

THIS WAR

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY
ERIC SUTTON

THIS WAR

by

THOMAS MANN

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ALFRED A KNOFF

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FOR SEVEN MONTHS we have been at war. The catastrophe, which was implicit in the National Socialist regime from the very beginning and which could not be stopped even by the terrible sacrifice of Munich, is unfolding its terror with a slow crescendo. In accord with the pattern with which it began seven years ago, Germany is bound to fall deeper and deeper into guilt, is bound to step from misdeed to misdeed. And every one of these steps, born of a still unconscious desperation, destroys another part, another instance of the pitiful illusion that there could be such a thing as "neutrality" in this World Revolution.

The period of peace offensives seems to have

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ended with the invasion of Denmark and Norway. We are hardly likely to hear still that England wishes nothing better for herself than to come to an understanding with Nazi Germany in order to march jointly with her against Russia. The machinations of the Hitler gang to obtain "peace," by which I mean the sort of peace with which we have been blessed since their coming into power in 1933, are steadily opposed by the united resolve of England and France never to make peace with the present German regime. If the finality of this decision has ever been in doubt, it should have become unshakable after the latest events.

I should like to know the German people's attitude of mind in the face of this plain, indisputable fact. Driven from their midst by my loathing of the moral and physical maltreatment to which they have been subjected, and now living three thousand miles away, a German asks himself constantly and in vain what can be their purpose in risking all that they have and are, to labour for the victory of a blood-stained and morally purblind, universally condemned and discredited regime, under the yoke of which they have

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almost unwittingly fallen; a victory which, even if it could be won, would never be tolerated by the world at large, one which could not be maintained nor bring any appeasement to Europe or to Germany herself.

No one must be under any sort of illusion that the powers now pledged to achieve a genuine peace will find it very difficult—not to “destroy” Germany, for that is a foolish and meaningless word—but to bring her to reason, to bring her to her true self, to secure her co-operation in the work of civilization which Europe must achieve, for which Europe is now ripe, and which cannot be done without the aid of Germany. The vile and anachronistic spirit of force embodied in the rulers of Germany alone stands in the way of the necessary fulfilment of this task. This spirit must be defeated—which, alas, means in practice that Germany must be defeated; for we are confronted with the melancholy fact that the German people support their rulers; that—in this war even more decisively than before—the German people have accepted these men’s cause, which was for so long a party cause alone, as the national cause, and

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for the last seven years have dedicated all their capacity, strength, patience, discipline, and devotion to this coarse, crude despotism.

Why? What confused and distorted sense of honour and loyalty has induced them to set all this upstart futility on a pedestal of greatness? Do they enjoy their subjection? Do they admire the human types which a disastrous fate, not without the assistance of every sort of trickery and betrayal, has permitted to become their masters? Impossible. Germans are decent folk, who love honesty and straightforwardness. Indeed, the average German, as depicted in the literature of his country, is always pre-eminently honest and straightforward. How can they endure the inhuman baseness of their present rulers, their foul cruelty and malignity, the absence of any spark of generosity in their make-up, their cowardly delight in trampling on the weak, in the humiliation of their fellow-men, in the use of every sort of spiritual and physical violence—in short, their sheer and utter villainy? These, truly, are figures deserving of devotion unto death! This is the system that the German citizen is called upon to pro-

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tect with his own person, with all that he has and is—a system that stinks to very heaven, the leading lights of which live lapped in the luxury of Persian satraps, with every intention of continuing to do so by the aid of gigantic fortunes invested abroad, when, as they always secretly foresee, their brief glory comes to be quenched. Even the most sympathetic among them all is a gross and fleshy bully with occasional impulses of kindness, a boon companion of the opera stages, a “Field-Marshal” with a wardrobe full of fancy uniforms, who kills or gormandizes as his jovial fancy takes him, an executioner with a liking for display, and yet not so oblivious of the heights to which fate has raised a poor morphine-ridden aviator captain that he is not, at times, ready to “live and even to let live.” The rest of them are a pack which there is no fit language to describe.

As for the chief among them all, he cannot be quite so summarily characterized, for the people regard him as above reproach. When, under the Republic, a few fellows brutalized by his doctrine were sentenced to the penitentiary because they had trampled on the throats of some Polish workers who

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were suspected of Communistic convictions, he called the verdict a sentence worse than death and swore eternal fidelity and comradeship to the beasts—this archangel! During the past seven years the German people have done their best to believe that he neither intended nor knew what those beneath him were about—though he intended it all, and knew it all, and every abomination that defiled Germany had its source in the murky depths of this man's soul. It is possible that the circumstances of the Reichstag fire were obscure to him for a certain time; his associates perpetrated it and only let him into the secret after it had all happily succeeded. For the entire duration of their adventures nothing could chain chief and gang more closely together than the joint enjoyment of the fruits of the trickery which their backstairs imagination devised and which laid the foundation for their indisputable domination of the country. Do the Germans never think of that or have they completely forgotten it in view of all they have since experienced? Do Germans never think of the disgraceful trial that followed, that unspeakable travesty of justice, to which the highest tribunal in the Reich had

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to condescend—a ludicrous, and indeed perilous, performance, at which the truth was every moment on the point of coming to light, when the perpetrator of the deed appeared as witness, and a drug-sodden youth, who had had the match put into his hand, and the Communist handbook thrust into his pocket, was condemned to death? Had anything like this ever happened to them in all their experience of justice? That was the beginning of the “regime” that made Germany into an object of horror and of loathing and led to the present war.

It could lead to nothing but war—never was there any doubt of that. Internal and external policy, the inner life of a nation and its demeanour within the community of nations, stand in exact, logical, and inevitable relationship. Force within and peace without—that is an impossible conjunction. The way taken by a country, the way that Germany has chosen for the last seven years, a country whose entire internal policy has been in the nature of a Reichstag fire and nothing more—in other words, a record of betrayal and beastliness leads inevitably to war. Did not the Germans know this? Had they so little

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vision that they did not realize they were confronting the catastrophe which the National Socialist regime made unavoidable from the very outset, even indeed from before its birth, if the phrase be permissible, and that nothing else could come of it but this catastrophe? In order that this regime may continue, that it may be perpetuated and spread its horrors over half the world—or over the whole of it—are the German people ready to starve for year upon year, to bleed, to fight, to devote all their strength and their capacities to supporting this, their chosen man, even to the very uttermost, to the very edge of exhaustion and ruin, until “victory” is won? How can this be?

All this time, merely in order to live and not to fall into an abyss of moral despair, they have had to thrust out of their minds what—in the very act of so doing—still burdened their conscience: all the crimes and human misery, all the dishonour and destruction, the blood, tears, despair, and suicide, that came of the vile sadistic gangster-tyranny that has so defiled the German name. The slaughter by the State of young men for having taken part in street brawls years before, in which some S.A. rowdy may

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have lost his life—young fellows who held that very political and economic creed with which National Socialism has now so shamelessly concluded an alliance—was all this really approved by the German people? The torture-cellars of the Gestapo, the concentration camps, those guarded preserves of a perverted brutality where a pack of villainous young brutes were given a free hand to inflict upon their victims the uttermost torments and degradation that a distorted imagination could devise—did German hearts beat higher at the thought of all these things? No, we must not deride the German people. They surely shuddered in shame and horror at the methods by which their masters saw fit to “solve” the Jewish question: the infamous degradation and calculated humiliation of their fellow-men; the pogrom which, under the feeblest pretext, instituted by these perverters of the people, unloosed the forces of anarchy and set them ranging through the wrecked streets and enveloped the cities of Germany in the smoke of burning synagogues.

Is it possible that any German, in full possession of his senses, who witnessed this spectacle believed

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even for an hour that this regime “wanted peace,” that the war was forced upon it and the German nation by malignant foes? Is there any sense in shutting the eyes to truth that can burn its way even through closed eyelids?—namely, that such deeds and scenes and everything, without exception, that happened in Germany since this gang came into power carried the inevitable implication of war.

These men deprived a people of their freedom, banished every thought of it by the use of the truncheon, spread terror in the place of justice—and, by way of compensation, endowed this people with a sense of racial superiority over a minority branded with the mark of shame and forced into the extremities of humiliation! I don’t fancy the Germans enjoyed their sense of superiority. Though the Jews had to suffer in the personal life of every day, they themselves were not much better off. They saw with their own eyes the moral corruption born of terror, of the pallid fear for life and livelihood, the degradation of those who could have lived decent lives in times which made decent living physically possible, the unloosing of every evil instinct, servility, hypoc-

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ris, the vilest opportunism, delation, the poisoning of family life, the betrayal of parents by their perverted children, the utter degradation of human nature produced by dictatorship—the dictatorship of a common murderer!—the pitiable perversion of a national community, naturally disposed to honourable dealing. All this they accepted open-handed—and as sole compensation for these horrors they were presented with the assurance that they were “Aryans.”

No, it would seem that there were greater and better compensations. All this was not too high a price for what was restored to the German people by their rulers, after years of deprivation: their national honour, their power, and their good name among the nations. They revived and set ablaze the trampled flame of national self-respect; party rivalry and class conflicts were engulfed in the glory of national unity; they tore up the shameful Treaty of Versailles, they forged a mighty armament for Germany, as a result of which the problem of unemployment, which so baffled the Republic, was miraculously solved; they secured military freedom for the

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Rhineland, built the Westwall, took Austria, planted the Swastika banner on the Hradschein, destroyed Poland, and incorporated half of it in the Reich. German heart, what wouldst thou more? In return for all this greatness, is a certain amount of individual suffering and disaster, some slight collective curtailment of old-fashioned liberal privileges, such as freedom and justice, too high a price to pay?

If only this were the whole price! The German people will have to pay much more than this. The fear and hatred which, in accordance with the crass and ruinous principle *Oderint dum metuant*, have been aroused on every side; the compulsion upon all to prepare themselves for war at a time of general consciousness that the world can be served by peace alone, that only in a time of peace can the great tasks of the age be fulfilled; the incessant disturbance of Europe by two entire mobilizations every year, and all the resulting dislocation of family life, the frustration of business, the black-outs, and the life of air-raid shelters; all this incessantly recurring alarm which broods over the continent of Europe by

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reason of the organized barbarization of a great nation in its midst, and which implanted the desperate resolve: *Il faut en finir*, "It must come to an end," in the most peaceful hearts—all this must be reckoned into the costs that Germany will have to meet.

For now the war is here, the war that was always inevitable, war in the fullest meaning of the word—no longer a ruffianly foray into the territories of helpless neighbours, but a struggle for life and death with adversaries whose moral position is backed by vast and powerful resources. And the payment has begun; the loss of the amenities of life, all the deprivations of the simplest material values, which an unscrupulous war economy, battenning on the very national substance, had inflicted upon the nation before the time came, will be multiplied tenfold under the blockade and the fearful strain of a war of exhaustion. The German people will endure them—their enemies may be assured that they will endure them for a very long while. They will suffer privation, shed their blood, and stand fast year after year; for a hysterical mountebank has restored Germany

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her honour, and a nation with recovered honour may be dealt with, and will deal with Europe, just exactly as Germany does.

Who can make the German people understand that they never lost their honour? That a pack of ruffians had persuaded them of the contrary in order to gain a mastery over them, and used the plea of lost honour to transform them into criminals and killers. Does a nation lose its honour through the loss of a war—even allowing for the fact that it has built up an empire by means of victorious wars? Surely, in just such a case defeat may serve honour, not destroy it, if it be thus established that honour does not rest solely upon fear and dread, but that to live in honour a nation needs some measure of the regard and confidence of the world at large. True it is that a series of victorious wars created Germany: it was from the Austro-Prussian, Prusso-Danish, and Franco-German wars that Bismarck's Empire emerged. It was a sinister Empire, and Empire of war and victory, and a defeat must necessarily damage the world prestige that necessarily attached to such an origin and such a history. But, viewed objectively, a defeat was what

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was needed to atone for that origin and history, to soften the grim and iron visage of Germany, to conciliate humanity and reconcile her to a world scarce able to cope with this massed force within its midst; to offer Germany the truly honourable occasion of leading the European peace movement and advancing in the van along the plain path of progress towards the leadership of Europe.

That was not to be. Exhaustion and embitterment at the destruction of the national outlook made it impossible. But the belief that Germany had lost her honour was nonsense. The world's deep respect for her tremendous contribution to civilization remained wholly intact; her very achievements in the four years of war, both active and passive, had extorted the highest respect from the world, and especially from her enemies, who were more than once very near to downfall. There was not the slightest reason to despise Germany, and she was not despised. Of sympathy there was no lack; indeed, the occasion for it, on the grounds above mentioned, though it meant the defeat of the regime of force, was, in the same sense and extent as in the case of defeated France

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in 1814 and 1871, the more immediately obvious. Germany could only conceive herself as dishonoured and despised because she persisted in using outworn, shackling categories of thought and rejected the new vision that promised life renewed; because she thought “nationally,” looked upon everything from the national point of view, set herself to alter and restore instead of taking her place as a member of a great community.

That this was the new and needed vivifying concept, even the most obstinate intelligence could not fail to realize. Germany could not stand alone; but the attempt to confine Germany yet more closely within the old idea of nationalism and a monstrous and perverted social philosophy found fulfilment in what is called National Socialism.

There was never anything more fundamentally false than this invention. All that it engendered in word and deed were lies and crimes, and its only honour was treason. The very name was a lie: it was a shameless refurbishment of a crass and obsolete theory to give it a new and revolutionary appearance; the poisonous lie of honour lost, its recovery through

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a self-enclosed and obdurate “nationalism” and then by “national” expansion and conquest; the lie of “racial unity”—a mere fairy-tale of war, told to grown-up children in accents of sham patriotism utterly devoid of social reality. A lie, too, was the tearing up the shameful treaty—for the Treaty of Versailles had ceased to exist. Its economic follies, conceived not unnaturally by victors who had had to endure much agony and suffering, had long since been disavowed and had fallen into abeyance. As for the territorial maladjustments that remained, the future of Europe for which all men longed and which must needs be established, a future of peace and reconciliation, would make them meaningless. The Treaty of Versailles was not exactly an object of positive pride to those who dictated it. Indeed, how sorely it lay upon their conscience was shown by their unprotesting tolerance of the forcible revisions of that treaty then undertaken every six months by the National Socialists.

Unprotesting tolerance, born of a guilty conscience—but was the attitude of the German people to these heroic deeds very different from that of their enemies

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today? Were they filled with pride and gratitude and joy at the thought that they were to carry their own sufferings into many other lands? Unless all our impressions deceived us, they viewed the "establishment of Greater Germany," the "expansion of the Empire" by the overthrow of the Czechs and the Poles, with an indifference which was not unmingled with an unuttered fear as to what might be the outcome of an adventure so compact of deceit and broken faith. The German people were darkly conscious that in what had come to pass, in what their rulers had accomplished in their name, there was no honour, no purpose, and no future; that it altered nothing, bettered nothing, made no mark upon their own happiness or the happiness of the world, that the deeds thus done were futile, senseless crimes from which no good could come.

Certainly the German people had this feeling. After all, even while they cheered on the streets at the amazing (really not at all amazing!) successes of their inspired leader, the utterly shameful and totally dishonest character of the situation was clear to them. What was the true position?

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Men who called themselves revolutionary, when they were merely out of date, thought they could exploit for their own aims a period of development in a world which was not theirs and of which they had no moral nor spiritual comprehension. What was called "progress," the moral, intellectual, and even technical development of society, had led the civilized world, in principle, to pacifism. The nations, the average man, the man-in-the-street, wanted no more to do with war; they regarded it as an outworn, futile, and ruinous method of adjusting human affairs. Thus far had our world made its way. Experience and thought had brought it to that point. Civilization felt that it could endure war no longer, it definitely recoiled from war—how profoundly has been shown today by the extreme reluctance of the warring powers to embark on all its horrors in good earnest. And the pacifist attitude and conviction of civilized humanity, so gradually achieved and so dearly paid for, was abused and thrown away by men who both despised and exploited natural progress. The love of peace, the honourable aversion to war, now implanted in the nations, was a godsend to

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them, just as night is welcome to a thief; under its cover they prepared their devastating forays. They had made the discovery, regarded by some as a stroke of genius, that great advantage can be drawn from a state of society by those who do not believe in it, and that history—or something that looks like it—can thereby be made.

Again, I am convinced that the German people were in the last resort conscious of all this. They are known as disciples of culture—they could scarcely acquiesce with pleasure in the destruction of the fundamental values of Western civilization, which was conducted in their name. They seldom or never descended to the belief that these anachronistic atrocities could really be for their advantage—or even for the sole advantage of their masters, who had to dazzle them with “successes” in order to secure their own supremacy. They strongly suspected that the promise given to them that this process would continue, that Germany in this “peaceful” fashion could not merely annul the shameful treaty but achieve the lordship of the world, would prove impossible of fulfilment.

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Nor could it be fulfilled; war, no longer waged on only one side, is come. Force has at last risen up against force—and do the Germans now believe that they must keep faith with those who perverted and deceived them and, in acknowledgment of deeds that never evoked their enthusiasm, deeds in fact that they disliked, stand by these men to the end? They will now let themselves be persuaded, and persuade themselves, that the guilt of this war lies with others—whom, at the same time, in the crassest contradiction to this assertion, they have been taught to regard as decadent and outmoded pacifists no longer capable of any historic deed. I shall have more to say of the “decadence” of the older civilized peoples. But who, for six years long, and longer, prepared for war? And who made so little preparation that, apart from the evil conscience engendered by Versailles, they were induced to shut their eyes to what was happening and let matters slide, until all right-thinking people—even in Germany—were in despair? Who are they that even today, to reassure their fellow-countrymen, boast of the start they had gained in every sort of preparation for war? In what country

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is war exalted, peace despised, pacifists and socialists martyred and destroyed? In England? In France? Four years ago, in a letter that did, I know, come under the notice of many Germans, I said:

“The meaning and purpose of the National Socialist State is this alone and can be only this: to shape the German people for the ‘coming war’ by a process of merciless spiritual isolation and repression and by extirpating every stirring of opposition; to make of them an absolutely malleable instrument of war, impervious to any impulse of criticism and driven by a blind and fanatical ignorance. Such a system can have no other meaning and purpose, nor any other *excuse*. All the sacrifices of freedom, justice, human happiness, including all the abominations secretly and openly committed, the guilt of which has been so lightly undertaken, can only be justified by the idea of an absolute fitness for war. If the concept of war as an aim in itself disappeared, the whole system would be merely a crime against humanity—and, as such, utterly meaningless and superfluous.”

That was the truth, and it meant no more than that the regime was, in principle and by its very nature, incapable of adjusting itself to a European peace system. In order merely to exist, to maintain its organization, to realize its “philosophy” and remain

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in power—which indeed was its all-embracing purpose—it needed the atmosphere of semi-war, of tension, of stark hostility and utter recklessness, and there was no price at which peace could be bought from it. Merely to name such a price was beyond its power, for whatever offer the other side might be disposed to make, acceptance would have meant the ideal and physical suicide of a regime whose breath of life must needs have been at once extinguished in a really pacified Europe. The incorporation of Germany into a community of nations that could at last devote itself, unhampered and secure, to the great tasks of peace was utterly impossible so long as Hitler remained in power.

But this was just what the democracies would not admit. The truth must not be true, it must be disavowed; theirs was the faith of *Credo quia absurdum*, and they acted as though the regime could be won over by concessions, appeased and tamed, and reduced to “normal.” After all, it was not without some attractive features. A country in which the right to strike had been abolished, whatever else might happen there—even though it were uncomfortably sug-

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gestive of war—had its lure for capitalistic democracies, so continually confronted with the most difficult social problems. Was not Hitler “the bulwark against Bolshevism”?

There is nothing essentially complimentary to England and France in stating, what is in fact no more than the truth, that two nations never resolved upon war with heavier hearts than they did on this occasion. After the foul betrayal that had been put upon them in Munich, after the destruction of the Czech State, they steeled their hearts to war, and after the invasion of Poland they declared it—or, to speak more justly, they accepted the inevitable. They had the choice between utter and historic abdication, complete capitulation, the loss of everything that is called honour and freedom, the right and the power to live by their own beliefs—and war. It may have been their fault that the issue had arisen, that they had so long refused to realize the catastrophic character of the Nazi regime. But this is scarcely what the conqueror of Vienna, Prague, and Warsaw means when he ascribes the responsibility for war to the Western powers. No, Germany’s intention was with

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a peaceful, powerful hand to construct a better and a juster world order; and the decadent West, which would not allow Germany to do anything of the kind nor even allow Germany to live, which lay crouching upon its treasures like Fafner on his hoard, covetously resisted any juster order, and, merely to preserve its own possessions and jam the rolling wheels of destiny, kindled the flames of war. Chiefly it was England who had done this—God punish her! France, “from whom we want nothing,” would have gladly died a peaceful death and thus deserved supremely well of history; but England, though equally decadent, still possessed enough evil vitality to be able to drag France with her into a wicked war against a Germany striving to stabilize a new order. God would punish England!

The unequal assignment of German hate between England and France, the contempt for France therein expressed, and the insistence that Germany still desired no war with that country are one of the strongest misinterpretations of the situation which Germany could have devised. Much that has happened in the past should have prevented Germany from seeing a

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harmless enemy in France, while accusing England of refusing to let Germany live and depriving her of her place in the sun. There was a time, after 1918, when the British Ambassador in Berlin was called the "Lord Protector." None of those things were done that might have prevented the return of the Saar to the Reich; if France did not stir when Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland and proceeded to fortify it—which was the preliminary condition for all his doings in the east—the hand of England was therein to be discerned. The renaissance of Germany after the collapse of the Imperial regime took place under English auspices; France had, naturally enough, looked on far from complacently and needed much persuasion not to interfere. Moreover, since the renaissance proceeded on such perverted lines, it is very questionable whether England's benevolence did any service to the world and to Germany herself. But if, as is indeed not beyond the bounds of possibility, Germany is defeated in this war likewise, when peace comes to be made, Germany will once more stand in need of England's "cold-blooded" calculation to protect her against the fury of her Con-

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tinental neighbours, for whom the resolve ultimately extorted: "*Il faut en finir*," had a more intense and desperate ring than for the cooler island race. It is France, recently so pacifist a France, that in this case, if the judgment were left to her alone, would shatter Germany to pieces, to rid herself of that menace at last; and no purpose could be more futile than that of attempting to detach France from England, and persuade her to desist from the war now finally begun; nothing could be more idiotic than to concentrate German hatred upon Albion's head and thus wreck any prospects of reconciliation when peace shall come.

But I speak of possibilities which Germany does not so much as envisage. She will not "stand in bitter need" of England, she will not stand in need of anybody. She is to win the war under her inspired Leader, and dictate to all the world a German peace, the new order, founded upon the majestic concept of force, which uplifts every heart. She can do no otherwise than conquer, for she is a young, revolutionary nation standing upon the threshold of her history, entrusted with the tremendous mission of

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reshaping the world, while her enemies are fighting to maintain things as they are, in a misconceived effort to set back the course of history. They are old nations, over-civilized and over-refined, decadent, and on the verge of collapse, exhausted, abandoned by the genius of history, no longer deserving of life, or of the power and the wealth to which they cling.

Such is Germany's conviction, and such the light in which her pedagogues have accustomed her to view the world situation and the parts to be played by the nations of the world. But supposing they were told that all this was dangerous nonsense—mortally dangerous for those who believed it? Supposing it were pointed out that the ebullitions of Signor Mussolini, now so cautiously non-committal, about "the young nations, who will crack the whip of mastery over the necks of the outworn nations now ripe for enslavement," were fatuous and fantastic rodomontade? I should like to know how Italy, who may indeed call herself the cradle of modern civilization, can be "younger" than France and England. And just because Germany had an unfortunately retarded and belated history as a nation, is it there-

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fore any “younger” than they? The secret of life and of death, of health and sickness, means nothing to Nazis—but for philosophical criticism, once so flourishing in Germany, it should have carried some significance. The concept of Humanity is not exhausted by the biological side of life; the spiritual element is part of its *bios* also, and the ideas of “health” and “sickness” are to be handled with the greatest caution in such a connection. A higher, and indeed the highest, life may come from sickness, and death may lurk in apparently blooming health. It is a crude misconception of human *bios*, unworthy of the German spirit, and yet, alas, in a certain sense truly German: to see death in refinement, and health solely in violence. Refinement can produce a kind of tenacity that, when the crisis comes, is beyond the reach of violence. The vital superiority of the former over the latter remains at least a human possibility, and the victories of a ripe civilization over barbarism constitute the more humane pride of history. But the disposition of the Germans to regard the old European cultures of the West as moth-eaten and moribund, their tolerance, so antagonistic to

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German energy and determination, as incompetence and arrogance, their scepticism as want of physical and moral vigour—this disposition does not date from today; it has become ominously intensified under the detestable violence of the present leadership and regime.

Nothing is more certain than that in this war also they will learn some bitter lessons—from the high-strung and formidable tenacity of France, a land of intellectuals no less than of peasants, as well as from the humorous, virile force that characterizes England in her maturity. Remember Julius Cæsar, the champion of civilization, great citizen and great soldier, who set his stamp upon this world and was certainly no decadent type, but the genius and pattern of an imperious and exalted civilization, who conferred his name upon sovereignty as such—one of the greatest men that the earth has yet seen. Just because the struggle now engaged is against his concept of empire, it is so misguided, so infinitely stupid of these men to believe that they stand for his dynamic forces and hold the future in fee, that they alone know the message tolled by the great bell of the

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world, that they, young and valiant, guard the threshold of life and transformation and renewal, while their weary and outworn adversaries, left derelict by life, have adopted as their cause what is in fact stagnation, mere survival. All this is mere rubbish. The enemies of Germany know quite well that nothing in the world can, or should, or may remain unchanged.

They have entered upon the war in the full and explicit consciousness that after it the world "will probably be barely recognizable," and they are, notwithstanding their older culture, as adaptable to destiny as ever Germany could be. England, especially, was always the land of wise and timely concessions to temporal necessities, and as she has remodelled her Empire from an out-of-date system of colonial exploitation into a commonwealth of loosely and freely federated members, she would—there can be no possible doubt—have offered her assistance to any reasonable solution of the great and pressing social problems of the world, if conceived in a spirit of peace and solidarity and with a view to the general welfare: and in co-operation with a Germany

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that had not, in anachronistic fashion, sought her salvation in the overthrow of other states. England would have been very ready to come to an understanding over the demands of the age, such as the more equitable distribution of the resources of the earth.

She would be ready to do so today—the assurances of her statesmen that England was waging war solely against a clique of rulers which stood in the way of any betterment in world conditions, and by its very nature must always do so—but not against the German people and their vital necessities—plainly indicate such readiness, and they are sincerely meant. The contention that this is not so, that England is lying in order “to destroy Germany,” that Albion is utterly false and always hypocritical, is a vulgar legend, which the German people are expected to accept from men who, for their part, believe nothing at all, for whom any sort of ideology is merely a means of propaganda and an instrument of power, and to whom words, and even thoughts, are known solely as a disguise for deliberate political

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deceit. These indeed are the right people to accuse England of an ingrained aptitude for deceit! True it is that political thinking is not directed towards a pure realization of truth: it is purposeful thinking, directed by the sense of interest; the doctrine that the intellect is solely the servant and interpreter of the will is most clearly demonstrated in the political sphere. It is a matter of luck or destiny whether our interest may call upon us to defend the right or the wrong—and here falls to be said, what is in no sense a commendation, but a plain statement of fact, that the warring democracies are today in the morally agreeable position of being able to defend the right in serving their own ends. England's hypocrisy, her much-abused "cant," is nothing more than the desire to adopt this position and maintain it; indeed, it is her expressed need to combine egoism and morality—a human need, human in a very distinctive sense, for it is by no means universal, and if the moral embodiment of an interest does not actually make it moral, we need not believe that an interest solely conceivable as involving cruelty and oppression, and

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one devoid of hope, should rank as morally superior to that which responds to the kindlier human instincts.

The German people are inclined to believe in this moral superiority of harsh and repellent ideas over those of a gentler and more benevolent cast; it is in consonance with their deeper sense of the tragedy of life, and the inevitability of evil in the world, which they love to set in sharp confrontation to the "shallow" pragmatism of the West, with which also their pessimistic view of interest as the motive of all thinking is involved. The need is to discover, and indeed the nation should have acquired some conviction on the subject in the course of the centuries, what is the aim of life, and what is not: knowledge, or power, as such—these being, as it would seem, absolute alternatives. A nation which merely sees a revolting display of *tartuferie* in the fundamental spiritual need, developed indeed into a spiritual capacity, for reconciling interest and morality, a nation that takes so uncompromising a view of politics as to deny that there can be any contact between politics and morality—we may well

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ask whether such a nation is really fit to exercise power; and the question may be asked even though ambition, tainted by envy and arrogance, is driving it so inexorably to grasp at power. Such ambition may well be described as perverted, manifesting itself as it does in a distortion of the physiognomy and character; for the struggle for power, and its exploitation by this people, involve such horrors as to implicate it in hopeless conflict with the world and with itself. Here is a safe prophecy—though indeed it is a prophecy after the event, for the facts are before our eyes. The German nation has greatly changed since it came under the curse of power-politics; it has now, without exaggeration, become a caricature of itself, and a nightmare not merely to a world that was prepared to admire and respect it, but also to itself; it has, in our day, acquiesced in the unexampled intellectual and civil dishonour, namely National Socialism—shaped its purposes finally and fundamentally for power and for world domination, inspired by an insane envy of England.

Envy, as displayed in human beings and in nations, is a stupid and deadening emotion. Each

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and all have to exist and fulfil their destinies, while unconsciously exhibiting character in such fulfilment, and the process is in every case difficult and anxious enough, despite the enjoyment naturally involved in the preservation and expression of the ego—which is, in fact, the enjoyment of life itself. How foolish to spoil such enjoyment by allowing a proper admiration of qualities displayed in other manifestations of the mastery of life to degenerate into dislike—or to belittle the special role assigned to others, which they, just because it is theirs, in accordance with their position in the world game, do not in any way overvalue and are little inclined to exalt! How is it that the English, upon whom so great and responsible a task in the governance of the world has been laid, are not an emotional or a boastful nation, but a nation addicted to “understatement,” to great reserve in the use of speech; a nation which—from a certain Puritanical inclination to regard their wealth as a just and immediate reward of Christian virtue—would be most averse to heroizing themselves and elevating their acquisitions into a mighty achievement? They say: “We got our

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Empire in a fit of absence of mind.” Has a German ever uttered such or similar words? For him there is no question of absence of mind, but a fierce, tense effort to achieve great things, and he speaks very freely of his successes, not with any sort of deprecation, but in the most thunderous tones of self-applause.

The parts to be played by England and Germany in the world game are inevitably quite distinct. I shall not try to determine them, for any such attempt might involve an estimate of value, and I am afraid that my Germanism might, in so doing, lead me into statements that would display my aversion to international envy as a kind of national pride, whereas it arises solely from the sense of the difficulty of all life, and illustrates the insight of the philosopher who said: “Better to see than to be.” Envy, as also international envy, is merely the expression of want of insight into this fact. It is an illusion, and moreover a contradictory emotion, for a man cannot want to acquire the characteristics of another; indeed, he criticizes them, just as Germany criticizes England’s *tartuferie*. This would seem to imply that a man

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wants to obtain an alien destiny on the basis of his own characteristics, which, having regard to the unity and identity of character and destiny, is utter nonsense; or, in addition to his own natural qualities, which all the world is ready to admire, he wants to impose others upon himself, as a result of which he will fall into the most violent exaggerations and by the abuse of his own nature will become a caricature of his own self and an object of horror to the world.

The German people cannot, in the last resort, blink their eyes to the fact that England's attitude to power is quite other, and an incomparably more natural and straightforward one, than her own. Both parties understand something quite different by it—it is the same word with a wholly different meaning. To Englishmen power is in no way the darkly emotional concept as viewed by Germans; power, in English eyes, implies no emotion—the will to power is a German invention—but a function; they exercise it in the gentlest and most unobtrusive manner, with the least possible display, and safeguarding as much freedom as is feasible, for they do not believe that power is a proclamation of slavery, and are therefore

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not slaves to power themselves. That is called Liberalism—an old-fashioned word for a very vital thing; for he alone is free who allows others to be free, and the taskmaster is owned by no man as his lord. Can it be denied that the world, in so far as it is English, finds itself in right good hands? Is it any burning interest of humanity that England's task of administration should be taken from her and pass into other hands—German or Russian? I ask this question because the eagerness with which the decay of the British Empire is announced, and its speedy dissolution conjured up, looks like wishful thinking and may well be dismissed accordingly. But not only does one look in vain for the advantages that the fulfilment of this prophecy might bestow on humanity as a whole; there are good reasons for regarding it as premature. The fact that Liberalism, or, better stated, Liberality, is not a merely historical concept now outworn, but an infinitely adaptable quality, which, at its best, stands independent of the epoch to which it may be historically assigned, is proved by the history of the British Empire. If there were still in question the capitalistic *Imperium* and

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the system of colonial exploitation, as indeed existed in the epoch of Liberalism, then these prophecies of dismemberment could show a better chance of fulfilment. But as sovereignty passes into a process of education in freedom and the voluntary system, and a liberal relaxation of the administrative structure can strengthen the endurance of a politico-economic symbiosis, this Empire, still so called, has in the post-Liberal period become an example to the world. India! comes the cry. What of national freedom and self-government for India? Those who ask the question with such notable insistence are not the people who would, in England's place, confer these benefits on the land of Vishnu and of Indra; they are those who would find the greatest satisfaction in the anarchy that would probably be the consequence of such bestowal. If even English Liberalism here exercises a certain reserve, an unprejudiced spectator may well believe that she has her reasons for doing so. And the acute differences of opinion between Gandhi and the Viceroy have not prevented the Mahatma's expressing himself at the beginning of the war on Hitler's Germany in words that indi-

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cate his close intellectual adherence to English civilization.

The British World Empire is more than an Empire, it is a civilization. It is the Empire of the English language—a quiet but powerful language, with a unifying, binding, colonizing force with which no others, though they have also produced great literature, neither German, nor Italian, nor French, can enter into competition. England is well able to deal with the dissolution of the existing world, not to mention its impatient heirs' attempts to destroy it. She possesses powers of resistance not easily exhausted by an accumulated mass of incompetence and error at the centre of her administrative system; she has still her contribution to make, and indeed her task is so far from being fulfilled and her hour from being past that there is much to indicate that this great secular organization finds expression in measures of time such as mark the passage of the Catholic Church through ages and far surpass the records of mere "empires."

Be this as it may, there is nothing to show that England's great hour was in the nineteenth century,

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and that the twentieth belongs to the “younger nations”—which are possibly fatally deceived as to the endurance and adaptability of an organization which they are so ready to regard as moribund. The contention that they alone understand life and the future, that they alone should be entrusted with its re-embodiment, and that old Europe must be content to stand aside and let them have their way, is one that will, in all human probability, be dispelled by events; and it must be added that in this matter what is probable is completely consonant with what we all desire, for the concept of the future as cherished by the “younger nations” is far from youthful. It is indeed detestable to the point of absurdity, utterly untenable, and revolting not merely to age and experience, but to humanity itself.

There is general agreement, *consentio omnium*, on the fact that everything in Europe cannot remain as it has been. I said just now that the democracies, and especially the British democracies, display a full understanding of the certainty and necessity for comprehensive changes in the political and economic structure of this our world. The dictators are not

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alone in being “dynamic.” Only as regards methods, and the aspect of the world that is to be, is there such a cleavage between ideas and purposes—a cleavage indeed so deep and fundamental that it is clear that only war can arbitrate. Let me set side by side the two concepts of change in regard to which this war is being fought. They are: European confederation, and the acquirement, in full sovereignty, of national living-space.

In this connection it is to be remarked that the declared resolution of the great democracies to conclude no peace with the present German Government represents a more far-reaching and important innovation than would appear at first glance. In fact, it means the epoch-making abandonment of a principle, to which Europe with fatal conservatism still adheres, although it had long since become only too obviously outworn and disastrous: the principle of non-interference, which lies behind the concept of the absolute sovereignty of the national states. The principle of non-interference rests on an idea of democracy and freedom which no longer responds to the claims of the age. Democracy is a fluid equa-

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tion between freedom and equality, between the claims of the individual and of the community, and is in constant need of readjustment; and every thinking mind today now feels that the balance has inclined to the side of equality and economic justice and so has shifted from the individual to the social aspect of life. Social democracy is now the order of the day; only in this spiritual form and structure, as a manifestation of freedom which has acquired a socialized maturity, and which retains the individual values by voluntary concessions to equality, can democracy continue to exist—nationally and internationally.

The inner life of a people stands in exact, and too often misconceived, correspondence with its position within the community of nations, and it is an immitigable error to believe that what happens within a given nation—as, for instance, what has gone on in Germany since the year 1933—concerns no one outside, and is solely and entirely a matter for the nation in question. The life of nations and of states must in the future be dominated by a new idea of freedom, as of a limited individualism con-

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strained by social forces. Only through the victory of this idea of freedom, the idea of super-national democracy, can happiness, peace, and order be secured for Europe—in the place of an anarchy which leads again and again to bloody wars and is destroying civilization. Anarchy is individualism socially untrammelled; and this obstinate adherence to the unlimited sovereignty of national states is an anarchy that endangers the existence of Europe; it is individualism run riot, and it must disappear. The egoism of national states must offer sacrifices—social sacrifices which do actually mean a retrenchment of the idea of State sovereignty, *and indeed of the national idea*. The fruit and aim of this war must be a peace that at last deserves its name; which will reinstate a word so long and pitifully misused, in the dignity of its true meaning; which will no longer serve as a protective weapon for the stale exploits of the history book, but stand firm as the expression of a community of free but inter-responsible peoples under a moral law that binds them all.

These are the ideas that embody one side's conception of the future. They can be found succinctly

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and plainly set forth, without Utopian exuberance, in the utterances of British statesmen before the war and since its outbreak.

“We shall use all our influence,” said Lord Halifax, in his radio speech at the beginning of November 1939, “We shall use all our influence when the time comes in the *building of a new world* in which the nations will not permit insane armed rivalry to deny their hopes of fuller life and future confidence nor be for ever overborne by grim foreboding of disaster. The new world that we seek will enlist the *co-operation of all peoples* on a basis of *human equality, self-respect*, and mutual tolerance. We shall have to think out again many things that lie on the route of international contacts—social, political, *economic*—and find means of reconciling *the necessity of change in a constantly changing world* with security against the disturbance of the general peace through resort to violence. To this order that we shall create *all nations will have their contribution to make*, and a great responsibility both in thought and action will rest upon our people. *We*,

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not less than others, have our lessons to learn from past failures and disappointments."

These words are not merely significant, but extremely striking—which is equally significant. For it is as striking as it is significant that the British Foreign Minister should declare that England also, just like other nations, has her lesson to learn. Here is no self-righteousness, nor any disposition to act as the schoolmaster of Europe, but the acknowledgment that "in a constantly changing world" the democracies change too, and indeed for the better; that they must adapt to their purposes the new necessities of the age; and if we envisage the spheres in which the speaker suggests that this acceptance of change will find fulfilment—"social, political, economic"—we may well say that the world stands on the threshold of a dynamic program of progress. All in truth hangs upon this—that not Germany alone shall emerge from this war transformed, but that her enemies too shall not, at the end of it, be what they were when the time comes for the establishment of the "new world" to which "all nations will have their

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contribution to make”—and herein unquestionably lies a certain danger, and a dilemma between two issues, both to be desired. If, as is to be hoped from the human standpoint, the war is short, it is to be feared that the general changes effected by it may not be sufficiently far-reaching to lay the foundation for a really new world. But if it is long and bloody, the emotions of hatred and vengeance which it engenders may mortally endanger all these high intentions. The second danger must, or should be, regarded as the more vital. All these aims and visions upon the one side had advanced towards realization before the war and have been greatly vivified since its outbreak. They are almost identical with the determination to fight it out, and they are more likely to survive after a war that is not too burdensome in point of time than under the stress of the moral and physical ravages that a longer and more terrible war would bring in its train.

I have tried to indicate one of the two perspectives of the future: it consists of adherence of the European states to a commonwealth, which would represent a new and creative synthesis of freedom and

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reciprocal responsibility, of the cultivation of national character and of social equality; a league to which all states would have to offer sacrifices of their absolutism and their right to self-determination in order to enjoy the advantages of ease, security for their labours, and the due meed of prosperity which only a real community can provide.

The other war aim of which I spoke is equally not devoid of power and glory—it is indeed superior in these qualities to our conception of peace, assuming an attitude towards the world according to which a hatred and contempt for humanity is a component of glory. This idea of the future has, of course, nothing in common with the desire for a human adjustment of freedom and equality, for the realization of individual and social values; its basis is rather the absolute, enduring, embittered adherence to this creed of sovereignty and slavery. The corollary of this view is the division of the world into a few vast “living-spaces,” which must be autarchic—that is, in national and sole possession of all industrial raw materials. They are to be established by force, the legitimacy of which lies in the

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natural claims of the ruler nations thus created, by the subjection and incorporation of surrounding small and militarily weak nations, whose small populations deprive them of any claim to freedom and individual life, and of those who offer resistance to such an unquestioning assertion of dominion and thus render themselves guilty of a monstrous assault upon the majesty of superior numbers. An important part in all this is played by the idea of "race." The "great" nation—that is, the nation great in numbers—is also to be regarded as the "noble" race, while the smaller ones rank as less human and born to slavery. Their subjection and annexation merely signify their absorption into the greater and sovereign unit, in so far as they increase its numbers and add to its prestige; otherwise they relapse into the condition of dehumanized and plundered helots who must toil for the ruling race and lick the boots of brutal masters. The fact that this ruling race itself consists of slaves, deprived of rights and ruled by their masters, the progenitors of the whole system, with every manifestation of uttermost contempt and

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by the aid of terror and besotted propaganda, is cold comfort for the slaves of these same slaves.

Indeed, there is little comfort in the system as such. It contains no sort of hope—though one is ashamed to mention such a flaccid, feeble word in this connection. Perpetual menace, merciless and gloating cruelty, harsh and bloody oppression, war-like tension unrelaxed—these are the conditions of its life, without which it could not be maintained; and aspirations to the values and the benefits of peace—to freedom, in other words, the delights of civilization, and the enjoyment of life, ideas that exalt humanity above the spheres of power and politics—must rank as high treason. How could it be otherwise? The small oppressed nations, who will always be intent on shaking off their yoke, are to be kept in bowed submission by every method of terrorism, as also the ruling race, which is almost as little to be trusted—and, to the world without, war is the eternal watchword. Indeed, the demand for “autarchy” makes that plain, the planned independence of any external sources of raw material, and, as a conse-

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quence, the claim to all strategic points needed for the security of the sovereign Reich—all of that would be of no account if the issue were peace. That, indeed, it can and may not be, our stark, heroic philosophy admits of no such concept. The might of this great Reich must be continually increased. The world is partitioned—but, of course, not finally. Among these nations thus deluded there must be a super-nation, destined by race to delude the rest, and the end and purpose of the universe will prove to be its dominance by this one nation. Probably, if God so wills—and He must so will, we'll see to that—it will be the German nation.

Unhappy German nation, how do you like the Messianic role allotted to you, not by God, nor by destiny, but by a handful of perverted and bloody-minded men? Dark and bitter will be the way to the goal that they have set before you, and terrible indeed will be your state when it is reached. All that you most deeply value, all that was easy and natural to you, your need to love and to be loved, you must disavow and destroy. All that you find hard and bitter and unnatural—isolation, the hostility of all

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the world, deprivation of your civil and intellectual rights, and the loss of many other things, as you have indeed already experienced in the years of National Socialism—will for ever be your lot; for otherwise the spell will be broken, only under such conditions can you be “in form” for your dreadful mission, and in order to conquer the world, as your villainous masters intend to do, you must abjure everything that ever yet did conquer the world for any nation.

And this you must do not only during your progress towards the goal, but for ever, even after your victory. For such a victory brings no peace; the eschatology of your masters is the most futile and impracticable that such pitiable minds could conceive, for a world subjected but not won will be in eternal revolt against its infamous oppressors. Spiritually unsubdued, these populations will behave like those “turbulent” Czech students (“turbulent” is a term much favoured by your masters) who, with bare fists, and at a time when success was hopeless, flung themselves against the iron machine of tyranny and with that display of idiotic inexorability, in which German authority so delights, were shot.

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“Better die than endure this”—what will become of you, O people of Germany, when the despairing cry of these turbulent youths has become the cry of the whole world?

And is it not already so? The war, which your perverted rulers promised to spare you, so firmly confident were they in the peaceful intent of others, though anyone could have told you it would come; and the phrase “*Il faut en finir*” may be translated into German in just those words. You would never believe anyone who told you how utterly hopeless was your struggle, for you still felt yourselves strong. Pity it is that you cannot be brought to see that where victory would be hopeless, the struggle cannot fail to be so too.

Of the two concepts of the future, the two contemplated forms of European reconstruction, one has been tried, and the other not. It has been tried provisionally and to a limited extent—the great-power Reich of sovereignty and slavery, the Reich of a noble race itself enslaved, which battens on subject helot-races; the whole world knows more or less how it will work out, the image of that peace stands before

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our eyes in the form of the Greater German Reich and its protectorates; and in the atrocities beyond all description perpetrated in Poland and Czech territory, those potential "subjects" of the German people, as yet unmastered—Dutch and Swiss, and all who can be regarded as impinging upon the German living-space—may contemplate their destiny.

Not yet tried, but merely an inspiration, and a precarious one at that, is that other "new world," the world of peace, in which the nations—all in equal measure—would have to make sacrifices of their State sovereignty and national right to self-determination, the political and economic co-operation among nations, a world of freedom expressed in common ties and obligations, the Commonwealth, the Confederation of Europe. One is an optimistic, human, kindly vision which promises ease, freedom, justice, individual happiness, and the enrichment of culture, and for that very reason—strange indeed is the bitterness and self-contempt of human kind—stands at a certain spiritual and moral disadvantage as against the tragic, pessimistic, and realist concept of a black, blood-stained, and violent future. It is

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true: an optimistic and humanitarian social creed is always considered as accompanied by general weakness of mind and character and proneness to self-delusion, while the pessimists, who disavow "happiness" and do not believe in it, are regarded as deeper, wiser, and more virile. And to German feeling and thought, optimism and pessimism appear particularly in this light. But there are two forms of "disavowal," and a great moral difference exists between the pessimism that comes from the sufferings of life, the agonizing participation in the dark destiny of man—and that which is in itself evil and an inhuman disavowal of any principle of betterment. There is a difference—and *more* than a difference—between the pessimism that says: Things will never improve; and that which says: They never *shall* improve. The former leaves moral scope for every sort of effort to pit the human will against fatality, and even without the faith that man can ever be happy will save for him what can be saved of happiness and honour. But a pessimism that says: "What, things are going to be better and brighter, are they? We'll soon see about that!" and does its

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best to make sure that they shall be blacker and bloodier and more brutal than ever—such a pessimism is neither profound, moral, nor virile; it is pure obstruction, plain diabolism; and a nation that puts this pessimism against a world desire for better, more rational, and happier conditions, and indeed against the well-founded hope that such may be achieved, is in no sense heroic, but detestable, and deserves to be scarified as a crime against humanity.

Are the German people prepared to be regarded as, in fact, the enemies of humanity? They were once a people to whom love and the stimulus of world admiration were all-important, and their unuttered longing to be loved is observable in their most defiant attitudes, though totalitarian politics, in which their innate lack of the political sense is now so disastrously disguised, has induced them to adopt as their watchword the most foolish of all phrases: *Oderint dum metuant*. To be hated, if only they could also be feared—here is a despairing aspiration for a people in whose original disposition fear was not innate at the cost of all feelings of kindness and devotion, for our German terms for reverence and

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devotion do in fact contain the word "fear." Eternally to hate and fear, merely in order to be feared, even though hated also—did I speak unjustly of a "hopeless victory"? And are we without feeling for the deepest longings of the German people in adjuring them to abandon a hopeless struggle?

This would mean that they must shake off their present rulers, who are really enemies of humanity, hating and hated, with whom any sort of definite peace is notoriously impossible, and get rid of their satellites. Impossible? Why? For internal or external reasons? For loyalty's sake? Because there is a war, and in a war it is no longer the Nazi Party that is at stake, but Germany, rulers and people being now at one? But the establishment of this delusion was one of their main reasons for starting this war, and it is not true that Germany's fate is at stake. Nothing more is at stake than the maintenance of their power and their foul and damnable schemes. The whole world holds desperately to the distinction between the German people and their destroyers, and will the German people, whose entire hopes are indeed based on this distinction, now deny it? Did

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they not from the very beginning, even in the first weeks of this besotted regime, when, in their romantic and fantastic fashion, they plunged into dreams of a millennium, did they not know, in the secret places of their reason, that all this was an adventure that would some time have to be liquidated in favour of a free, fresh start? I speak of the "secret places of their reason" because, though in others the reason lies at the surface of the soul and the irrational in its depths, with Germans the opposite is true: soul and dream, the imaginative element, are on the surface, and reason in the depths, so that they must "go inside themselves" in order to be reasonable.

Will they now do so and give reason her due, no longer close their eyes to the true aspect of the desperate adventurers who are their leaders, and make a fresh start? Am I to be told that external reasons, the fearful mechanical power with which the terror system is protected, make this impossible? That we must look on and wait until severe military defeats have shaken that power? But looking on and waiting are dangerous; we shall thus become accomplices in the prolongation of the war, make everything depend-

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ent on success or failure, and miss the great occasion; which means that we shall, through a long, bloody, and destructive war, destroy the hopes of that peace for which Europe is ripe and for which its peoples yearn. It can only be concluded with Germany as a free participator; it would merely prelude new disasters for Europe were it to be concluded without the aid of, and in opposition to, the great nation in her midst.

Thus there lies a heavy responsibility upon Germany, towards the world and towards herself, a responsibility from which she cannot be freed by any inner crisis, any "must" and "cannot," any terror alleged to be omnipotent. No nation can, in the last resort, be forced. A nation that wills to be free is free in that same moment. No police machine can prevail against the determination of a nation which proclaims with one voice: "We will now put an end to this injustice, evil, villainy, and madness." No system of terror can cope with a nation which rushes into the streets and cries: "Away with these besotted tyrants!" Machine-guns are then powerless; once the ruling rabble give orders to fire upon the

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people, they are lost, and indeed it is questionable whether they will find anyone to fire. That is the plain issue. If the German people cannot muster the strength to revolt, if they prefer to look on and wait, to see whether success may not justify their rulers, guilt and disaster will be heaped upon their heads. They will fling away the peace that could have been *their* peace, and theirs especially, a peace of German happiness and German greatness.

For it is a certain truth, clearly observable to every friend of Germany that knows her well, to every admirer of her really great qualities, that she can only be great and happy within a Europe purged of the poison of international politics and cured of the outworn delusion of hegemony, in a Europe that can live in a free community of interests and devotion to the arts of peace. This is the world wherein the German people, so unpolitically minded, are destined to find happiness and love and fame. More than all other peoples would the German people take full advantage of such conditions: they would be rid of the curse of power-politics, more disastrous to Germany than to any other country, and, thus

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liberated, they could foster and develop all their great qualities on which the world sets such store and which indeed are indispensable to civilization. Not in their present rulers' concept of peace, but in those of her present enemies, are contained the happiness and greatness of Germany. All depends on the framework in which the future of Germany is to be set, and on whether Germany will forthwith and of her own free will adopt the Constitution of Europe, instead of having it imposed upon her.

This applies likewise to the State structure in which the German races are destined to live within the "new world," new in regard to economic and political relations. There is talk of the "dismemberment" and "dissolution" of the Reich, accompanied by much bitterness and indignation, as though it were an especially malignant aim of the Allies and must compel the German people to fight the war out to the bitter end. Well, whether such an aim exists is not known. But the fact that Bismarck's Reich is not the last word in German history, the National Socialist history-makers have proved by their own acts: they have distorted and dissolved the Reich by

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creating a Greater Germany quite alien to its founder, while at the same time flinging away century-old German territories, cultural bulwarks of Germanism, and incorporating within the framework of the Reich lands and peoples that are not German at all. It is no longer a German Reich that is waging this war, it is a formless and distracted "living-space" held together by police terrorism. There is nothing more for the victors to "dissolve."

For good or ill the "living-space" politicians of the National Socialist regime are responsible for the fact that it is today a matter of indifference whether peace shall give back their freedom to the Czechs and Poles alone or whether it will lead to alterations in the structure of the Reich itself. I say: peace, and not: the enemy. A relaxation of the Reich structure on federal lines will involve no discredit; indeed, it will be perhaps the fairest arrangement and the one most adapted to the multifarious qualities of the German genius, if the German association of states were incorporated into a European association, and more especially if this were established by the free will of the German people, on the basis of a peace

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which Germany might feel she had helped to create.

It is a recognized fact that only the present rulers of Germany stand in the way of such a peace. If only the Germans could realize that they are not fighting for the greatness and happiness of their country, but for the fortunes of a dozen upstarts and adventurers linked together by their crimes! Think for a moment of these villains as out of the way—and where would be a single reason for the life and death struggle that Germany now thinks she must carry on, as a result of which she is sinking deeper and deeper into misery? But, alas, they must not merely be thought of as out of the way; they must be put out of the way and dismissed, like the nightmares they are and always were, to their proper limbo. In the words of a strangely prescient poet:

When, after long and darkened days, the breath
Of brighter morrows
Cleaves the ice at last,
We hail the unclosing of the grip of death;
And even as children build a straw-man on the heath,
Joy comes forth from sorrows,
And light from terrors past.

American Editions of the Works of
THOMAS MANN

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