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A Newspaper Man Looks at Germany

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I speak of Nazi Germany because I regard Germany as the chief problem of Europe. If Germany could be brought back into the League, into the community of nations; if her power were on the side of peace, all the other problems confronting us would be solved far short of war.

Two years ago last September I went overseas, and it would be presumptuous indeed for me to appear to be an expert on Germany or on any other European country. If I add to the sum-total of your knowledge of Germany, you will remember that I served in the office of a great newspaper—the Manchester Guardian—and was a member of Chatham House. I owe much to the members of Chatham House, particularly to Mr. Wickham Steed. His books on Nazi Germany are the best I know of.

What I will say, therefore, you will regard more as information passed along to you than as information originating with myself. Moreover, all of this information being of record, can easily be checked for accuracy at the expense of a little study.

Unsound Ideas.—To begin at the beginning, I left Ottawa in 1936 with firm ideas about Germany. My explanation was that Germany had lost the war, had been compelled to accept a rather severe peace (the severity can easily be exaggerated) and had been mistreated in the post-war years.

These ideas were not sound. I abandoned them because they did not square with the facts. I became doubtful, I think, from the time I first met Nazis and argued with them.

We used the same words, but meant quite different things. Later on when I went to Germany I was astounded by what I saw, and I think I got the impulse to do whatever work I have done on Germany from Herr Hitler himself.

One afternoon in the spring of 1937 I heard him speak from the balcony of his chancellery in the Wilhelmstrasse. The Guardian Berlin correspondent was at my side, translating as Hitler spoke. Hitler said: "If you would understand us, search for the roots of the Nazi tree." I have done my best and I think I have uncovered a good many of them. It is quite true that these roots flourished in the period of which I have spoken—the defeat, the treaties and the post-war years—but they go much deeper into German character and history.

Queries to Answer.—I began by asking questions:

Why the record of broken promises?

Why has Nazi Germany broken almost every promise she has given to the world?

Why does Germany persecute Catholics, Protestant, Jews and political opponents?

Why must the Nazi think with his blood and not with his head?

Why must he be subjective and not objective? Why does Herman Goering say "Thank God I was born subjective: I can think with my blood"?

Why do Germans have to surrender to the state as they do?

And, the last question, why does Germany oppose every form of international association except alliances which promise to help her in aggression? Germany will have nothing to do with the League. Perhaps this is understandable. But she will have nothing to do with international religion. Why? Surely this has no relation to the war or the peace. She will have nothing to do with world opinion. Why? Indeed, in every respect, particularly in trade, she views the world beyond her frontiers as being in a state of conflict and she carries on her activities as a form of war.

I shall try to find answers to these questions and in doing so I will reverse my own way of going about it, which was

to work from the Nazis back through German history. I will begin at the beginning of the story.

Germany's story in modern history begins around 1500. I ask you to remember the history of our own Motherland, England and Scotland, and as I sketch in the history of Germany please bear in mind what was happening in our own country. Remember England at peace after the Wars of the Roses, unified. Remember Scotland coming in with the union of the crowns under James I in 1611 and the actual union—the one that endured, not the one Cromwell brought about, which did not last—the one that began in 1707 or thereabouts. Remember the tight little isle, with its sea-walls about it, prepared to take full advantage of the industrial revolution; in every way equipped to develop and make firm the institutions of freedom which are our greatest heritage. Remember that liberty is invariably the gift of peace that war, invariably, is the destroyer of freedom.

In the 1500's Germany's story opens with the Peasants' Revolt, when the masses rose against their masters and were put down. The story continues through the wars of the Reformation—very terrible wars indeed. In at least one German town there is a cage strung to the top of the town church in which are the skeletons of people who were tortured and placed there during those wars.

Succession of Wars.—After these wars you find small wars going on over the area that is now Germany, right through the whole of the century. Then in the 1600's came the Thirty Years' War, in which one-half of the people in what is now Germany were either killed or died of starvation and disease. Their historians tell you that in this period, 1619 to 1648, great areas of the most fertile parts of Germany became desolate and that large numbers of the population forsook their homes, their farmsteads, their villages and towns, and took to "the most inaccessible thickets" in order to escape the horrors of war. After the peace of Westphalia in 1648, you again have small wars going on, becoming general in the war against Louis XIV of France, in which we participated under Marlborough.

The 1700's tell, likewise, the story of war and at last came the French Revolution and the Revolutionary or

Napoleonic Wars, which swept across Germany like molten lava, ending with Waterloo in 1815. This is the story of 300 years of war.

Now history is very clear on one point. The German people did not like war any more than any other people liked it. There is nothing to show that the German has a greater desire for war than have our own people. Most of the armies which have swept across the Germans' country were foreign armies, led by foreign commanders. It so happened that Germany had no sea-walls to separate her from her neighbors. The Germans lived in the centre of a continent; they were full in the path of every force which swept across it.

Many Small States.—In 1500 there were a vast number of German states, how many I do not know. But in 1786 I know that there was one state in what is now Germany for every year since the beginning of the Christian era—one thousand seven hundred and eighty-six sovereign states, most of them with their own systems of taxation, tariffs and currencies.

How different is the story of our own Motherland.

This German background surely accounts for the fact that government in Germany stayed at the top. In our Motherland, power was transferred from the top down to the masses and it has been held there, as it is in all democracies.

And this background, I think, is also the explanation of the vital fact that the philosophy of one man Georg Hegel—took possession of Germany (in the sense of possessing the ruling minds of Prussia and of the other German states) as no philosophy has ever possessed any other great nation. Hegel died in 1831 and since then it has been said that Germany has never had another philosopher because she has never felt the need of one.

Do not understand me to be attacking German philosophers. I do not forget that we draw from Germany the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. He was a Prussian, although he had good Scotch blood in his veins, whereas Hegel was a southern German. Kant, however, unlike Hegel, never received any recognition from Prussia. He

lived and died in Koenigsberg. Yet, Kant is our man. He is our peerless philosopher. He is the man who put a foundation of philosophy under the belief which one feels instinctively to be true—that through faith we can know reality—find God.

Hegel's Philosophy.—Hegel came to very different conclusions. His is the philosophy of conflict. In a sketchy way, his philosophy is this: every idea that may come into your mind has a positive and a negative side, yes or no, an affirmative and a negative. Before you can act there must be conflict and fusion. Having resolved this conflict by fusion, a new negative appears and a fresh conflict is inescapable, and so life proceeds through endless conflicts and fusions. His is the dialectic philosophy, and the jargon runs—thesis, antithesis, synthesis. His greatest disciple was Karl Marx, who applied the Hegel principle to the class struggle.

Hegel, having developed his philosophy of conflict, applied it to history and here you come directly into contact with Hitler. I know of no one, least of all Hitler himself, who disputes the fact that Hitler is a pure Hegelian. The latest authoritative German history (Pinnow's, translated in Everyman's) is very favorable to Hitler and says this: "The founder of Social Democracy in Germany, Adolph Hitler, found his weapons in Hegel's armory." J. A. Spender in his latest book—*The Government of Mankind*—traces the line direct from Hegel to Hitler.

Now when Hegel wrote his philosophy of history, he was really engaged in a search for God. He looked about the world, noted the poverty, disease, injustice and so on and dismissed any belief in divine providence as untenable. All that is in the world, said Hegel, is right. It is all part of God's plan. God will work things out in His own way and it is not for man to try to change things.

The God State.—Hegel found it equally nonsensical to believe that there could be a personal God or that human beings are made in the image of God. He was compelled by his own observation to the conclusion that the only manifestation of God on earth is to be found in the institutions which men create, under which they live, do their work,

reach their highest efficiency and obtain the greatest degree of self-expression. And these institutions, he said, reach their highest form in the state. The state, therefore, is the manifestation of God on earth.

In one particular kind of state Hegel found the God state. I will deal with it in a moment.

The point is that if you were to destroy the institutions, do away with government, you would be in a state of chaos. Therefore, the state, government, is greater than the individual.

If you desire escape from the law of conflict, if you desire to obtain the peace that passeth all understanding, you must seek God, the State, just as Christians seek their personal God, Christ. You must surrender to God, the State, passionately, as an act of faith, without reservations. Having done so you obtain peace but only in a national sense. Beyond the boundaries of the state, the law of conflict still applies. And if you so much as think of the state in a critical sense you might as well oppose its laws with physical force. The surrender must be utterly complete.

"Natural Totality."—The first important event in history, wrote Hegel, came after Christ's death, when the Divine Idea entered the world. The moment was when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost. But this Idea was misunderstood and misinterpreted.

The next vitally important moment in history was when Rome was conquered by the Vandals and Visigoths—Germanic tribes. At this time, Hegel wrote, began the German era of history, in which we are still living. For the first time there had appeared in the centre of the world stage, a people with a unique quality. This was a sense, in Hegel's own language, "of natural totality," which would enable them to "create a state which is the soul of the entire body."

This is what we would call a tribal instinct, what Hitler calls "a herd instinct"—a natural sense of unity. In this way, and for the first time, the Divine Idea fell upon soil in which it could take root and flourish and in the course of time these people, Hegel wrote, would throw up the God State, which, in his opinion, they did in the Prussia of Frederick the Great.

Let me read you some of Hegel's definitions of the God State—it will give you a clearer idea of what we are dealing with in Nazi Germany today.

"The state is the manifestation of God on earth. It is absolute. There is nothing beyond it. It conforms to no rules of conduct. It recognizes no rights but its own. There can be no question of right or wrong about what it does. It is without sin and beyond criticism. The state is a totality. It is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth. It is the Divine Will. It is the absolute power on earth. It is its own end. Individuals in the state are like cells in the human body. All the worth which a human being possesses, all spiritual reality, he possesses only through the state." Listen to this:

"To require the state to define its mission, or to limit its activities in relation to other states" (the League for example) "is to ask the impossible. By its nature and Divine Inspiration, it is dynamic. The moment objectives are reached, a new national purpose is born, and the state goes forward to achieve it. If it fails to do so, it begins to die. Satisfied states are dying states. It is true that there have been periods of peace and happiness in the history of the world, but these are the blank pages of history."

And he goes on to say:

"It is good, it is positively good, that from time to time the lives of those dearest to us should be destroyed and our property destroyed. War has merit because it inculcates discipline and moral soundness."

At this point I wish to break my narrative. I will try to show the connection between Hegel and Hitler's racialism and will then return to trace the flow of Hegelianism into the history of modern Germany.

I think Hegel must be acquitted of being a racialist. True, he said these Germanic people had this unique quality. But he did not deny to others the power of acquiring it.

But a Frenchman, named Gobineau, bridged this narrow gulf in 1855 in his book, "The Inequality of the Human Races." Gobineau regarded himself as a Frank—a Ger-

man; He divided the human family into a dozen or more races and argued that race meant everything, environment nothing. There was but one race, the German race (which of course, included us) which possessed, by reason of its blood, the power to create civilization; this was the only race of genius. All other races were, as it were, muscle men, capable of doing the work of the world but unable to create culture.

After Gobineau came Houston Stewart Chamberlain, an Englishman, born at Southsea, near Portsmouth. He was sent to the continent as a boy, became an ardent racialist, and he added to racialism a fanatical anti-semitism. His most important book was "The Foundations of the 20th Century" published before the war. But his correspondence with the Kaiser ought not to be overlooked. You will find an excellent exposition of this correspondence as well as of Chamberlain's book in Mr. Wickham Steed's "Hitler—Whence and Wither?" Chamberlain was the friend and adviser of the Kaiser and passionately supported Germany in the war. He lived to be the adviser of Hitler. There you have, in briefest outline, the connection between Hegel and Nazi racialism.

Now let us watch the Hegelian philosophy flow into the history of Germany. Begin with Bismarck, who became the chancellor of Prussia in 1862. He fought three wars in nine years, all of them premeditated, all of them, as he himself declared, against the wishes of the common people of Germany, two of them against the wishes of his king. In this way Germany was unified.

By this policy, which Bismarck himself described as a policy of "blood and iron," he brought into being the German empire as we see it today. It became an enlarged Prussia. Democracy never had a chance, because Bismarck hated democracy just as deeply and sincerely as Hegel did.

Some 13 years after the unification of Germany came the first demand for colonies. Bismarck got them from England almost within a year of making the demand. Germany came right back with a demand for additional colonies but, before England could meet this second demand, Germany launched the naval race.

The Naval Race.—The first ten or fifteen years of the naval race did not worry England because Germany possessed no navy to start with, whereas England was the great naval power of the world. But about 1909 the race reached a point where England suddenly realized that by 1913 or 1914 Germany might possess one capital ship more than Britain. Germany had succeeded in overtaking Britain, as the war documents show, by enlarging her shipbuilding facilities without England becoming aware of it, and by reducing the time necessary for the construction of a capital ship from 36 months to somewhere between 12 and 15 months.

England's answer was to lay down eight ships in one year and five in the next year.

"Conciliation."—Sir Edward Grey said that the armament race was the fundamental cause of the war—not the immediate cause, but the real cause. Yet all through this period, as the war documents prove, successive British governments (the efforts of the present British government are almost an exact parallel) constantly tried to come to terms with Germany. The word they used in those days was not "appeasement" but "conciliation."

You will recall that Edward VII went at least twice to Berlin. Haldane went, Joseph Chamberlain went. The war documents are full of communications from government to government. On the German side, the only principal figure who emerges as a great statesman is Metternich. He told his government the truth about England. He was not believed and, at last, was dismissed as unfit for his job.

Metternich made an exhaustive survey of British business and banking and wrote to Berlin to report that there was nothing in the argument advanced in Berlin that England intended to provoke war with Germany in order to smash Germany's industrial machine and free Britain from German competition.

Britain Not Hostile.—He proved, on the contrary, that British business men and bankers wanted a strong industrial Germany: that such a Germany was profitable to British business and that the one thing that the British feared most of all was war. But he carried no weight.

He told the German government that it would be a tragic mistake for them to believe that because Grey and Asquith came to them, as it were, with their hats in their hands, asking for peace and an end to the armament race, the British people had lost their courage. On the contrary, Metternich declared that the British people would fight as well as ever they had fought, if war occurred. But, as I have said, Metternich carried no conviction in Berlin: indeed he was finally dismissed.

I have read many of the debates at Westminster in this period and I have taken out many extracts from the speeches. I have only time for one. Here is Asquith speaking in the Commons on July 26, 1909: "Some people think we have overstepped the limits of what is prescribed by what is called national dignity in the efforts we have made" (to conciliate Germany).

There is Grey's great speech in Manchester on Feb. 3, 1914, and I will gladly furnish you with other references to prove my point.

How did pre-War Germany read Britain's efforts to conciliate her? The conclusions reached at Berlin were those of the German naval attache at London who wrote, after Grey's speech: "Grey's surrender is due to our naval law alone, and the unshakable resolution not to allow any diminution in this respect."

German Proposal.—Germany was the perfect example of the God State. Germany wanted Southwest Africa, Togoland, the Cameroons, an island near Australia, Heligoland and so on: She got them all, but they were never really all that she wanted. There was always something else, something that was inexpressible, something she couldn't put into words. Not until 1913, or thereabouts, did Germany realize what this something was. Then she went to England and said: "You have been coming to us all these years asking what we want. We know now. If you will guarantee to remain neutral, regardless of what happens on the continent of Europe, we will stop building battle-ships."

The British government could not accept that. John Morley, who was no jingo, who, as you recall, left the

government rather than be a minister in war, said that even a government of idiots would have rejected it. And so war came.

I want to drive that record home to you by quoting from the memorandum written by Sir Eyre Crowe and dated Jan. 1, 1907. Sir Eyre Crowe was the head of the European section of the Foreign Office. He was half German, his mother being a German. He was educated in Germany, married a German. He was a man with two countries—a Motherland and a Fatherland. Crowe wrote his memorandum on British foreign policy and the history of Anglo-German relations. He gave it to his chief, Sir Edward Grey, who was so deeply impressed by it that he passed it along to the cabinet. It became a State paper and, as such, appears in Vol. III of the British war documents, edited by Dr. Gooch and Prof. Temperley.

Crowe's Warning.—This is the first quotation:

The action of Germany towards this country since 1890 might be likened not inappropriately to that of a professional blackmailer, whose extortions are wrung from his victims by the threat of some vague and dreadful consequences in case of a refusal. To give way to the blackmailer's menaces enriches him, but it has long been proved by uniform experience that, although this may secure for the victim temporary peace, it is certain to lead to renewed molestation and higher demands after ever-shortening periods of amicable forbearance. The blackmailer's trade is generally ruined by the first resolute stand made against his exactions and the determination rather to face all risks of a possible disagreeable situation than to continue in the path of endless concessions. But, failing such determination, it is more than probable that the relations between the two parties will grow steadily worse.

And the second:

There is one road which, if past experience is any guide to the future, will most certainly not lead to any permanent improvement of relations with any power, least of all Germany, and which must therefore be abandoned: that is the road paved with graceful British

concessions—concessions made without any conviction either of their justice or of their being set off by equivalent counter-services. The vain hopes that in this manner Germany can be "conciliated" and made more friendly must be definitely given up. It may be that such hopes are still honestly cherished by irresponsible people, ignorant, perhaps necessarily ignorant, of the history of Anglo-German relations during the last twenty years, which cannot be better described than as the history of a systematic policy of gratuitous concessions, a policy which has led to the highly disappointing result disclosed by the almost perpetual state of tension existing between the two countries. Men in responsible positions, whose business it is to inform themselves and to see things as they really are, cannot conscientiously retain any illusions on this subject.

I would add this brief extract from a speech delivered by the late Sir Austen Chamberlain, half brother of the present Prime Minister, in the House of Commons on July 5, 1933. That was a little over five months after Hitler had taken office and before he had begun greatly to disturb Europe.

Whether you read the story of the 20 or 30 years which preceded the war, or whether you read the story of the post-war years, you will find the same thing. While something is refused to Germany, it is vital. If you say, "Well, we will give it to you, and now our relations will, of course, be on a satisfactory footing," it loses all value from the moment that she obtains it, and it is used by her merely as a stepping-off place for a further demand.

"Mein Kampf."—And that brings me to the Nazi literature. The master book is Hitler's "Mein Kampf." It is a book of 780 pages in the German original, while the English edition that you can buy in your book store is a book of some 280 pages. There are 500 pages missing from the English edition and these missing pages are the book.

When this English edition was published a group of British statesmen, churchmen and scholars got together to see if the whole book—a proper translation—could not be

published in English. British publishers were eager to publish the full edition. But the German government would not consent and they held the copyright. In France, the book was translated in toto and the translation was about to be published when the German government protested and the edition, because of the law of copyright, had to be abandoned.

This being the condition of affairs, a group of people in England, of whom Sir Austen Chamberlain was one of the leaders, got together and formed an organization known as "The Friends of Europe." This society has translated large sections of *Mein Kampf* and other Nazi literature and issued the translations in pamphlet form. In this way a good deal of material is available on the Nazi literature. I may say that the translations have been done by scholars whose names are a guarantee of accuracy and integrity.

Nazi "Old Testament"—*Mein Kampf* is the key volume of the Nazi literature. Second to it comes Dr. Alfred Rosenberg's "Mythus of the 20th Century." Rosenberg is the minister whose job it is to train the youngsters selected by the Nazi government to be the future leaders of Germany. He is an important man and his book has become the old testament of the Nazi Christian church. The Nazis have thrown out the Old Testament and taken Rosenberg's book in its stead. After these two, you get shoals of books written by Nazi scholars, historians, economists and so on.

It is difficult to summarize them and I will only attempt to do so to the extent necessary to answer the questions I asked of myself at the beginning of my talk. I will deal with the Nazi treatment of history. They teach history from the racial point of view.

They affirm with passionate sincerity the Gobineau theory that only German blood can create civilization. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, before the war, had got to the point where he demonstrated that David and Solomon were pure Germans, and that whatever Christ may have been he was not a Jew.

The Nazi doctrine with respect to Christ is very confusing. There is agreement that he was not a Jew. One school advances proof that he was a pure-blooded German.

Another regards him as a Galilean—which, it is contended, is something quite different from a Jew.

But to get back to history, the Nazi scholars write that there were successive waves of emigration from the German homeland to various parts of the world—China, India, Greece, Rome and so on. These Germans created the civilizations which we know were centered in these countries. That is, the Chinese civilization was the work of Germans. But those Germans, being unmindful of their blood, inter-married with the local population. Their blood became polluted and the Chinese civilization, in consequence, collapsed. The same thing happened in India. Greece was the work of pure-blooded Nordics but the Persians and the inferior people of the eastern Mediterranean crowded in and the German blood lost its magic and down went Greece. In Rome, their historians declare, the "scum of the Mediterranean" gathered at the heart of this great German civilization and again blood pollution occurred and the civilization fell.

Then there was the empire of the Franks—a pure German people. But the Latin peoples thronged northward from the Mediterranean and in due course the German blood, through pollution, lost its power and the empire of the Franks fell.

Then they come to the British Empire—again the work of German blood, because they include the Angles, Saxons and Celts in the Nordic race. But British blood is badly polluted and our fate will be the same as that of preceding empires. The United States, as well, is the work of the Germanic people. But their blood is more polluted than our own.

Now let me pick up *Mein Kampf*. Hitler agrees with this racial concept of history. He finds that the Germans, likewise, have not escaped blood pollution. Indeed, blood pollution cost Germany the war and the mastery of the world.

"*Split Personality*."—Hitler points out that when pollution has reached a certain point the German experiences a sharp diminution of his power to surrender to the state. His "herd instinct" deserts him. His sense of "natural

totality" becomes fitful and uncertain. He becomes, Hitler says, a "split-personality."

The greatest factor in this blood pollution is the Jew. With respect to the Jew, Hitler is a fanatic. He tells you in *Mein Kampf* that the Jew was put into the world for the one purpose of polluting German blood. He is the parasite: the German is the host. Whatever the Jew may appear to be doing, he has but one function, one over-mastering impulse, and that is to mix his blood with Nordic blood. Hitler's language with respect to the Jew is beyond belief: it is appalling.

Then you have persecution of religion. With Hitler race and state are synonymous terms. God speaks to the Nazi only through his blood. The late Reichbishop Müller translated the gospels for the Nazi church. In this translation everything that is international is excluded from the Holy Word—if anything is left after such a purge.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

This becomes: "Happy are they who keep peace with their fellow-countrymen: they do the will of God."

Summing Up.—I think I have answered my questions.

First there were the broken pledges. The Nazi state is a God State, a Spirit State. It is without sin and beyond criticism. If the German spirit tells Hitler to do one thing in March and another in September, who is to be blamed? Obviously, not Hitler. You must always remember that Hitler is the physical manifestation of the German spirit.

Remember the well-authenticated story of Hitler's conduct at Godesberg on the night of June 30, before the blood purge of July 1, 1934. He spent the night trying to get into touch with the German spirit to find out whether or no the purge should be carried through. The hotel orchestra played Wagner to him. He walked up and down on the terrace overlooking the Rhine. At dawn he came in, exhausted, nerve-wracked. But he had got through to the spirit of his people and knew what had to be done.

Think of this when next he tells you, as he does in *Mein Kampf*, that he goes about his work as head of the state, not as a rational man but as a sleep-walker, a somnambulist.

The spirit of Germany cannot be bound by pledges. There is no bar of justice or of world opinion before which it can be called. It is God on earth, uncontrollable, masterless.

The persecutions, I think, are quite understandable with respect to the persecution of Catholics and Protestants, you must remember that the German must surrender to God the State. He meets God in his blood and the race and the state are identical. The God of our Bible and the German God are both jealous Gods. So the Nazarene must go. Apparently, the Nazis do not believe that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.

The regimentation is likewise quite understandable. In a state where the individual must surrender to his government, it is an obvious advantage to leave as small an area to individual judgment and decision as possible.

The antagonism to internationalism springs directly from Hegel and racialism. The God State, the Spirit State, cannot sacrifice any part of its sovereignty even if it would. It is beyond the power of such a state, as Hegel clearly sets forth, to bind itself to any course of action in the future. The moment it attempts to do so, it menaces its own life: it tends to become satisfied and to be a satisfied state is to be a dying state.