

GERMANY'S LAST HOPE

by

Stanislaw Kowalski



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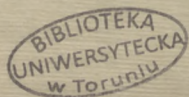
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GERMANY'S LAST HOPE

From time to time, after each serious German defeat, or after the Reich has been heavily bombed, millions of people turn their eyes with optimistic expectation towards Germany, to see whether there is any sign of an internal collapse and whether the moment for the anti-Hitlerite revolution has come.

But the essence of the problem of contemporary Germany is to be found on another plane than that of military events. The problem of Germany consists primarily in the fact that National-Socialism is a philosophical doctrine which embraces eschatological questions, i.e., the final issues of man, in its scope.

Hitlerism is regarded by its authors as a recipe for the government of the world, the most brilliant recipe which humanity has produced. If National-Socialism were to fail, then (so its ideologists and with them very many Germans think), the world would have no further reason for existence, and in particular Germany would have no object for existence. It is this conviction which gives rise to the decision to sacrifice, if necessary, everything, even half the population of Germany, in order to keep Hitlerism alive. If anything was needed to ensure this doctrine's absolute domination of the German people, it was strong confirmation by external events.

Of recent years, when things have obviously been moving towards Germany's defeat, Hitler has twice spoken, and after him many other National-Socialist leaders, of the Nazi intention, before any defeat could genuinely overtake Germany, to first reduce all the world to a state of complete ruin. Speaking in Cracow in the middle of June, 1943, Sauckel, the plenipotentiary for Reich man power reserves, once more affirmed this intention. He said: "We shall struggle, and even, in the worst case, until Europe is in a complete state of collapse. But before Germany loses the war, here too, as in all the rest of Europe, not one stone will be left on another." (*Nowy Kurjer Warszawski*, June 19th, 1943.)

The German calculation is simple enough; if it should become obvious that this war cannot be won by normal methods,

situation, the German have arrived at the conviction that, as the Soviets have been caught on the hook of their own enormous ambitions and enfeebled by their gigantic military efforts, it will be possible at the right moment to administer a mortal blow.

In order to increase those efforts still more, and to accelerate their speed, the German staff transformed the entire area between Poland's eastern frontier and the farthest bounds of their territorial conquests in Russia into enormous grindstones, under which Soviet armies were to be pounded and eventually crushed. Every sector of the terrain was sown with obstacles and traps, the towns and railway junctions were transformed into fortresses, the river banks, the marshes and cordons of lakes into mighty fortifications. All through 1943, down to the present moment, we have been witnessing the operation of this plan. And all the German forces on the eastern front have by no means been thrown into the accomplishment of this task, ample reserves being held in readiness for the final effort.

There are negative consequences for the Germans themselves in the adoption of such a plan; the psychological effect of adopting the defensive, and the material effects arising from retreat. For the Soviets the negative aspect (against which has to be set the positive psychological factor arising from the conquest of territories and the continual advance) arises from the enormous cost of incessant attack and the difficulties of supplying fronts which shift further and further away from the industrial bases.

When appraising these questions from the German angle, we have to remember that very considerable gains arise from the adoption of this conception: an essential shortening of the front, a decided shortening of the lines of supply, a considerable intensification in the density of the human potential in relation to the area under control; every mile of retreat connotes an increase in the number of soldiers available for defence of the remaining miles.¹ In addition, one important factor from the

¹ This is, of course, the same problem which Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell discussed, when he wrote: "A retreating army is itself entering its own terrain and, provided it is not cut off, its reserves increase with every moment. In addition there are other elements working to its benefit: bridges, ruined roads, blocked narrows, destroyed stores. On the other hand, the pursuing army is drawing farther and farther away from its own bases. True, it can exist by booty, but it cannot renew its ammunition and equipment in this way."

If the army is not in a state of disintegration and disorderly flight, but is carrying out a plan forced on it by necessity, then the retreat can be just as much a military operation as an attack.

sphere of the German soldier's psychology has to be taken into account: as he withdraws to the Polish frontier the German soldier begins to feel that he is in a familiar and not an apocalyptic landscape. In these parts winter ceases to be like the 'white hell of the Russian winter.'

It is obvious that if such a conception, the most risky that can be imagined, is not to be reduced to absurdity, it is necessary that the retreat should end at some appropriate spot and time, and that the function of the 'grindstones' should be taken over by a final offensive manoeuvre.

The Germans believe in the existence of that time and that spot.

The German Calculation on the Psychological Plane

I am among those who have persistently maintained that already the Germans have been several times within an inch of collapse during this war. The capacity to continue a struggle, or, alternatively, the decision to capitulate, is the result of the inter-dependence of two factors: the material possibility of waging the struggle and the psychological belief in its sense and possibility. During 1943 the Germans were twice very close to collapse: first after the capitulation of Italy, and secondly in the period between the bombing of Hamburg and Berlin. The revelation to the German nation of the terrible spectre of great bombing attacks was the second of the three factors which decisively influenced the course of German policy in recent months.

In both the above-mentioned instances collapse was threatened not as the result of the direct, material influence of the facts we have specified, but because, owing to very unfavourable news, the hopelessness of the general situation, which had hitherto been driven down into the collective subconsciousness, came to the surface. In the case of both the Italian collapse and the air raids, in the bare reports of defeat the German people discerned that their country was encircled by a ring which she would be unable to break.

And yet, just as at Stalingrad, the Germans succeeded in escaping from these two further periods of possible breakdown. What came to their aid?

We must not regard the Germans as a nation of deliberate suicides, even though Hitlerite philosophy includes an entire eschatological section. Nor must we think that, although they

are a nation of murderers, they are deprived of political realism and the capacity to think. The German generals are not utter idiots, as one might have judged more than once from the comments of the Allied press. At the beginning of last year there was a serious conflict between Hitler and the generals, but Hitler was by no means the stronger party in that dispute. If there had really been no possibility of carrying on the war, means would have been found of dealing with Hitler. The Germans would have capitulated.

To-day the conflict between the generals and Hitler is disposed of, and indeed a harmonious division of roles has followed: the generals at the front, the party at home. Himmler's appointment as Reich minister for home affairs may not only mean that the home front is breaking down and has to be supported by machine-guns, but also that it is desired to prepare the country for a new task which is awaiting solution. In time of war waiting for months and years is not the same as waiting in the days of peace; it has many unpleasant distractions. Himmler's function, strictly agreed with the German generals, is that of teaching the German nation to wait patiently without regard to what may happen. The 'Fortress' idea is rather more than a conception of defence, it is a complete political conception—a point that it is well to remember. There is a world of difference between the tone of the German press in July, 1943, and its tone in January, 1944. To-day the tone is much more self-confident. The Germans are once more revealing their arrogance.

For in 1943 one other factor appeared in addition to the two already mentioned (the collapse of Italy and large-scale bombing). The third factor was that during 1943 changes of attitude to the war occurred within the anti-German camp.

Since 1933, and especially since 1939, the Germans have committed the most savage crimes that human beings can commit. The German nation approved those crimes and rejoiced in them; but they knew they were crimes, for only recently Germany had been a civilized state. Then came the attack on weaker nations, the breaking of international treaties, the deportation of populations, eviction without compensation, murders, concentration camps, and other crimes. As long as the victories continued, and as long as the Germans were stronger than the 'moralisers,' argument was of no avail. But when defeats began, the spectre of their crimes emerged in the form of a general terror. The realization that the 'European Fortress'

was girdled with a ring of steel, which was more and more closing around them, and the simultaneous consciousness of the crimes they had committed, at certain moments created a mood of panic and the *saue qui peut* in Germany. A German collapse could have occurred at any moment of considerable military defeat in conjunction with the simultaneous realization that all the non-German world was against them with all its terrible force of moral justice.

The Germans have been close to this moment of hopelessness several times during the last two years. One can say with considerable confidence that if it had not been for the changes which occurred in 1943 in the camp of those fighting the Germans the cannon would have ceased firing several months ago on the European front.

It calls for only a small amount of imagination to put oneself in the same situation: if we had been in such a hopeless situation and a similar opportunity had been presented to us as is now presented to the Germans by Soviet imperialism, then, even if we had already decided to capitulate, we would certainly decide to continue the struggle, to wait until Soviet imperialism had the effect of changing the disposition of the fronts. The fact that Germany, and with her the satellites, are still fighting, that hundreds of thousands of people are perishing, that thousands of others will perish in the course of a second front, and that bombs may still fall on our homes, is due to the policy of Soviet Russia.

Succour to the enemy arrived first and foremost through the agency of moral collapse. In the camp of Germany's enemies the talk of justice and freedom ceased, and our aim was no longer defined simply as the liberation of the subjected nations. Additions began to be made: frontier adjustments, changes in the systems of the liberated states, spheres of influence, the 'big four,' which later was reduced to the 'big three.' One of the most important newspapers in the world, THE TIMES, declared that international organization can be based solely on force, and that many of the prerogatives which had been derived from the self-determination of nations must now be sacrificed for the benefit of that force. In the mind of the German people the question now arose whether the Hitlerites were any worse than the rulers of other nations. Possibly all that the Hitlerites had done and were doing arose in fact out of the universal spirit of the age.

Succour in the political sphere followed almost immediately.

The Germans very quickly seized on the fact that the war aims of the various great partners had by no means been harmonized. And that one of the partners was pursuing his own policy, which not only came into collision with previous moral postulates, but was detrimental to the economic interests of the other great partners.

And so suddenly, at the very moment when the situation seemed to be completely hopeless, a chance turned up for Germany, a great chance yet to win this war politically, though it might be lost militarily. It was this chance which saved Hitler from having to resign, induced the generals, on the contrary, to agree with him on a further compromise, and led to an agreed division of their functions: the war to be conducted by the military, the home front and production to be kept in the party's hands. At this moment the National-Socialist party is more indispensable to Germany than at any previous time during the past eleven years.

In view of what the Germans think they see, it is for them a matter of life and death to hold on. To hold on, to drag out, to protract, and to allow only those factors to work in the enemy's camp which must lead to a split in that camp. In this situation they expect tremendous possibilities to open up, if only in the form of opportunities to make peace with an exhausted Russia or with the western states. Without doubt there are Hitlerite politicians who imagine that they are sitting in the grand stand of the war arena and are watching a spectacle performed for their particular benefit. Their seat isn't entirely comfortable; bombs leak through the roof, unpleasant winds are blowing from the east and the Appenine peninsula, and a storm is rising on the Atlantic coast. But even so it is better than lying prostrate under defeat.

The Germans Decipher the Political Situation

From the military viewpoint being a 'European Fortress' is bad, but the situation affords many opportunities of observation. Whatever may be said of the Germans' military situation, in this one respect they truly have the advantage over each of their opponents, in that they occupy the most convenient observation post. And such is the conjunction of circumstances that observation can be kept not only by officials and political leaders, but by each individual German, who can discern the facts and political symptoms for himself. This fact greatly strengthens the verisimilitude of the official propaganda thesis, though

whether, with their well-known psychological skill, they will derive any benefit from it, is another question.

They are situated in the very centre of the gigantic conflicts which have encompassed the whole world. Down to the outbreak of war one of their great opponents, Soviet Russia, was completely isolated. And isolated in both directions: the Russians knew nothing about the world, the world knew nothing about Russia. Fundamentally there has been no change in the completeness of that isolation since the outbreak of war; the world knows Russia from the windows of the embassies at Kuibishev and Moscow, the Russian nation knows the world from the articles in PRAVDA. In these months of war Russia is even more barred off from the western states than is subjugated Europe, the German Reich, or occupied Poland. They are situated at the antipodes from each other, separated by 25 years of complete isolation and by not one but several war fronts. And information concerning Russia arrives by a circuitous route, along the tenuous lines of convoys, to a less extent than the West could wish.

Of course, no Gestapo official was allowed to hear the confidential conversations at Moscow and Teheran. But the official communiqués issued after each of these conferences are well known in Germany. It seems to the Germans that when they compare the texts of these communiqués with the reality which began to come into being in Europe after their issue, they can see even more than was necessary. They have only to observe diligently the behaviour of the Communist agents and to read the press which those agents distribute to learn very exactly what was decided in Teheran and what is the attitude of each of the great partners to those decisions.

There is one problem of this war which is beginning to find mention even in German political publications, and which must long have been an important factor in German political thinking. The problem arises from Germany's conviction that Soviet Russia has completely taken over the German political programme, so far as the final aims and methods of advance are concerned.

The problem is formulated as follows: German political literature considers that for Soviet Russia the war falls into two distinct parts, the first, down to Stalingrad, being a defensive war, and the second, from Stalingrad onward, being an imperialist war. The German party to the 'pact of friendship' of August 23rd, 1939, knows very well and now cynically re-

veals that the political dream of Soviet Russia was to embroil and set upon Germany all the forces outside the Soviets, and to enter the arena at the moment when the others had been largely exhausted. The Germans well remember from their two years of close co-operation with Russia that the Soviets gained Eastern Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Bukovina and Bessarabia with the aid of the Reich, but they also remember from the period of negotiations which involved these areas how much greater were Russia's desires, which however she did not obtain with the aid of her German friend. The Germans vociferously take credit for complicating all these Soviet calculations and all but rendering them impossible of realization. Now they are again shrieking that, aided by British and American arms, the Soviets have come through the period of complications and have taken the firm decision to advance to the position of which they have always dreamed: dictating their will to our exhausted world. It has to be admitted that many of the Soviet steps in the international field and the propaganda of the Communist parties in the subjugated European countries ostensibly justify the German statements. It is easy enough for the Germans to ascertain the attitude of Russia to her western Allies from the Communist literature dropped by parachute in the various occupied countries. It contains very violent and mischievous attacks on the western democracies. Soviet Russia is facilitating Germany's task with astonishing nonchalance. All Goebbels has to do is to reprint the official Soviet pronouncements and secret Communist publications, not changing even a comma. In fact he does make plentiful use of such reprints, even making photographic copies of the originals.

German propaganda contains a clear allusion to the fact that Soviet Russia wishes to build up a career out of the movement towards integration which is part of the character of our times: she wishes to take over all Europe and Asia, to form a base for world domination. The German propagandists cynically admit that they had an identical plan, but declare that they had it (and this is where the cynicism comes in) for the specific purpose of saving civilization in face of the inevitability of integration. One derives a special relish to-day from reading the German propagandists' thunderous utterances on the Soviet intentions, which only three, indeed only two years ago, were Germany's own intentions: to dominate Europe as far as the coast of France, to occupy the whole of the Baltic and strong bases in the Mediterranean, to get firm hold of the Arab world, to cause as much ferment as possible in India, to

put Great Britain at loggerheads with the United States, to play down Great Britain, and drive the United States back into isolationism. The Germans get the utmost satisfaction out of watching what they call Russia's sneers and contempt for the submissive weakness of the western countries. Only recently they manifested a similar contempt, and regarded it as an important element in their political calculations.

In all these thunders there is the frenzy of disappointment, but also their one hope. From their own experience the Germans know where the western powers considered themselves threatened when the Germans played the game of integration, and now—seeing their own recent activities copied in all the Soviet activities—they wait to see (not without a feeling of satisfaction) how long it will be before the states of western civilization realize that they are threatened for a second time in exactly the same way.

The German thesis is that Soviet Russia, pressed to the wall by the Lend and Lease bill, will conclude an agreement and compound on the issues, but that the agreement will only be in the nature of a stepping stone to the ultimate realization of their own egotistic plans. German journalists declare that, hypnotized by the mirage of international co-operation, Great Britain and the United States will make any concessions required by the Soviets, but German politicians know that that is not true. For they know what certain compromises previously reached already look like in the light of public opinion in subjugated Europe. They know that the European nations, who had been disposed to regard the Soviet reality as a 'bugaboo,' are now more terrified than ever before, threatened as they are by the latest brutal Soviet steps, and that the Bolshevik 'bugaboo' has been transformed into a genuine terror. They know what consequences will follow from placing their trust in Russia without previously obtaining clear and binding obligations from her. They know that if reality is stood on its head instead of on its feet, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, this can last only a few months, not longer, and certainly not when there are so many similar problems to be solved.

The dismemberment of Poland, in whose defence the sword was drawn, would be an absurdity which might possibly be explained away in the columns of the Sunday press, but could not be justified by any school history in a country valuing its honour. To grill the government of fighting Poland, and to demand that it should renounce half the country's territory

without allowing it the possibility of a normal appeal for national agreement, would be a crime against the most elementary principles of democracy, and once that crime had been committed the word 'democracy' should never again be uttered except in jest.

At present the German politicians must be rubbing their hands with satisfaction. Russia has given them many unpleasant surprises, but now it appears that Soviet Russia is her greatest hope.

It seems to me that it is fundamentally useless to deal with German propaganda in the way it is dealt with by the Allies. The dominant note in our comments is one of scoffing and disdain. I fully realize that to a normal person German propaganda invites contempt. But disdain is another matter. After all, our policy of scoffing at the enemy has for five long years been one of the principal causes of the tragedy that has overtaken us.

German propaganda is scoffed at, but no attempt is made to understand it. And our military and political knowledge is all the poorer in consequence. During the present war this much ridiculed propaganda has accomplished some very difficult things. It has several times raised the German people out of hopelessness and readiness to collapse, and it is less deserving of disdain to-day than ever before. It so happens that at the present moment a great part of the load of war in Germany is carried by propaganda, and Goebbels' handling of the German people has proved successful.

Experts on German questions tell us that for a long time now German propaganda has been working on the system of telling the Germans the brutal truth, with even a tendency to make it blacker than it is. And because of this, for some months past Allied commentators have been drawing the unjustified conclusion that things must be pretty bad in Germany, since even Goebbels makes such statements. At present that is not the case. The opposite is true. There is one reason for and one object of this propaganda. The reason is a desire to strengthen the 'spirit of sacrifice,' the object to restore confidence among the German people in press and radio statements.

And the Nazis were successful in achieving that object (as the result of saying things that were, if anything, unpleasant to hear). But not only as the result of that. It is worth while remembering that on the political plane everything that German

propaganda has been prophesying for the past two years appears to be in process of fulfilment. So far as changes in the policy of Soviet Russia and the Anglo-Saxon countries in regard to Europe are concerned, it would seem that in this sphere everything which the German press and radio long ago asserted is coming to pass.

Perhaps for the first time in history it appears that the policy of the opposite side is realizing to the full the previously unjustified charges of the enemy. This exact confirmation of the statements made by Goebbels' propaganda must have had an enormous influence on the German people. During the first part of the war all the prophecies of the German military propaganda were fulfilled and more than fulfilled; when this did not happen in the latter part of the war, all the political declarations began to be fulfilled.

In this changed situation Goebbels has succeeded in achieving the greatest victory that propaganda ever gained; it has led to the average German realizing that this war was not only wanted, but also that it was inevitable. Previously they had not believed that. It is true that at the outbreak of war an official theory of the origin of the war was formulated in Germany, to the effect that Germany began the war in order to defend herself against encirclement on the part of Britain and—after June 22nd, 1941—against Russia's communization of the world. Until recently the Germans conveniently accepted this legend, but when they repeated it they winked. They did not believe it. Now they have come to believe it, and think admiringly of the Fuehrer's foresight in anticipating the present happenings so many years ago.

The German of the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944 believes that this war was inevitable after all, that this war hung like an avalanche over poor Germany, that her initial successes arose from the wisdom of forethought, and that the present unhappy turn in the war is due to forces that all along lurked in wait for Germany. But he also believes that Germany, and only Germany, will succeed in slipping out of the war, thanks to the same forethought. It is only necessary to hold out. The holding out process is pretty terrible, but then this is a war of an apocalyptic character, in which what matters is not that man should dwell and eat, but that he should wander and vegetate, while holding fast to life.

Such are the trends of present German propaganda. It is not true that it has no influence on the German people. It has

an enormous influence. That influence is growing, and every fact of discord, dissension and chaos, unilateral decisions and injustice to any nation only strengthens that influence. And every manifestation of Soviet brutality and the exposure of others to that brutality also strengthens it.

The German can conceive of the occupation of Germany by Anglo-Saxon soldiers, but cannot allow the possibility of German soil being occupied by a Soviet army. Too long have the Soviets been presented to him as a devilish institution, and the things which he himself has seen (and even co-operated in), and the things which he is now witnessing do not convince him that any change has taken place in that respect. The disappointed German who remembers the Weimar Republic undoubtedly thinks without any great feeling of prejudice of an Anglo-Saxon victory. But Goebbels' propaganda explains to him that in this war there is no possibility of three distinct victories—that of Germany, the Soviets, or the Anglo-Saxon powers—but only two—either of Germany or of the Soviets. Any connivance at a European dictate imposed by the Soviets proves to the Germans that Goebbels is telling the truth.

The Polish question especially has had a stunning effect on the average German. It needs to be remembered that for four and a half years Poland was represented to the Germans as the country in whose defence this misfortune of war was begun, and as the one country in Europe which was aflame with a blind, obstinate love of Britain. In infuriated German opinion this Poland had been exalted into a symbol of all the misfortunes which had come upon Germany. To every German Poland seemed to be the *alter ego* of hated Britain and both the symbol and the emblem of this war. And now it is this Poland which, with the utmost *sang froid*, it is proposed to carve up. Under the influence of the bombing raids it occurred to many Germans that perhaps the Allies were right after all. But by the example of Poland the German who is disgusted with the Hitler regime is now coming to the conclusion that fundamentally it is all the same swindle. And as that's the case, it is better not to change the evil which he knows in favour of a similar evil which he does not know.

Immediate Benefits

That is how their most important chance, the one on which all their hopes are pinned at the moment, appears to the

Germans. But in addition to this main advantage, they gain several smaller, immediate advantages from the situation.

The state of the present political situation keeps all the satellites with the exception of Italy in the German camp. Formerly Germany was threatened with the serious danger of Rumania and Hungary especially breaking away, and in addition there was the danger that Turkey would intervene actively against Germany. To-day there is no need to fear that. To-day it is not even necessary to bring pressure to bear. Everything will work itself out, and the Rumanian soldiers are even beginning to fight quite well.

The world is standing on its head as a benefit performance for Germany. Formerly a particular country entered the war, knowing that it might lose at the hands of the enemy, but would only gain at the hands of its allies. To-day if a country were to come into the war it would not know whether it might lose at the hands of its allies also. And examples tend rather to strengthen the doubts.

A second advantage is a transference of the costs of the war to others. In the last war Germany's satellites, Hungary and Turkey, suffered the worst effects, while the chief criminal was protected. But in this sphere certain progress has been made since the last war. Maybe this time also the satellites will be punished. But the greatest irony of history, as far as Germany is concerned, arises from the circumstance that one of the most valiant defenders of liberty is to pay the costs of the war. And after it other countries which put into living practice the purest idea of democratic life: Finland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania. The cynical hangmen of the Nazi party bellow and roar with delight: '*Na, na, jetzt verstehst du was die demokratische Welt bedeutet?*' (Now do you understand what the democratic world means?)

A third advantage is a weakening of the underground movement. The underground movement in Europe is vast in its scope and size. If it were occupied solely with the struggle against the Germans the damage to the Germans would everywhere be as great as it is down to this day in Poland. But it transpires that part of this movement is occupied with something else: with political propaganda for one of the allies. In certain countries the underground movement is more and more occupying itself with an internecine struggle among the various factions, in which Germany is forgotten.

When I read in reports from Poland that the so-called

“partisans” were not taking action against the Germans, nor were the Germans taking action against them, for a long time. I could not understand this phenomenon. To-day I understand it perfectly. The partisans themselves are engaged more in political agitation than in struggle, and the Germans do not do anything to prevent their spreading confusion. Here also the feeling that they are in a grandstand seat, looking on at work performed by others, comes into play. The underground movement in Europe has been only half as dangerous to Germany since it began to split into two parts with differing aims.

I understand quite well the attitude of those who consider that they must defend themselves against the emissaries of the Comintern and apply a portion of their underground forces in combating these agents. But despite my realization of this fact, I rejoice that the Polish nation has refused to be drawn into such defence, despite the fact that it is the most threatened of all, but is devoting all its underground effort to the struggle against Germany. It is the very fact that the Polish underground movement is not taking up the struggle against the Soviet partisans, but is continually reaching out its hand towards co-operation with Poland's eastern neighbour at the very moment when that neighbour is acting as she is, that I regard as the most dramatic circumstance of this war. It is an intensification of the tragic element in the style of Greek tragedy.

A fourth advantage is the facilitation of certain tasks which the Germans themselves can no longer fulfil. German political thought all through the nineteenth century, and still to-day, has had the dream of diminishing the Polish nation and preventing the Polish state from being anything more than a *Saison-Staat* (seasonal state). Regarded from this angle, the deportation of two million Polish citizens by the Soviets, and their subsequent transference to concentration camps (amounting in practice to extermination) was no small windfall for the Germans. From this viewpoint the reduction of Poland by half is the finest of military exploits, to reward which no knightly cross with swords, not even of the highest class, is adequate; any line of demarcation with the Soviet administration is highly beneficial, for that administration, patterning itself on its deeds of 1939 to 1941, will comb out the Poles very thoroughly from its own particular area. During the twenty-two months of the previous occupation the Soviet administration dispersed two millions. How many will it succeed in planting around the Urals and in the sub-Polar regions in the course of three or four years down to the days of the peace conference?

No one has attacked the conception of a Central European federation more than Germany, and no one is more afraid of seeing it realized. But the Germans alone would not be able to render its emergence impossible. The Germans could not achieve that, but Soviet Russia is doing it for them, by attacking the idea of federation and using Benes for the purpose of dividing an area which is in process of consolidation.

A fifth advantage arises by dragging others down to their own moral level. The Germans have committed an enormous number of crimes—the most savage crimes in modern history. Although they do nothing about it, yet they know they have committed crimes. But a criminal does not like to be alone in his crime, he feels more comfortable when he has company. At the present moment, beside the struggles at the fronts, an invisible struggle is also being waged between Germany and the Soviets to prove that Soviet totalitarianism has committed the same crimes as Germany, and that all the rest of the world has closed its eyes to this fact. That is why Katyn was such a windfall for Germany, while for the Soviets it is fundamental that it should be given the lie.

For the same reason the Germans keep in their hands and exploit to the utmost another trump—the fact that hundreds of thousands of Poles are being held in Russia, without a home, without legal protection, and without the possibility of receiving food parcels from abroad. And especially the terrible fate of the Polish children who have been deported into the Soviets. Hundreds of thousands of these children have died in terrible conditions of hunger and cold, according to the statement of a Polish bishop who visited the Soviet concentration camps for Poles. German propaganda is incessantly playing on the following note: your promised reliefs and freedoms from force and fear will look fine, seeing that you are unable to rescue the one and a half million Poles still alive from the Soviet concentration camps and give them bread and clothing!

The sixth advantage is that Germany absolves herself of the attack on Poland and Poland's partitioning. The foremost crime that weighed on the Germans was their attack on Poland and that country's dismemberment. This fact was the representative charge which was the epitome of all others. To-day there is a plan, which is already in the initial process of realization, to dismember the same Poland, and the plan is drawn up by members of the Allies. Without entering into discussion of other aspects of this question, the above-mentioned fact means

that Germany is relieved of a serious charge. It provides her with absolution.

Berlin and Other Questions

Apart from what has been already stated, the reports of blunders in the German war machine are sound and just.

All this suggests a similarity with the final phase of the last war, and deductions of a similar kind. Yet I think the analogies are purely superficial, and the symptoms which then indicated the end of German resistance do not indicate that to-day. The difference is that in the final phase of the last war the Germans had lost all hope, whereas to-day they have regained hope. The situation existing in the summer of 1918 was similar to that of the summer of 1943. But, just when Germany was in the lowest depths, aid came in the autumn of 1943.

Bombing raids are certainly terrible enough. Every few nights hell must be let loose in Berlin. I judge that it is much worse there than it was in London in 1941. But we must realize that the bombing of Berlin has caused not only terror but a state of mind which Londoners also know: a feeling of being beyond all attachments to home, to comfort, to food; a feeling of contact with final things. If, in such a spiritual state, the human community considers that it is fighting for a just cause, it steels itself and wins through. German propaganda is doing everything possible to strengthen that spirit of the Germans with the conviction that they are fighting for the greatest cause in history.

It would seem that common sense would dictate the necessity of not aiding German propaganda in this perfidious fraud, and not giving it an air of probability.

I have tried to present as faithfully and exactly as possible the mood of the Germans and the reality in Germany, basing myself on continual reading of the German wireless communiqués and the German press. That is an activity which cannot be counted among the pleasant occupations, especially to-day. It is an activity involving an understanding of the reactions in moods and forces of a criminal who had already, once before, been almost overthrown by doubt.

It is obvious that I am unable to say how the war will continue to its end, or whether the Germans will get any lasting benefit from the chance which, as it seems to them, has fallen

into their hands. But everything indicates that they have been given that chance.

I cannot avoid feeling mournful when I think that the great criminal has been given this unexpected help, and that from a direction whence he should have been given only blows. I cannot think without sorrow of those people for whom all this means several months, or possibly a year or more of further suffering, hunger, and persecution. Or of those thousands, hundreds of thousands, and possibly even millions of people who must perish in the bloody struggle to achieve the "second front," designed to capture a fortress which was once all but shattered and ready to capitulate, but which has suddenly been reinforced and confirmed in the need for bitter and prolonged defence.

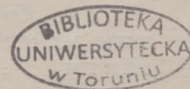
For it is well to remember what has been already mentioned, namely, that the ability to continue fighting depends on two factors: on military force and spiritual force. The one supports the other. In Germany to-day everything is based on the hope that Soviet Russia's aim is not only to win the war, but above all else to conquer the world. It would be much easier, and would call for fewer losses to conquer a Germany without hope than a Germany which holds this great opportunity in its hands. In the latter case it would most probably be necessary to capture the fortress mile by mile, with the addition of a state of affairs in which the natural allies of the attackers, the conquered peoples, would be weakened by the brutal extinction of their most fervent hopes.

It will be possible to conquer the German comparatively quickly only if conditions arise in which all the nations fighting them, including Soviet Russia, surround the "European fortress" with a solid ring not only of steel, but also of moral justice. This moral justice is a terrible weapon, when it is used in conjunction with present day military equipment. Equipment alone, without justice, is a far more fallible instrument of victory.

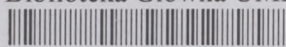
The history of the present war has taught us this if it has taught us nothing else.

STANISLAW KOWALSKI.

London,
April, 1944.



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