Danes, of All Hallows, Barking, the Guildhall, of the Chain Bridge at Budapest, and other ancient monuments during the Second. These, however, are minor and unimportant matters; slight damages to civilization. Civilization is capable of surviving more than a destruction on five times that scale.

The argument the pacifist at times neglects is that peace is quite as capable of damaging — not destroying — civilization as war. Ancient monuments fall into ruin because public money is spent on poor relief or armaments. Cancer research has to suffer because money is needed for new cruisers. And what is the use of ancient monuments, and what is the use of culture, if the largest majority of people cannot appreciate them because their senses are blunted by struggle for mere existence? The pacifist usually neglects this argument because the destructiveness and the horrors of peace are different in rate from the destructiveness and horrors of war. The impact of war horrors is more direct, much faster and more dramatic than the impact of peace horrors. He should learn to explain that in our time, fundamentally, there is no difference between peace, which at its best is orderly stagnation, and war which for quite a period can be just a lull, a 'phoney' war. It is admittedly difficult to make people understand this, especially in a happy, well-to-do country, the majority of whose inhabitants know no horrors



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equalling war. Besides, in the so-called 'peace time' there are so many factors that lull people into the illusion of a real peace, even if they lack the almost natural capacity of man for wishful thinking.

The well-intentioned pacifist, therefore, enlarges on the horrors of war and he usually ends up with a misleading picture. He uses colours which are impressionistic and false, he uses sound effects whose volume or modulations or range do not correspond to reality. The horrors of the Second World War, for example, were nothing compared with the picture ardent and well meaning pacifists presented to us in the course of the Twenty Years' Truce. The devastation of Rotterdam, Hiroshima, of Russian and German towns, which suffered more than towns in Britain, present nothing like the pictures envisaged by Group-Captain Charlton or H. G. Wells. They frightened us with 'new horrors', whereas what came were largely 'old horrors' in more efficient technical forms. The magnetic mine was a spectacular failure, the 'doodle bug' and the atomic bomb promising beginnings for inexpensive means of destruction, but not yet ready for large-scale effects. These gentlemen frightened us with bacterial warfare, death rays, really deadly poison gases; they talked of wholesale disease and starvation. And what is more important they talked of these horrors occurring in *every* country. What in reality happened was that nations did what they could afford and what they thought proper to prepare themselves for these improvements in the technique of warfare.<sup>1</sup> And they will continue to do so in the future. The point is that military secrets do not include secret weapons. Military secrets are troop movements and ship movements and concentrations; largely time factors, not material factors. The existence of battleships and cruisers cannot be denied, nor can the strength of a country's armed forces be a secret . . . to the enemy, that is. Secrecy is a matter of details, not of wide, general facts and principles. And secret

<sup>1</sup> Thus most countries spent large sums of money and time in preparing themselves against gas warfare.

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weapons are only secret to the population of the country which evolved them and to the population of the country against which they are meant to be used. If they remain secrets to the Military Intelligence Departments of the enemy country, then a serious reshuffle is needed in the department.

Where the peace propagandist has made his mistake, and may make his mistake again, is that he placed an undue emphasis on the horrors of war which in themselves, in any case, are not factors capable of stopping wars.<sup>1</sup> War comes when the horrors of peace exercise a more powerful impression on nations' minds than the horrors of war.

It is true, of course, that the argument about the horrors of peace is more difficult to put over, because periods associated in our minds with peace produce long-range horrors which lack dramatic impact and intensity. The description of the picture of unemployment in the 'Dust Bowl' of California, on the Clyde-side, on the Tyneside, in Düsseldorf, or in Essen at its worst, is merely depressing. It is horror in slow-motion, which seems to belong more to time than to space. It has not the vivid, tonal impact and speed about it that spells the horror of an air-raid or of the sinking of a battleship. Besides, horrors of peace only become large-scale collective horrors in impoverished or defeated countries.<sup>1</sup> At least such was my personal experience during my tour of Europe in 1931, possibly the peak year of the economic nemesis of the threadbare 'thirties. This tour was in the nature of a return visit to a few countries which I had known previously and, ironically enough, the 'grand tour' of a representative of a generation which reached maturity during the Twenty Years' Truce. I saw soldiers in rags in Rumania, peasants living in caves in Hungary; I attended several Communist meetings in the Parisian suburbs of Belleville and Ménilmontant and the meetings of both the Communist and the Nazi parties in Berlin districts like Hallesches

<sup>1</sup> Fear of war in fact can be a potent source of war, because instead of promoting peace, it forces nations to arm themselves and to strike before they are attacked.



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Tor and Neukoelln; I was stopped in the street by hungry men in Dresden, in Cologne, in Leipzig; I saw soup kitchens in the Angyalföld of Budapest and in the Favoriten of Vienna. I ended my tour in the Scotland Road district of Liverpool, in Butetown, Cardiff, and in Limehouse, London. I gathered impressions of respective worlds which Céline and Christopher Isherwood with the power and vision of artists and Christopher journalist. In that year 1931, when the Spanish monarchy fell, when President Hoover declared a moratorium on foreign debts, when the City of London went off gold and sailors struck at Invergordon, when governments fell in France, Hungary and Britain, when middle-aged men all over the globe felt that the bottom was falling out of the world, the horrors of peace never seemed either quite as vivid or as true in countries which were rich enough to solve the problem of the essential contradiction between capitalism and democracy. When all is said and done, and when the statistician has compared the data and the expert on nutrition has had his say, it simply is not true that misery and poverty are the same all over the world. The sooner we forget this comfortable and convenient lie the better. In view of this fact, however, it is easy to understand the attitude of the pacifist in Western Europe: he cannot dwell too much on the horrors of peace, because the vast majority of his audience—including the unemployed and the undernourished—are so lucky that they cannot imagine horrors equalling war.

Another of his false trails is the indictment of the internationalism of armament manufacturers. The proper answer to his argument is the new principle which in the long run will become an accepted principle, namely the nationalization of the manufacture of armaments. If it is mere internationalism or the private profit of the manufacturer of armaments that contributes to war, why should armaments be manufactured exclusively by the nation-state?

The pacifist then often follows this false trail up and extends

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it to international trusts and cartels, which he accuses of causing wars, simply by being international. The truth is that international organization of production of raw materials in itself is by no means a harmful thing. It becomes harmful when the international organization is used for exploitation for the benefit of group interests. In this respect it is really immaterial for the world — and it is the whole world that counts — whether the international monopoly of rubber, for example, is in the hands of fifty individuals or of the whole British Empire (that is, immaterial for the rest of the world, but not for the inhabitants of the British Empire). In the interest of the world it is, indeed, essential that raw materials, for example, should be organized internationally, but they should be organized through international planning for the benefit of the whole world and not in the interests of individuals or of a few nations.

The pacifist must proceed on such lines when he criticizes cartels, trusts or armament manufacturers, and he must make his picture of horrors more collective and less one-sided to be really effective. It is largely a question of intelligent selection. Here is one of the details which he habitually neglects. He says that apart from physical and mental sufferings, the money spent on purposes of war ought to have been spent on purposes of peace, and there he stops. He ought to go on and analyse this problem, for he might evolve a very good argument. He naturally cannot say that if all the belligerent nations had pooled all the money, not to speak of the toil, effort and suffering, they spent on the last war a durable peace would have been made possible. Such a pooling might, however, have gone a long way towards it. In this respect I do not blame him for refraining from telling an important aspect of the truth, namely that war is an incentive for people to work harder, to make sacrifices and to sink some of their differences, whereas peace is not. War, to a certain extent, is something like a conditioned reflex produced in the psychology of the nation. Chased by a tiger, a middle-aged chartered accountant might



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climb a tree with the skill and speed of a young native. Fear, unfortunately, is a stronger incentive than security.

The pacifist, however, has a good line in another respect. He can ask the question: would the belligerents of the Second World War in 1939 have been ready to put up with all their varied ordeals and sufferings for five or six years, not so much to avert war in general as to secure peace at the price of their efforts for another twenty or twenty-five years? The Second World War was the greatest military enterprise of all times in history. According to an editorial in *The Observer* in 1945, 'no military enterprise has drawn its strength from roots so far flung and remote. Soldiers from all over the world have fought the battles; factories scattered from the Urals to California have poured out the arms; the citizens of Leningrad and London have shared ordeals. Airmen were trained in Canada, Texas, Rhodesia, to bomb Berlin; aircraft flew the Atlantic in multitudes to take part. And behind it all a miracle of organization and transport and supply; and the unfailing heroism of the seamen who endured and died to carry the cargoes and keep the oceans free'. This is a fair estimate of the military efforts of the United Nations, and a similar picture can be drawn up of the efforts of Germany who also had behind her miracles of organization and unfailing heroism.

We know full well that the answer to the pacifist's question would have been more than just 'No', but 'No, of course not'. Still the pacifist-propagandist has a very good argument here if he makes an intelligent analysis of the forces which resulted in that answer. It depends on his skill. He can, of course, acknowledge his defeat by admitting that fear of war is an incentive to heroism and sacrifice, whereas the maintenance of peace is not, but he can also further analyse the issue and can reveal exciting material as to *why* the maintenance of peace is no incentive. He can enlarge on the fact why certain nations preferred war to peace and why others had reasons to prefer peace no matter how rotten and how unsatisfactory they recognized their own 'private' peace to be. He can demon-



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strate why war under the present systems of government in the world is the only means by which a nation can hope to improve its economic situation, and finally he can show why international co-operation and peace have no tradition, whereas international anarchy and war have a beautiful, long and glorious line of tradition. It is all a question of skill. He must make his material interesting, even if it is factually dull (and nothing can be quite so dull as ideas about international co-operation). For purposes of popularity he must be sensational, but his sensationalism must be utilized so as to be effective in the right direction. One of the old tricks is to debunk war heroes. He may use this slightly moth-eaten argument, but he must be careful not to make them ridiculous. He must show how futile and how small are the acts for which people receive the Victoria Cross, the Congressional Medal, or the Iron Cross with the Oak Leaves, compared with acts to serve the 'benefits of humanity'. (The skilful pacifist of course must not use these words, 'benefits of humanity', because his reader would immediately — and with some justice — put his book or pamphlet down.) He must show, on the other hand, that in spite of the beautiful human (not English, not German: just human) act meriting a decoration, how *easy* it is to get the decoration, in spite of being maimed or killed; how easy it is to merit even a posthumous V.C. compared with what is needed, not through five minutes or ten minutes or half an hour's heroism, but five or ten years of relentless effort in *another battlefield*. It greatly aids the pacifist, of course, if he himself happens to be a V.C., or if he does not look or sound like a pacifist. Most unfortunately people can look like pacifists; like professional pacifists in fact, and that is a bad thing, because the public gets the impression that peace for the professional pacifist is somehow a private vested interest. It is a good thing for a pacifist to look like a picture of health, even if he does not stand at least six foot two with broad shoulders. Under no circumstances should a pacifist use an ear-trumpet in public.

In view of the arguments of pacifist propaganda, which was



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pretty well uniform in this respect in every country, it is not surprising that the lack of nationalism in Britain during the Twenty Years' Truce was genuine enough, but all the same superficial and very misleading. In the years before the slump there was a period characterized by an apparent retrogression of the nationalism of the years immediately following the war. It is easy to understand that nationalism during that period was weakest in the United States, in Britain and in France, but anti-nationalist trends were by no means confined to the victor countries. During the Locarno period they were very strong in Germany, in Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. The enormous success of German anti-war books like *All Quiet on the Western Front* in the defeated countries, and the enormous international success of books like Wells' *The World of William Clissold*, are significant.

This pacifism, however, was not the outcome of a constructive effort; in most countries it was a mere negation of war. In the defeated countries it came from the bitterness of defeat, in the victor countries it came from the bitterness of victory; the explosion of the emptiness of popular slogans, from nausea at unscrupulous patriotism. The financial nemesis of the late twenties which put Hitler in power, at once put an end to the surface pacifism of the defeated countries, yet pacifism in the victor countries was rife almost until the Munich crisis. This pacifism was not restricted to the intellectuals or to the educated. On the contrary, it was fairly strong among ex-servicemen and the young of all classes. Smart young English intellectuals were not the only people who hung their war decorations under mirrors in lavatories; or went regularly to the Strand Theatre to laugh at the lines of a play called *Young England*, meant to be heroic and uplifting; or who regarded the *Saturday Review* under the ownership of Lady Houston as 'much more amusing than *Punch* because it's meant to be serious'. True, of course, such attitudes were considered smart, and thus did not always come from genuine sources.

These popular manifestations, however, were quite as mis-

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leading as the Oxford Resolution. Those who censured the undergraduates who decided to 'refuse to fight for King and Country' usually maintain that this 'shameful' resolution was a private affair of some young men at Oxford who would have done anything for publicity. The point is that, irrespective of whether the signatories to the resolution were sincere or not, their attitude at the same period was typical of millions of young men in Britain, in France and in America and — had they been allowed to express their views freely — of millions of young Germans, too, in spite of defeat, blockade, humiliations, unemployment and Nazi propaganda. The point which arises here is that the Oxford undergraduates, along with the pacifists, have often been censured on the ground that they encouraged German aggression. I shall here make an attempt to describe the impression the attitude of pacifist Britain made on the totalitarian states.

The Nazis and the Fascists knew very well that Britain was unwilling to fight, but they also knew that Britain would fight regardless of whether she was willing or unwilling. A year or two after the Oxford Resolution, when Hitler sent his troops to remilitarize the Rhineland, he actually anticipated the possibility that both France and Britain would declare war on Germany; accordingly he gave orders to his officers to retire at once if there should be any armed resistance. This is a fact often proved.

At the time the Oxford Resolution was made I discussed its effects with foreign journalist colleagues in London, and, among them, with several who knew Hitler's Germany well. In their opinion the resolution had the following effect on the Nazis:

'Are Oxford students really stupid or merely hypocritical?' the Nazis asked. 'It is, no doubt, an extremely comfortable attitude to decide not to fight for King and Country, but good intention is not enough. Would the young gentlemen of Oxford go quite so far in their resolution as to fight their own countrymen in order to revise the Peace Treaty of Versailles? Because



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otherwise they can keep their comfortable resolution. They won't, however. Well, that's just too bad. In that case, old boys, resolution or no resolution, in a few years' time you will fight for your King and Country like hell, and you will be heroes against your will. At the same time, thank you for your resolution. Naturally we don't believe you won't fight, but the German masses will believe that you are such nasty hypocrites that you pretend not to prepare for war so as to mislead us. We shall, therefore, redouble our efforts.'

Similar was the Nazis' reaction to the Peace Ballot and to Labour's disarmament policy. 'We quite believe', the Nazi comment ran, 'that the Labour Party wants to spend the money on public services instead of spending it on war. We, too, are peace-loving, but not on Britain's terms. We cannot accept the *status quo*.'

In this respect it is important to remark here that the enthusiasm of the German crowds cheering Chamberlain was perfectly genuine, even though Chamberlain's aerial acrobatics were exploited by the Nazi propaganda to show that Hitler had such prestige that he had achieved his aims without war. The individual German cheering in the crowd may not have believed that 'Peace in Our Time' had a solid foundation, but he still hoped for miracles. In view of this it is easy to understand that Nazi propaganda had again and again to inculcate into the German masses that 'war is a mission of the German race'. Otherwise they would have found it as difficult to believe that their mission was war as the British that their mission was democracy.

The emotional attitude towards foreigners is impossible to assess properly. It is a part of that exciting theme 'human relations', and it is subject to so many factors that all we can do is to make a brief summary of some of them.

We know that it is not universally true that foreignness always repels. For certain individuals it provides a strong attraction. Both attitudes, however, represent a degree of

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civilization. The savage neither hates foreigners nor likes them: he is usually afraid of them.

At the same time, however, we know that with the person representing a degree of civilization, race consciousness is not quite instinctive; at least, not in all respects. It certainly does not include sex aversion, and the sex motive is an important factor in our attitude towards foreigners. Geography is one of the most important aphrodisiacs known to man, and the exotic and unknown can provide as much sexual attraction as attractive physical features. Like of foreigners quite often is nothing but sexual curiosity, and dislike of foreigners often emanates from nothing but sexual fears and sex-envy.

The attitude of curiosity towards foreigners, however, does not necessarily involve sex motives at all. It can take the form of a purely intellectual curiosity. The foreigner is usually regarded as a human being from another part of the world. What is he really like? What are our identities and what are our differences? On this point we have already arrived at a fairly high standard of civilization. This attitude already represents the beginning of an intelligent approach. The trouble starts when we begin to rationalize; that is, when we inevitably begin to see the individual in the context of the political unit of which he is a member. There is a good deal to justify this rationalization or generalization, because to a certain extent everybody is a representative not so much of his country, as of the particular environment in which he was brought up. There is a good deal in that detective-fiction premise according to which nobody can leave a room without taking a vital and compromising bit of that room with him, because the criminologist has a powerful array of scientific paraphernalia to prove this thesis. The time spent in a particular environment is infinitely longer than a murderer would spend at the scene of a murder, and there is no need for criminal-scientific methods to find out what those vital, compromising and typical bits are that stick to personality. Thus the temptation to rationalize in terms of geography, of national



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civilizations, of climate and of politics is not only strong, but to a certain extent justified. What this extent is we cannot assess, but it is certain that the number of people who think of other people as individuals, and not as representatives of a class or of a political unit, are very limited. Such thinking is the height of civilization and, as such, it is typical only of a few people.

Foreigners can often awake one's pity and they can enormously increase one's self-respect, most of the time quite unconsciously. There are hundreds of people in every country whose only reason for liking foreigners is that they feel superior in their company. The foreigner in question supplies an element of compensation for some people, and this is especially the case when the foreigner himself thinks that he is inferior because of his foreignness. He can, of course, feign his attitude and pretend to be inferior if he can dine out on it. I know several refugees in London who carry this type of synthetic humility to such perfection that the genuine variety cannot hold a candle to them.

Sometimes it has been suggested that the presence in this country of large masses of refugees, as well as the servicemen of various Allied countries, has done some useful service in helping us to understand foreigners and foreigners to understand us. It was assumed that they would become ambassadors of good-will towards Britain. No doubt those refugees who escaped death from their diseases in various internment camps, or those who survived the 'City of Benares', may carry pleasant memories back with them. But with every printed and, sometimes, genuine praise of Britain there is an unprinted and, sometimes, genuine adverse criticism of Britain. The point is that large masses of foreigners have had an opportunity to see us during a crisis, and we have seen a large mass of foreigners. The result is unforeseen, though it is likely to be neutral apart from half a dozen novels in English and several other languages for which this contact will inevitably supply background and material.

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Even the wish to travel abroad does not always come from motives of self-improvement or geographical curiosity. Many people travel because it is 'done', many lesser representatives of Great Powers travel because they get more respect abroad. Many people travel to have a 'change', and many people travel to return to their country, thanking God they are Englishmen. This latter is by no means an attitude restricted to English insularity. Insularity can exist in a Continental country, too. 'No man is an island,' said Donne; a country, however, is *always* an island.

The individual can occasionally desert one nation-state for another nation-state, that is not only change his legal allegiance but also give up his ties. The considerations which prompt such desertions are numerous and well known, the most important being economic. The economic motive was the mainspring behind the wholesale immigration to the new countries in the years between 1880 and 1914, combined perhaps with political motives (oppression by the Church, by political authorities, etc.). The case of the political emigrant is different. He merely takes refuge in another country to escape punishment, but he usually returns to his native country as soon as circumstances permit.

Changing allegiance can, however, come from non-material springs. It can be prompted by preference for another country's allegiance from non-economic or non-political reasons. Such a change of allegiance is usually restricted to people, broadly termed the *élite*, comprising in this sense the material *élite* as well as the spiritual. The late W. W. Astor was not the only American who at the end of last century declared that 'America is no fit place for a gentleman to live in', but he was one of the few who acted on the principle.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, several people transferred their allegiance to another nation-state simply because they preferred it to their own. John Paget and Terence Egan, who became Hungarian citizens in the eighteen-seventies, are typical of this way of thinking on

<sup>1</sup> He was created Baron Astor 1916 and a Viscount in 1917.



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purely emotional lines. Such motives are even stronger in the case of the artist.<sup>1</sup> Many of them find that the atmosphere of their own country is not congenial to them but desertion is not easy. Economic circumstances among others play an important part. How many artists would leave their native country if they could afford to? And how many proclaim their allegiance simply because they are not in a position to change it? National allegiance with many people is nothing more than making the best of a bad job.

The most important difference between the forces of nationalism and the forces against nationalism is that the first are powerfully organized whereas the latter are not organized at all. The forces against nationalism are represented by isolated feelings of individuals, or of groups which are small and weak and unorganized compared with the tremendous emotional and material strength of nationalism. In this respect it is highly significant that in our time there is no organization whose sole object is to oppose nationalism. There are, no doubt, various institutions which are fighting nationalism by implication, or, at least, which provide sources of resistance against nationalism. It might be thought that the most important of these is the Roman Catholic Church, whereas the truth is that it is Christianity as such which provides a real source of resistance, not the individual churches. The anti-nationalist character of socialism is discussed in another chapter of this book. The fact thus remains that there is no organization whose specific aim is to fight nationalism by telling the difficult and hideous truth about it. This fact is significant but understandable. If an organization were to start spreading unbiased and scientific information about nationalism in Stockholm or London, it would have to tell the truth about Swedish and British nationalism too, and this

<sup>1</sup> American novelists in the last fifty years were not the only ones who preferred other countries to their own. Henry James, Edith Wharton, Logan Persall Smith, T. S. Eliot and Henry Miller had distinguished colleagues in many countries.

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would be an extremely difficult proposition the very moment it ceased to be restricted to educated people. Besides, such an organization, no matter how wise and intelligent its aims, would to a certain extent be quite genuinely destructive, because while weakening national unity it would offer no concrete alternative to the nation-state. It would offer no absolute values while denying the relative value of loyalty to the nation. Christianity and socialism are both institutions whose fundamental principles offer in varying degrees absolute and therefore universal values, and therein lies their strength as means of resistance against nationalism.

It is a general belief that science is a great factor of resistance to nationalism; in fact, there is a growing opinion which concludes that in the end science will take the place of nationalism as the most important political force.

So far, there seems little to support this theory. In the nineteenth century science and technology made rapid advances and became a strong historical force which altered the shape of the world almost beyond recognition. It also dealt an enormous blow to religion, which by that time had become more or less the private affair of each country. The prestige of science, however, was not strong enough to take the place of religion, nor could it offer the same emotional satisfaction. The place of religion, therefore, was taken over by nationalism, and became a matter more and more for the individual conscience. Since that time, science—which, when all is said and done, is a neutral—has been exploited for purposes of nationalism. There is hardly any scientific discovery or technological invention that the nation-state has not exploited for its own aims, and used eventually for destructive ends. The aircraft, the agent which can abolish distance, was used for purposes of aerial bombardment. Wireless, the agent of international communication, became an agent of internationally organized political hatred, while the release of atomic energy was first used for the destruction of two Japanese towns. The result of



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the technical progress of the last fifty years is that the world has become much smaller, although the greater part of the world has not yet noticed the change. For this there are many reasons, most of them social and economic. The advantages of scientific discovery are not yet fully available to the masses. Most people know that it is possible to fly from London to New York in four hours, or is it six? but how many of them are able to make the journey? The same applies and, for a time, will apply to telecommunications. These great technical advances remain for the time being more of theoretical than practical significance to the masses. Besides, to reduce distance does not automatically demonstrate the unity of mankind. In fact, the technical progress of the last fifty years has only strengthened nationalism because it has given technical expression to that fundamental characteristic of nationalism: separatism. And when men, for the first time in history, began to travel in foreign countries in masses and began to learn more about their opposite numbers abroad, this closer contact did not always result in discovering identities. It resulted in discovering very strong differences . . . in standards of life and national income. Such discoveries could not very well supply a motive force to strengthen the unity of mankind. In this connection we should also remember that technological advance, apart from destruction, can be exploited for purposes of national isolation. Every nation-state is trying to be as self-supporting as possible, and so naturally tries to make itself independent of supply of raw materials from foreign countries. If artificial rubber which is cheaper and better than real rubber can be made in a country, that country would not import any natural rubber.

The future of scientific discoveries, however, need not fill us with undue gloom. Science may be regarded as a neutral and there is no reason why in the long run it could not become an ally. Man is often inspired by man's achievement. When Blériot for the first time flew the Channel, the immediate reaction was interest in the fact that man can fly, not interest in Blériot's racial origin. The regret that Blériot was not born an

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Englishman or an American came five minutes later. When Virchow (in 1883) pronounced the words: '*Krebs ist heilbar*' ('cancer is curable'), people did not immediately concern themselves with the fact that Virchow was a Prussian. And similar reactions were displayed by the majority of mankind when they heard of the discoveries and inventions of Marconi, Edison, Bunting or Pierre and Marie Curie.

It is also said that because of technological discoveries war in the end will become so destructive that 'it will bring people to their senses'. This argument in the face of the past is somewhat illusory, but there is another aspect that may allow some hope. War has become very costly, in spite of the fact that some war materials in the last thirty years have declined in price. And what is more important, man's life has become much more valuable all over the world than it was thirty years ago. This is exceedingly important. Perhaps, owing to the work of socialists, governments in well-to-do countries at least throughout the Second World War have been less light-hearted in the sacrifice of manpower for victory. What actually happened was that they tried to save lives by sacrificing wealth, and by doing this they may have done a certain amount towards equalizing the wealth of individual nations.

The greatest factor of resistance against nationalism is education, which, however, is entirely in the hands of the state everywhere. The ground of hope, in this respect, is that education is advancing all over the world, in spite of the blinkers the nation-state imposes on it. This advance is universal in that more and more people begin to realize that the nation-state is an historical accident, and, compared with the family, quite unnatural; also that it is defeating itself because it represents itself as the final absolute and an aim in itself. Fifty years ago such beliefs were restricted to the élite, to-day they are known to some of the so-called 'common man'. People slowly discover that every nation-state is distorting national history and forging universal history. Certain facts have to be



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admitted in schools, or cannot be suppressed, and certain aspects of history do not always lend themselves easily to forgery. Some political philosophers assert that the moral factor which is known as 'public conscience' is also a factor against nationalism. That this, for the time being, is not so, is so easy to see that it is unnecessary to give detailed evidence to support the negative. The fact is that morality and ethics in our period of civilization are more the private morality and private ethics of the nation-state than the universal morality and ethics of mankind. The advance of education for which we see hopeful signs all over the world is, however, conducive to the universalism of morality and ethics. More and more people begin to see that the nation-state finds it absolutely essential to find moral and ethical justifications for its policy, whether for home or foreign policy, and whether the state in question is totalitarian or democratic. No state can maintain itself and carry on its policy for long if it is based on press-button loyalty or on blind and, therefore, passive obedience. The world's greatest Gestapo or Ogpu would be incapable of making up for that which nothing but moral support can give to the government, namely the conviction in the mind of the citizen that the policy of the state is justified on moral grounds. Without this conviction there is no devotion. The advancement of thought in this connection is evidenced by the fact that more and more people recognize that war is represented by governments in such a way that it can be fought on both sides with perfect moral justification, the result of which discovery is either that both parties are right or neither of them are right. Discoveries like these, which nationalist propaganda cannot kill (it merely drives them underground), may in the end attack the very roots of sovereignty.

No national leader in any country could in the twentieth century tell the naked truth about a nation's cause. This can be interpreted as a welcome sign that nationalism is weakening because it has to be camouflaged to make it acceptable. A national leader in our century has to cover up the



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truth with moral justifications, claiming them to be universal moral grounds. Hitler could not possibly concentrate on nothing but the truth (namely that Germany wanted a bigger cut of the world's wealth than was her lot) on the ground that the Germans were human beings, and on the ground that they were capable of making a bid for it. This is change. He had also to work out an elaborate doctrine about the superiority of the German race in order to claim that change, although change in itself is a fundamental right of every single nation. (But, naturally, only powerful nations can attempt to make such a claim good, because under our civilization war is the only way, and small nations cannot make war.)

Similarly, no Prime Minister of Britain could have admitted the naked truth that Germany was trying to satisfy herself at the expense of Britain's wealth, nor justify Britain's opposition to this plan on the sole ground that Britain had a right to what she possessed. He had to cover up or amplify this private truth with moral justifications about democracy.

Britain for that matter had very little need for war aims, for there can be no better war aim than to know that you are fighting to defend property and liberty which are in danger. It is true that demand on the national scale was not satisfied and that millions of people were on the dole, but if Hitler had succeeded in invading Britain even the dole would have gone, and, instead of a 'narrow-minded Englishman bent on the maintenance of the interests of capitalism', the boss would have been a narrow-minded German bent on maintaining goodness knows what. Of the two evils Neville Chamberlain was certainly the lesser.

There was a very good reason why the British government did not define war aims beyond vague references to the rule of democracy. The public cries of 'What are we fighting for?' were baits for the government to commit itself, to make promises about broadening the basis of democracy, which it was unwilling to do, and which in fact, and quite frankly, it had little need to do. It had no fear of the Labour Party starting



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a flirtation with the German Labour Party, because Germany had no Labour Party!

Another sign of the times is the criticism or ridicule which is the lot of the 'old-fashioned' patriot, the man who says 'my country right or wrong'. Such a man to-day in most countries is either criticized or laughed out of court, very often by people who themselves passionately believe in their country, right or wrong. Accordingly, they criticize him or laugh at him on the ground that he is 'old-fashioned', uncivilized, Blimpish, etc., although the real reason for disapproval springs from entirely different roots. They disapprove of the man, though they agree with him in fundamentals, because he is too blunt about those fundamentals, because he gives the game away, because he exposes the naked truth about nationalism, that it is something like family affection which is independent of right or truth. They disapprove of such a man because through his lack of subtlety he invokes the danger that patriotism will become discredited. They — the critics — of course, are more subtle; they cover up the private truth of nationalism with moral justifications, so that it may be paraded as a piece of universal truth.

'What we have we hold' is another much criticized slogan, by those who subscribe to it, but they wish it were phrased more happily.

All in all, nationalism to-day among the ruling classes of the white countries seldom parades in its older nakedness, but practically always assumes the cloak of moral justification. It is very difficult to say whether this is a welcome sign in the evolution of nationalism. In its older form it would have had a stronger chance of being discredited; in its newer form a good deal of critical sense is needed to find the dirt under the cloak of moral justification.

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THE desire for world peace is much older than modern nationalism, but before the advent of nationalism it was a desire restricted to a small group of men. The task would have been infinitely easier before the advent of nationalism and before the interdependence of the world became complete, but the necessity was not so great. Christian universalism would have been something like a solution — at least for Europe. This found its expression in the *Pax Romana*, which meant that the making of war was in the hands of Rome, which in turn meant the concentration of power in a single state. The *Pax Romana* came to an end with the Reformation, but its conception of the 'master state' from time to time has been revived, and the temptation for a strong state to dominate the rest still remains. Two notable attempts made in this field were those of Napoleon and Hitler. They both aimed at the unity of the world which is essential, but they both failed, not so much because of their technical inadequacy for the practical realization of the conception, but because both the Napoleonic and the Hitlerian conception of the super-state gave mankind the impression that it would promote its own selfish interests. Both the Napoleonic and Hitlerian designs were in essence variations of the Machiavellian theory.

Hobbes' *Leviathan* represented an important advance over his contemporaries in general, and over Machiavelli in particular. The *Leviathan* expresses the belief that a single super-state could prevent war by guaranteeing order and security. While Hobbes accepted Machiavelli's view that vanity and lust for power are in the nature of man, he did not agree with Machiavelli's conclusion that the super-state should strive to promote its own interests. He contended, on the contrary, that it should strive to promote the interests of the individual by



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suppressing the evil in man's nature through despotic power intelligently used. No educated man would now agree with the two men's belief as regards the nature of man. The generally accepted theory is still Montesquieu's relativist tenet, that man is neither good nor bad but is conditioned by environment, climate and history. Apart from this, however, Hobbes' view of the super-state is still the last word as a realistic basis for world peace.

Hobbes' conception, however, was not the only one. Indeed, during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, several hundred theories were put forward by writers, churchmen, lawyers and philosophers. Most of these were on the basis of Christian universalism, and the best known are those of Pope Leo X, the Abbé St. Pierre and Hugo Grotius. These ideas came to nothing largely because the desire for world peace was not universal. For one thing — in Europe at least — wars were not the greatest evil which faced mankind. The ravages of the Plague had devastated Europe for long centuries proportionately more than the most devastating wars of the twentieth century. Besides, wars were restricted in area, and far from being total, were more or less private affairs between the mercenary soldiers of two states.

The French Revolution gave a powerful impetus to the idea of a world state, or at least to the idea of some permanent co-operation between European states. It was the fear of the French Revolution which first drove European rulers into each other's arms; then this fear gave place to fear of Napoleon. It sounds ironical, but it is a fact that the European federation aimed at by Napoleon was made by those who feared and defeated Napoleon. Although the federation, known as 'The Concert of Europe', was more of a negative than a positive nature, yet it marked the beginning of modern power politics.

From the eighteen-seventies onwards an enormous change occurred in the attitude towards world peace. Through technical progress the interdependence of the world became obvious to a growing portion of mankind, and the devastating



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character of war more real. These factors, together with compulsory education, produced a mental atmosphere all over Europe which was much in favour of world peace. International conferences to promote peace were held, lesser disputes between nations were submitted to international arbitrators, and for the first time in the history of man a 'peace' conference was held at the Hague which was not called into being at the conclusion of a war. A Peace Palace was built and a panel of international lawyers was created. In the early years of the century these efforts for the promotion and organization of peace were doubled, and a few practical plans were evolved of which the United States contributed more than any other country. One of these plans to promote peace was the so-called Bryan Convention, which suggested that states should undertake to accept a 'cooling off' period of six months before going to war with each other. Such a suggestion seems ridiculous to-day, but it was believed that if it had been adopted in 1914 world history might have taken a different course.

The desire for world peace naturally grew enormously in the course of the First World War, and the belief that the war would put an 'end to war' was by no means confined to the masses in the Allied countries. When President Wilson published his plans for a World Peace in 1917, the mental climate of the world was readier for such a proposition than ever before in the history of man. During his first stay in Paris, Woodrow Wilson was regarded by the majority of the world's population as the greatest man that ever lived. The extent of such an enthusiasm would have been technically impossible in earlier periods, but to-day, when an even greater extent of enthusiasm is possible than in 1918, it is by no means certain that a peace plan would start with such enormous advantages of uncritical enthusiasm. The months that immediately followed the conclusion of the Second World War were characterized by the almost complete absence of any visible sign of optimism, and in view of this it is highly significant that the new charters and pronouncements concerning the United Nations are marked



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by a painful sense of self-consciousness. The Dumbarton Oaks proposal reads not unlike the lease agreement of a cotton field in South Carolina, and most speeches in which peace plans are discussed sound as if they were drafted by unhappily married solicitors.

Time may not be too far away when the League of Nations will perhaps come to be regarded as a great advancement of civilization, no matter how the institution itself has been discredited. The idea of the League throughout its existence exercised a great influence over the minds of men and on the whole it became an important force of resistance to nationalism. This important effect on the public opinion of the world was achieved almost entirely by implication. The League as an institution failed, but after a time people all over the world discovered — and still continue to discover — that it was not so much the conception underlying the League which was at fault, but the purpose for which the League was used. When this important difference between theory and practice became apparent, people turned away from the League and gradually dropped all interest in the pronouncements of its spokesmen; in fact, Geneva became a magnificent target for witticism. All these manifestations of disappointment and cynicism, however, hid a good deal of secret idealism. The League itself became discredited; the idea of the League did not. In fact the idea of peace through international co-operation became more and more desirable because the mechanism of the League went through all the motions of a body created to solve the problem of the world. The sessions at Geneva became a farce, but all the same, it happened for the first time in history that representatives of most countries of the world did meet at regular intervals in a single room and did pretend to promote peace and the co-operation of mankind. The fact that the sessions became a farce made the real thing even more desirable. It is by no means certain that large sections of the world population know what the world needs in respect of world

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government; it is, however, certain that because of the very existence of the League they have a much better and clearer vision of that need than ever before in history. We now know that those Allied statesmen who opposed the conception of the League were forced by public opinion all over the world to accept it. In other words, the spirit of 1919 proved that nationalism and power politics had undergone a very significant change. The war had discredited them in their old, brutal, open form. The decision of Wilson's opponents to accept the League was political realism which recognized that power politics could no longer be played according to the old naked rules. They could only be played through the institution at Geneva. Hypocrisy is a tribute vice pays to virtue, and in 1919 the tribute was extracted.

Realistically speaking, the most important fact about the League of Nations is that it never existed. The organization whose conception was laid down in the last of the Fourteen Points is called in the French language the *Société des Nations* ('Society of Nations'). If that terminology had been adopted all over the world, a certain amount of misunderstanding and disappointment might have been avoided. 'Society' is a fairly non-committal word and it vaguely corresponded with the institution that came into being in Geneva. This was, in effect, a society of sovereign states to which, at one time or another, most countries of the world belonged. It was, in a way, a new institution, a new technical instrument in one single town for regular official contacts between most nations. Previous to the existence of the League, official contacts between states were maintained in two ways: through diplomatic representatives in the states' capitals and at so-called 'international' conferences. The first were regular; the second occasional. Such international conferences before 1914 were held to conclude a peace treaty or to discuss a given issue between certain nations. The League of Nations was the first step, not so much towards combining these two functions as towards extending them to include as much of the world as possible.



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The twenty years of the League's existence brought more results than the one which was a result by implication, but these other results are much less important. I refer here to various Geneva 'side-shows', such as the International Labour Office which was a brilliant beginning of international co-operation in sociological respects, and a number of international agreements in important, but relatively minor matters, such as the international control of dangerous drugs, etc.

The 'Society' of sovereign states in Geneva could never become a 'League', that is, an alliance of states, because all its members maintained their full sovereignty. If the history of the League is surveyed from this point of view, its inevitable failure is easy to understand. This painful contradiction was at once obvious to the experts and to them the failure of the League was no surprise. Experts, however, are few. To the majority the facts that the League could achieve success only in a very restricted field and that it was unlikely it could outlaw war even if it acted on the principles of its founder, were not in the least obvious.

President Wilson tried something novel. He realized that the nations of the world (at least the Great Powers, and those are the ones that really count) would not dream of giving up their sovereignty, even if their leaders were aware that this attitude guaranteed war. Wilson, therefore, tried to provide a substitute for war. This substitute was offered to the world in a document known as the 'Covenant of the League of Nations'. It contains a system of mutual guarantees between states and it lays down a permanent apparatus for mediation, arbitration and conciliation, in short, for the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

It has often been said that the noble aspiration of the Covenant came to nothing not so much because it could not provide a substitute for war, but because of traits in Wilson's personality. The more we learn about the history of the past thirty years, the more we realize that such a view is very relative. Wilson's failure was a highly creditable failure in an



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attempt to solve the greatest problem of the world to-day. He was an honest idealist, who quite sincerely believed that sovereignty, the greatest stumbling block to peace, could be by-passed, and he did his best to have his principles accepted. For this purpose he committed the most painful blunders, of which nobody but a non-professional politician burdened with a good deal of nineteenth-century liberal optimism and with timeless idealism could have been capable. He evoked the anger of his opponents at home when many members of the Republican Party would have supported the League, by asking his country to vote Democrat and by refusing to choose his fellow delegates from among the Republicans. He treated the Allied representatives with all the contempt they deserved (and some with more than they deserved), and finally he forced them to accept his Covenant by threatening to conclude a separate peace between America and Germany.

His reluctant partners, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando were better psychologists than the ex-president of Princeton, and it did not take them long to sum him up. They found him slow, dogged, vain and naively idealistic as a college freshman, and they thought they would easily succeed in getting round him, defeat him, and make use of his principles for their own political aims. They were a little over optimistic. It was not easy to get round Wilson. In fact, they had to fight to defeat him, and at times they had to fight hard. But they succeeded in the end. The Wilsonian principles were turned into the service of selfish national interests. Embittered idealists have said of the period — that guaranteeing the Second World War at Versailles was a somewhat difficult task, because there was an honest, idealistic and genuine desire for peace everywhere on earth and a slogan like 'War to end War' exercised magic for the masses, victor and vanquished alike. But all the same, the zeal and unselfish devotion of the statesmen fighting Wilson was, in the end, crowned with full success.

The Allied statesmen never tried to improve on Wilson's design in order to make it workable. Their activities were



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restricted to attempts to make use of the design for the purposes of their own power politics. There was no unity of purpose between the Great Powers — except in one respect and this was fear of Communism. They were certainly not afraid of war, or rather they did not share France's fear of war, which was based on France's geographical position with its extremely vulnerable frontiers separating her from a highly industrialized Germany almost twice her size. It is important to mention here that this fear drove France so far at the time of the Peace Conference, that it is safe to say she might have agreed to that supranational state which is the condition of world peace. In any case the French proposal of an international armed force was rejected by Britain and by America.

It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that the League tried to forbid war but offered no substitute for it; and that the League, as established, had changed the form and the practice of the hypocrisy and treachery in power politics which previously had been practised through 'the usual channels' of diplomatic intercourse. After the initiation of the League the seat of power politics was largely transferred to Geneva. The edifice on the shore of the Lake of Geneva, for a period proved to be an excellent scapegoat at a very modest yearly premium (in respect of which a large number of its members remained in arrears).

Throughout its history many attacks were directed against the League of Nations, but most of these attacks were misdirected because they attacked symptoms instead of the underlying cause. The best known line of attack is the charge of America's aloofness paralysing the League. This provided a splendid excuse for Britain and France not to work on the Wilsonian principles. The answer to this attack is that the League could not have achieved its aims even if America had been a member. On the other hand, if its members had surrendered necessary amounts of their sovereignty, it could have worked even without America.

The rest of the painful story is too well known. The Peace

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Treaties created a *status quo* and the powers tried to maintain this *status quo* through the League. France, unable to get the international armed force, tried other means to assure herself against a third attempt of German aggression. She surrounded herself by a ring of satellite states, made powerful at the expense of Germany, and tried to keep Germany weak by the occupation of the Rhineland and by the reparations.

The League of Nations could not stop aggression because, when it came to decision, this was taken not in accordance with League principles but in accordance with the view the Great Powers held of their own, often momentary, interests. This attitude was already observable during President Wilson's lifetime while an invalid in Washington. Vilna was stolen from the Lithuanians by Pilsudsky's Poland. It was a clear case of unjustified aggression and the Powers could have quite easily forced Poland to retract her step. They, however, were afraid of Communism and Poland looked like the bulwark they needed, so they evolved a formula to condone Polish aggression. Incidents like this and the subsequent Corfu incident in 1923 are now forgotten, perhaps with reason, because they were trifles compared with the history of the 'thirties, but the actions of the League during the first few years of its existence made it clear for anyone learned in international politics, that Geneva was merely a new field for power politics.



## CHAPTER XV

### THE END OF THE ETERNAL

It was the unsolved problem of power which killed the League of Nations. When the League's failure became obvious there appeared literally hundreds of propositions and plans aimed at the solution of the problem: world unity and the supra-national state. In the mental climate of the nineteen-thirties this subject was one of the most exciting of parlour games for semi-intellectuals, and the most popular subject for doctoral theses in the political faculties of the universities of lesser countries. Some plans, however, came from the pens of brilliant scientists and eminent writers. Though the latter had the attractions of style or of scientific or historical erudition, they shared with the lesser efforts of the dilettante the same sense of irritating Utopian unreality: they either disregarded the problem of power or offered totally unworkable solutions for it. Their typical feature was usually a correct diagnosis — that is, world peace can only be achieved through the unity or the federation of the whole world; but their suggestions for bringing about this federation invariably ended in something that looked like a permanent Utopia. The otherwise very sensible and intelligent writings of the Federal Unionists in Western Europe and America, for example, suggested the establishment of a world federation on a basis that nobody should rule and nobody should be ruled. Such a basis proves at once to be unworkable, because it presupposes such a high level of co-operative spirit, discipline of mind and enlightened self-interest as, in our days, is not found in the majority of mankind, and it totally disregards the fundamental nature of power.

The problem of power is simply this. It cannot be voluntarily given up, nor are those states which possess power willing

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to pool it. In theory every nation-state is a law unto itself, the final arbiter of its own destiny, and it knows no will higher than its own. In practice, however, this fundamental 'national ideology' of all countries in the world can only be achieved by the Great Powers. Equality of status between powers or 'sovereign equality of all freedom-loving states', therefore, is nonsense. In this respect there is no change between the situation during the existence of the League of Nations and the position of the United Nations to-day, except that the farcical character of 'sovereign equality' has since been driven home a little more clearly. If, for example, on the basis of 'sovereign equality' (that is one state — one vote) the assemblies of the League of Nations or of the United Nations pass a resolution against the interests of a Great Power, the Great Power in question will be defeated and overruled only in theory and on paper, not in practice and not in fact. The resolution arrived at by majority vote against it will not make the slightest difference to its armed might, nor to its free will which is based on its armed might. It would, naturally, involve that awkward issue known as the 'moral issue', but a Great Power recognizes only her own moral issue. 'Truth', said Justice Holmes, 'is the majority vote of that nation which is strong enough to lick all others.' In our time no such single nation exists and real power is distributed between the Big Three who are, therefore, permanently engaged in power politics, with Justice Holmes' witticism as their underlying principle. There is a growing school of thought to-day all over the world according to which power politics lead to war. This is perfectly true in one sense, but the nation which is strong enough to play power politics cannot do otherwise. She cannot give up her power because, if she does so, that power is snatched away by a rival and is used against her. This is such a strong argument for power politics that we can quite safely disregard emotional considerations, such as prestige, which are additional incentives to power politics. Power politics has got to be played, otherwise the nation falls to pieces. Power politics, therefore, is a necessity,



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although it need not of necessity mean either a state of war or armed conflict, as these depend entirely on the use made of power. If power politics is exercised in such a way that it does not become oppressive for others it might in the end lead to permanent peace.

This sentence, of course, looks Utopian, but only looks so in view of past history. In the past, state power in international relations was used exclusively in the interests of the state concerned, which, from the point of view of the world, was an essentially amoral purpose. If, however, power is put into the service of a moral purpose, or rather into the service of a purpose, the *moral character* of which is recognized by the majority of the world, the problem of power would find its solution and, incidentally, its only solution.

So far we are in agreement with all those well meaning idealists and optimists who formerly believed in the League of Nations, and who to-day believe in the United Nations and write pamphlets for Federal Union. They are correct in their diagnosis, and, together with the whole Left wing (including socialists), are correct in their dreams and anticipations. They are, however, wrong in the anticipations of their own solutions of the problem. Their dream, which took its first concrete and popular form in the nineteenth century, would inevitably come true perhaps in a century or two, but it will not come about by peaceful co-operation, free discussion, enlightened self-interest and the mutual recognition of the interests of the world. On the contrary, it will come about by force. The end is desirable, the means are not. The means, however, will justify the end. There are many people indeed to-day who interpret present-day historical events in such a manner that the trend of the future becomes clear in its outlines on their horizon. These people inevitably conclude the following way: 'If only one could go into a sleep lasting a hundred years or so, till the preliminaries are over.' The 'preliminaries' are indeed threatening. One of them lasted six years (1939-45). Other people, who are realists enough to be aware that going into a

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coma for a century or so is not possible, and yet attempt to draw the outlines of a perfectly possible world, are promptly attacked by the idealists. Dr. Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* is not the only book which has been more violently attacked by the Left than by the Right. There are many people who accuse Professor E. H. Carr of extolling power politics, of being an enemy of small nations, or at least of paying lip service to world domination by two or three or four Great Powers. The truth of the matter is that Carr — like Burnham — acknowledges trends which, to him and to many other students of international politics, seem possible or inevitable, regardless of whether these trends are desirable or not to their critics or to themselves.

It is, indeed, easy to see to-day that the unity of large areas first, and finally the unity of the world, will be brought about by force. Hitler's attempt at uniting the world will not be the last one, and the success of his followers will depend entirely on their programme. If they repeat Hitler's mistake and base their programme on nationalist premises, namely the superiority of one race or of one nation above all others, their failure will be similar to his, as in that case nations would rather fight to death than submit themselves to slavery. If, however, they use their power intelligently, that is for a purpose which the majority of the world recognizes as a moral purpose, the attempt may be successful. We need not interpret power politics essentially and entirely in terms of selfish national interests, or in terms of exclusive national ideologies, even though the experience of the past has amply shown that they were so interpreted. If a great power made a bid to unite the world for a great common purpose, it would inevitably find that large numbers of people from every country would choose to be 'traitors' to their own country and join it to take part in a true war to end war; that is to say, in a war against the nationalist who, by that time, would be fighting for an utterly out-dated folly — the sovereign independence and the freedom of the nation-state. The time may not be far off when it will be



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realized that there are few causes which are less futile to fight for than this, for it is a truth that is becoming increasingly clear every day.

There has never been a more fateful theory evolved in the long history of politics than that tragic nonsense, the analogy between the individual and the nation. The beginnings of this theory can be traced back about four hundred years, but it was the nineteenth century which made the public conscious of it. It has done much damage since it was evolved and we are passing through an agonizing twentieth century because we believe that nations are like men. The truth is that there is no similarity between men and nations. Nations do not come into being like men do, do not continue their existence quite like men do, their relations to other nations (this is the most important) are by no means the same as the relations of one man to another, and finally they do not disappear like men do. This fateful theory was based on the fact that nations consist of human beings, which is the only connection. Otherwise every single implication of this analogy is false and has brought disaster to the world. Among other things it gave rise in public belief to that complete illusion, international law. Just as there is law — so runs this idiotic theory — governing the individual in the nation-state, there is a law governing the relations of nations, which is international law. In 1945 no further argument is needed to demonstrate what a dangerous illusion and what a painful piece of rubbish or (in the best case) what wishful thinking this assumption is. There is, in truth, no law between nations beyond the law of the 'one that is strong enough to lick the other', that is, international law is the law of the jungle. It is the final analysis, the naked fact, the last resort which counts, which is 'typical' in this respect, and not that appearance of peace between nations, that mere absence of armed conflict which we usually take to be real peace. And yet it must be said that there is progress in this; in fact, in this respect we are more civilized and more progressive than our predecessors. Such progress is shown by the

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growing and popular desire for international law; it is shown by the fact that people come to the conclusion that there is no international law, and that it is highly desirable that international law should exist. Here is the true beginning of international law, this widespread desire for the existence of international law, not those minor customs and agreements — no matter how old, deeply ingrained, and accepted — which are generally recognized by wishful thinkers to be the beginning.

What are these so-called 'beginnings', these things that do exist and are called, in fact, 'international law', but are nothing more than tiny isolated and completely unimportant exceptions to the rule of national sovereignty? What are these supposed 'beginnings'? The existence of systems of mutual agreements between states relating to minor matters, such as the extradition of criminals, agreements which are subject to very important reservations. While it is generally accepted that a criminal taking refuge in a state can be extradited to the state in which he committed the crime, such agreement does not exist between all states. Nor will a state extradite a criminal who happens to be her own citizen. Nor is it customary to extradite people who are accused of political offences. Some countries have a tradition about the right of sanctuary, which, of course, cannot work if a stronger state begins to bully the state in question.

Another aspect is extra-territoriality, which is the theory that certain persons are outside the law of the country in which they reside. This is a generally accepted attitude towards diplomats all over the world. The diplomat when stationed abroad is not subject to the law of the country to which he is accredited. But is this really so? It is the 'national emergency' of the country in which he is accredited which really matters. It is all very well that he does not pay income tax even in the moment of the greatest national emergency, and gets his whisky tax free even in the middle of an air raid, but is he allowed to communicate with his own country freely (that is by



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secret means either through his courier whose luggage cannot be opened or through telegrams in cypher)? The answer is negative as events in 1944 in Britain clearly showed. A month before D-Day the diplomatic privileges of secret communications were suspended, no courier was allowed to leave Britain and the Post Office accepted no telegrams in cypher. It is natural that no state would resort to such acts without a true national emergency (as was the case in Britain just before D-Day), but this case is the acid test and it clearly shows that international law does not exist even in the restricted field of diplomatic immunity.

The false assumption about the existence of international law is only one outcome of the fateful analogy between men and nations. The most important difference between the individual and the nation is that the individual needs freedom, liberty, equality and self-determination, while the nation merely demands for herself these privileges on behalf of her citizens, but does not really need them. We should get much further if we talked more about the 'sacred rights' of the individual than about the 'sacred rights' of the nation.

It is highly regrettable that many people (those I specifically described as the mass-man) believe that the nation-state is a natural form of society like the family, whereas the truth is that there is no other natural form of society besides the family. The family is based on 'blood', whereas the claims of the nation on the basis of blood are claims based on false pretences. According to Ortega<sup>1</sup> the state begins when man strives to escape from the natural society of which he is a member by blood, that is from his own family. The state speaks a different language from that of the family and it has a different culture, a different history, different problems and different traditions. He describes this driving force to desert the family as 'the project of vital enterprises greater than those possible to tiny groups related by blood'. His conclusion is that the origin of the nation is that the individual was invited to take part in such a 'vital

<sup>1</sup> ORTEGA Y GASSET: *The Revolt of the Masses* (Allen & Unwin, 1931).

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enterprise', and the individual accordingly deserted the bonds of his family. The logical and inevitable development of the future is that man will be induced to desert the nation-state for the world state, that is for a vital enterprise greater than any possible to groups related by something that pretends to be blood.

To talk about the world state and the unity of the world is, however, to anticipate. That the world state will one day be brought about on these lines is highly probable, in spite of the fact that Ortega's theory of the birth of the nation still leaves a few factors in obscurity. However, it is highly improbable that the attempt to bring world unity about by force will be made by a homogeneous nation-state. The preliminary step towards the unity of the world is the unification of large areas, and this is the historical phenomenon — the intermediate state — whose birth we are watching to-day as the inevitable result of the Second World War.

We said that the present-day development of nationalism shows parallel features to the development of capitalism, in its strong tendency towards monopolism. In fact, monopoly nationalism has gone further than monopoly capitalism. Power politics means the struggle for Zones of Influence; namely the gradual emergence of something like three, four or five orbits between which nearly all countries of the world will be divided, and in which one nation-state (the present-day Great Powers) will be all-powerful. It is most unfortunate, but all the same it seems inevitable that these orbits or super-states will not federate with each other, but will be in a 'state of war' or in 'armed peaceful' relations with each other, which in the end will inevitably result in armed conflict between Zones of Influence.

The present trend of power politics towards Zones of Influence will radically change the position of the small nation-state, whose sovereignty, as the developments of the past thirty years has shown, are becoming more illusory every day. Owing to



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the conditions of modern warfare the only hope of survival for small nations is the conclusion of a permanent alliance with a Great Power. 'This alliance', writes Professor Carr, 'though it may assume the political forms of an equal partnership, must in practice subordinate the military policy of the weak Power to that of the strong. The political right of self-determination is conditioned and restricted by this military necessity.'<sup>1</sup>

The change in the conditions of armed conflict alone — long before the arrival of the atomic bomb — is already capable of rendering the small state with its daydreams of neutrality a thing of the past. There is, however, another change: the change in the conditions of that 'state of war' which is the inevitable consequence of the anarchy of the nation-state, namely the discovery of what we to-day call 'the economic weapon'. This most formidable weapon of both state of war and armed conflict is as new as the bomber aircraft. It is a result of the development of industrial conditions in the last thirty years. Before that time the economic power of sovereign nations had never been used as a regular weapon in international politics.

The Sphere of Interest policy as the new form of power politics will not so much put an end to the sovereignty of the small state as dot the 'i's' and cross the 't's'. Neither will the crystallization of the world into three or four Spheres of Interest occur in bewildering rapidity, nor will the means used be uniform; at least not uniform in their outward applications. We have already seen that the small state since the last war was sovereign in little but in name. Her most important premise of sovereignty, namely that she was the supreme arbiter of her own destiny, has gone irrevocably. In the recent past she could maintain a shadow neutrality during the state of war and during armed conflicts; in the future she will not be able to do so. She will also lose those characteristics of her 'freedom' which are against the interests of the Great Power to whose Sphere of Interest she belongs.

<sup>1</sup> E. H. CARR; *Conditions of Peace* (Macmillan, 1941).



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It is true that the documents of the United Nations still contain the words 'sovereign equality of all peace-loving nations', yet this is completely meaningless for any nation which is not included in the Big Three or Four or Five. The Great Powers, in effect, will continue to allow these 'peace-loving' nations to exercise certain sovereign rights. They will, no doubt, continue to be allowed to have their own postage stamps, their own coins and banknotes, their coats of arms, their national flag, their national language, in fact all the stage property for a successful pantomime of sovereignty. Some of the lyrics, however, are subject to revision and there will be important changes in the cast, too.

The smaller 'peace-loving nations' will continue to accredit ambassadors to the Big Five, and the Big Five will treat these distinguished underlings with traditional courtesy. Hungarian diplomats, no doubt, will be allowed to wear their picturesque gala dress, which Hollywood can never successfully represent on the screen. The heads of the Big Five will exchange birthday greetings with the heads of the Little Seventy-Five (or is it a hundred and five?) and Government Hospitality Committees will take care to find out what their favourite dish is, or whether they prefer Debussy to Chopin. That will be all, however. In the interests of 'peace', or rather 'if they really love peace', they will have to be satisfied with a limited role in the pantomime.

Yet the Sphere of Interest policy need not be doomed to failure, even though it will not rest on the consent of the small state. Power will be used against the small state because power will have to be used, but there are many ways in which power can be used, and if the Great Powers draw the necessary and logical conclusions from the past lessons of power politics, in other words, if the system gives as much as it takes away, it might easily work. If it becomes mere despotism on a nationalist basis, the small state will revolt or seek the assistance of another Sphere of Interest (which is automatically the rival or the enemy of her own bully). If, on the other hand, the Great



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Power will allow the small state to maintain its existence to the full as a cultural unit, and at the same time extend the same advantages to it as it extends to its original citizens, then the members of the small nation in a fairly short time may develop a loyalty towards the Sphere of Interest. In other words, such systems would augur well for the future even though they had been created by force provided they are maintained on a democratic basis.

It is generally assumed that men all over the world wish their country to be powerful, because they feel that they can live their life more fully in a powerful state, whereas there is reason to believe that men do not so much wish *their* state to be powerful as they wish to belong to a powerful country. If the Sphere of Interest policy is democratic, men can quite easily achieve this without leaving the soil on which they were born, and to some extent, perhaps, even if they do not learn the language of the Great Power. Older men may not be able to readjust themselves to living this new life, but their children may take it for granted. If the system is democratic, they need not be 'traitors' to the traditions of their group in order to rise above their fellow men. Under a democratic federation they should be able to rise to high positions provided they fulfil the necessary qualifications. One of these is the language. Lloyd George could never have become even a member of parliament, and still less Prime Minister of Britain, if he had spoken only his native language, nor could Stalin have become what he is had he not been taught the Russian language in his early youth (which he is said to speak with a slight foreign accent).

Surveying the advantages of life under a democratic Sphere of Interest policy, the reader might ask why is there need for force or coercion for such multi-national or supra-national units to come into being? The answer is that life in such a unit will not be to the advantage of a certain group of people in the small states, such as those of its 'governing class' who are bound to lose much of their importance. Furthermore, many of those for whom it will be a definite advantage cannot, at present,

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easily grasp this. Besides, most of the advantages will come only when the system has been in operation for some time, and not immediately. Finally, the habit of living in the sovereign state is too strong for most people to adapt themselves quickly to a new way of life.

The basis on which the Orbits or Spheres of Interest is built is not quite identical with that of the federal unionist, who wishes to bring about the unity of the world, or that of large regions, for a common purpose. At least it is not identical as regards the means through which it is brought about. These federations whose beginnings we are witnessing to-day in the form of the Spheres of Influence are not coming about because the Great Powers recognize that federation is beautiful, or that mankind can live its life more fully if it belongs to a large unit and that the larger the unit the larger the freedom. They are coming about because the Great Powers are afraid of each other and, therefore, are trying to build up a strong system of defence by forming federations. In other words the Great Power cannot wait till smaller units 'come to their senses' and voluntarily give up such aspects of their sovereignty as are necessary for a federation. For the same reason Great Powers to-day have to choose between making a bid for the co-operation of the leaders of the small states or of rendering them impotent. This is an aspect in which contemporary history is not exactly 'repeating' past history but is being influenced by the same realities. A federation of nation-states, or even a substantial abrogation of sovereignty between nation-states by mutual consent to-day, seems a flat impossibility while nationalism continues to be the most important political factor. It was not an easy matter even in the past. The 'miracle' of the Swiss federation was preceded by painful struggles, even though they took place such a long time ago that we almost take it for granted that Switzerland always existed. The history of the American Confederation, being more recent, is better known. We know how difficult it was to win the thirteen original states to a federal idea, even though at the end of the eighteenth



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century nationalism was not a strong political factor, and even though the American colonists largely spoke the same language. In 1786, that is three years after the peace treaty was signed with the English, the thirteen states were to all intents and purposes at war with each other. The Pennsylvanian army massacred many thousands of settlers in the other states, and eighty armed men intimidated Congress: the representatives had to flee from Philadelphia. It was then that George Washington wrote the following lines in his letter to George Mason: 'I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities that I thought our liberties in such imminent danger as at present . . . We are verging fast to destruction.'

On the other hand, however, if we make a survey of those European national units which are to-day multi-national states, like Britain and France, we find that most of them came about not by that mutual consent which is the basis of their unity now, but through bloody wars and coercion. They were largely the results of the conquest by a numerically superior nation of one or several numerically weaker ones. The conquest of Scotland by the English is a case in point. The internal conflict between various sections and clans may have made conquest easier, but conquest was of great interest to the English. Some of the ruling class of Scotland become 'Quislings' to the Scottish state, by collaborating with the invader; others went into emigration and tried as 'Free Scottish' to obtain help against England from abroad; still others were killed. The numerically superior nation won, but Scotland could not have become part of Britain if the English had not realized that in order to keep the conquered race within her framework she must extend to it the benefits enjoyed by her own people. This she did and the result is a measure of cultural independence for Scotland, coupled with a sense of loyalty to the British state. The British state thus became a federal state through a mixture of conquest and consent. On the other hand, however, if the English during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had waited till the Scot consented to enter into a federation, it is highly doubtful



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whether that federation would exist to-day, or, rather, whether it would exist between Scotland and England.

The Sphere of Interest, as we have said, is not the final solution, because after a time even the wide frontiers and framework of a Sphere of Interest would prove to be as narrow and restrictive as those of the nation-state to-day, even though its constituent elements developed a loyalty towards it. Further integration, that is a federation of the whole world, will become necessary. This is obvious because economic interests to-day are already wider than any Sphere of Interest, and they would be difficult to sort even according to Spheres of Interest. The Sphere of Interest, when all is said and done, is not more than the nation-state to-day on a large scale, and at the bottom it is nothing but a defence unit against states of war and armed conflicts.

It seems that the mental climate of continental Europe to-day is not essentially antagonistic towards Spheres of Interests. The smaller national units of contemporary Europe appear more willing to join a federation, or perhaps less ready to fight against a kind of foreign domination that exercises no undue tyranny or oppression over them. It was in this respect interesting to watch the readiness with which groups (larger than the public opinion of the Democracies would have admitted or would have liked to admit) were quite willing to live under the Nazis in spite of the racial tenets of the Nazi state. Nor were these 'collaborators' all members of the ruling class. On the contrary, they for the most part belonged to the politically unconscious layers of their countries, who at once realized that the time had come for them to choose between beggarly independence and freedom from insecurity or another type of oppression which at least gave them bread.

The most important problem for the Sphere of Interest to solve is, therefore, how to generate in its freshly acquired members something which is difficult to describe: a kind of obedience which is not identical with submission, a kind of respect, a kind



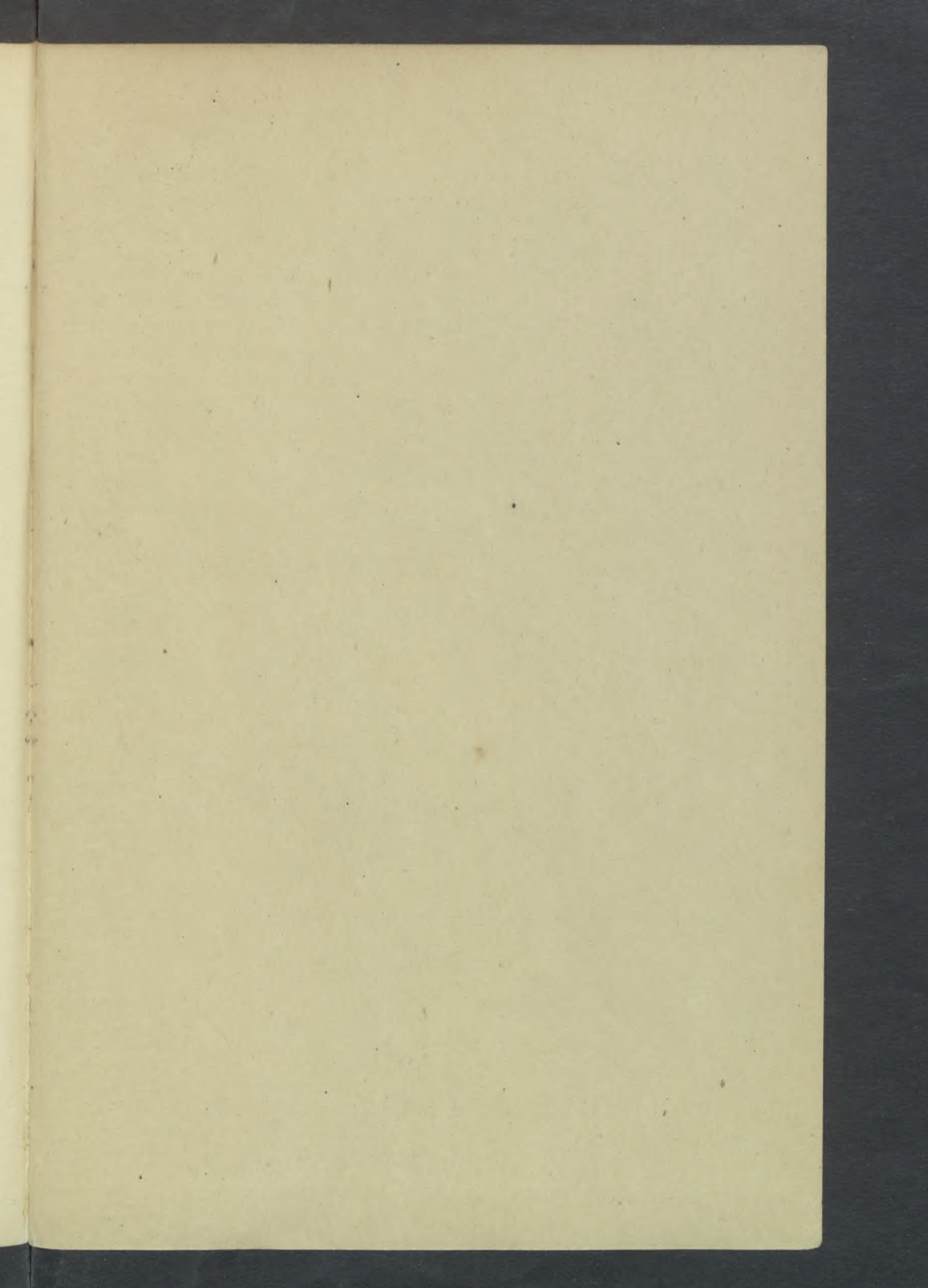
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of acceptance of leadership in the common interest, a kind of solidarity. Democracy is a term which must from time to time be reinterpreted. It always must remain, however, at least negatively, *the lack of unhappiness* for the greatest number.

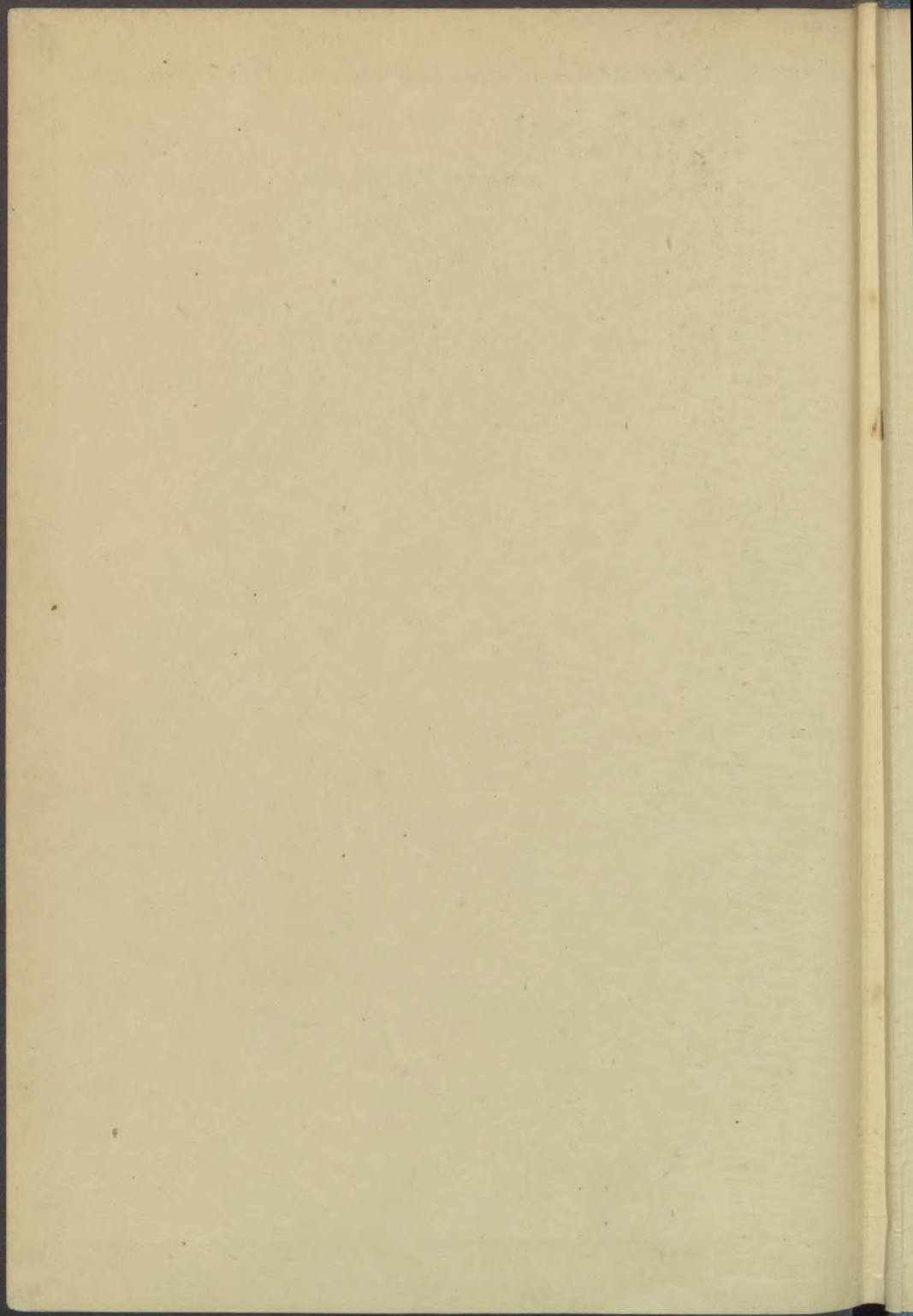
It is naturally impossible to say how long the process of the transformation of the present-day nation-state into the multinational state of the Sphere of Interest or Zone of Influence will take, nor do we know more about the picture than its contours and outlines. And it is still more illusory to try to speculate as to when and how these Spheres will be transformed into the world state and result in universal peace. 'Universal peace', wrote Anatole France early in this century, 'will come about one day, not because men will become better but because a new order of things, new science, new economic needs will impose a state of peace on them, just as the very conditions of their existence formerly placed and maintained them in a state of war.'

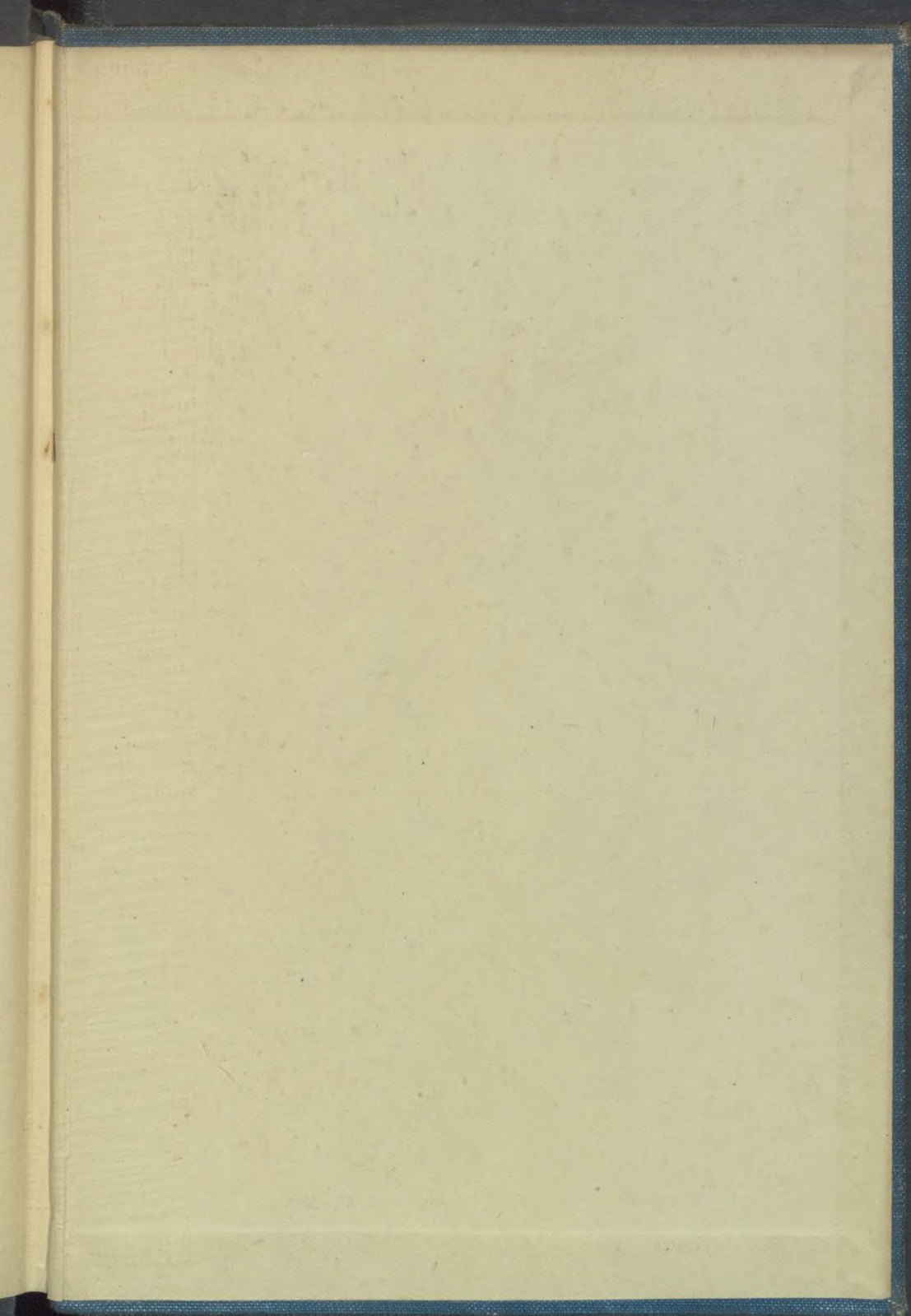
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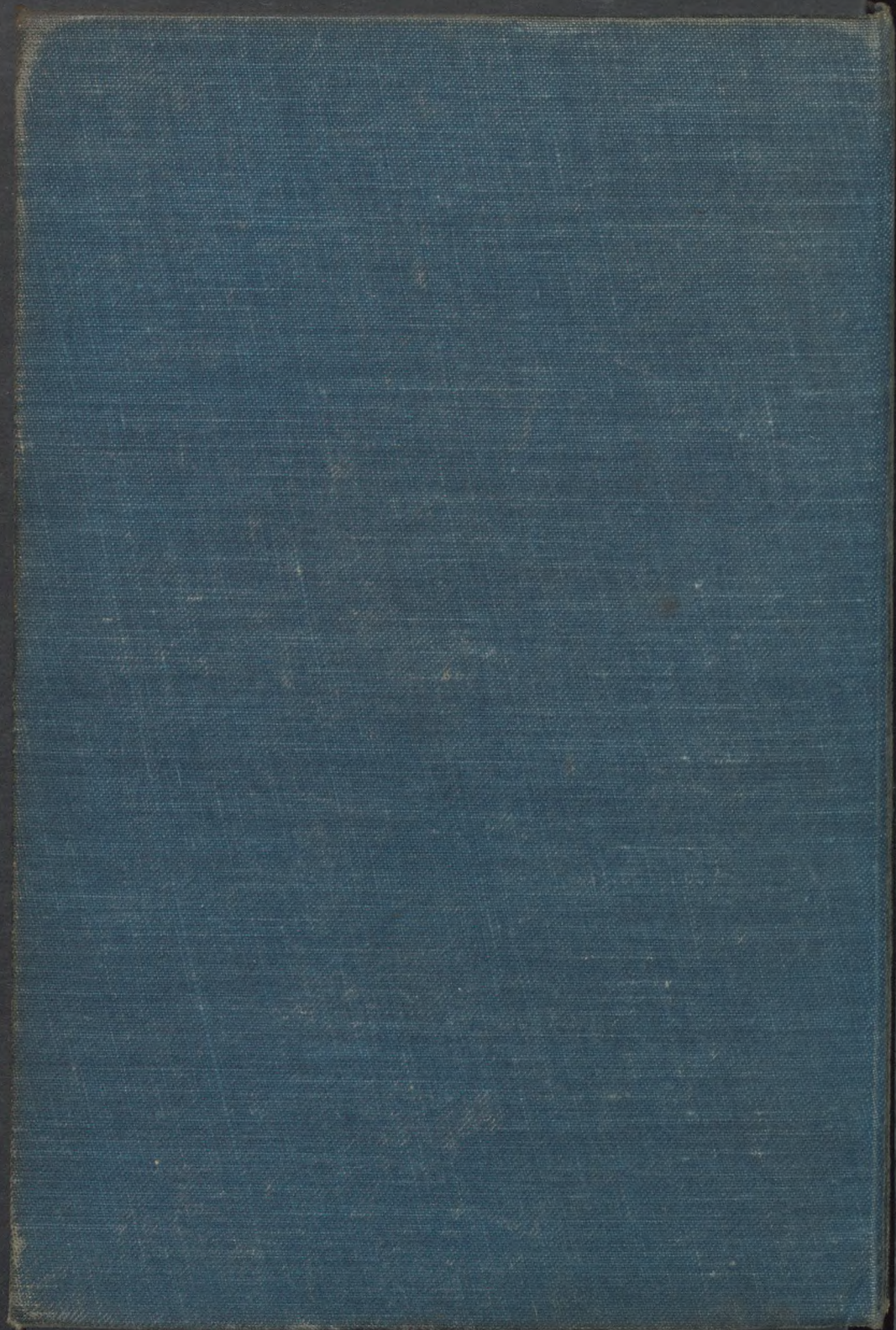












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