

MARGINAL NOTES

GERMANIA CONTRA MUNDUM. — Whatever the result of 'World War No. 2' may be—whether victory will rest with the armed forces of the Allies or with those of Germany—at the close of hostilities the problem of how to live with Germany will have to be faced and solved in the interests of each and every nation not in vassalage to the Reich.

With Hitlerism triumphant it cannot be doubted that the defeat of the Allies would but serve to fan the flame of Nazi ambition to obtain dominion over the mass of mankind and make the whole earth a sepulchre for the departed ethics of civilization. Man's duty to man would be governed by the precepts of *Mein Kampf* and not by the commandments of Holy Writ. Fascism and Bolshevism as well as Democracy would be swept into the dust-bin of history before the onrush of the Nazis to set up a World Autarchy in which the German people—the 'only pure Aryan race' now in being—will lord it over the 'mongrel peoples' who will no longer be regarded as nations, and whose proprietary rights will be subordinated to the dynamic doctrine of *Lebensraum*.

Thus the Nazis may become the founders of the *civitas terrena* as envisaged by St. Augustine, a form of human society which would extrude every element of the divine from its polity, and therefore stand as the antipole of the *civitas Dei* wherein human behaviour would reflect steadfast obedience to the revealed ordinances of God.

But if success crowns the heroic struggle of the Allies, as all who value right and justice hope and pray it will—what then? Surely the answer is that the political structure of Germany must be cleansed of everything savouring of Nazism, and if the German people are so bereft of the moral sense that would induce them to repent of and renounce the outrageous barbarism that has marked their national conduct as moulded by Hitler, then they must be compelled to reform by a complete commercial and economic boycott imposed on their country by the free nations of the world.

As to the hypocritical pretext put forward by Hitler that the wholesale destruction by his armies of the lives and property of non-belligerents was necessary for the effective defence of Germany against the 'unprovoked attack' upon her of the Allies, there is no justification in fact or under the rules of war for this policy of indiscriminate slaughter and spoliation. So far

as the treatment meted out to non-belligerents is concerned no one but a gangster like Hitler would justify it as a measure of defence. That it is contrary to the rules of war is spread upon the pages of international law writers from the earliest times. Vitoria, in his *De Jure Belli*, (No. 35) says: "The deliberate slaughter of the innocent is never lawful in itself". Gentili, (*De Jure Belli*, Book II, Chap. XXI) declares that "Children should always be spared, and so should women What has been said of children I should also wish to apply to those of advanced years." These rules for the merciful conduct of war were laid down some four hundred years ago, but the despots in control of the totalitarian states of Europe in our day did not hesitate to brush them aside.

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THE CASE FOR THE ALLIES.—Let us consider for a moment the justification afforded by the doctrines of international law for the war launched by the Allies against Germany in September last and now in its crucial stages. The object of this appeal to arms was formally proclaimed to be not only for the protection of the Allies themselves but also for that of certain weaker nations against menaced aggression by the armies of Hitler.

In Cicero's *De Officiis* (I, XI) we find a lucid statement of the principle he conceived as governing such cases which has the approval of modern writers on the laws of war. He says :

"There are certain duties to be strictly observed, even towards those who have injured us, for we ought not to go beyond certain bounds in exacting revenge and punishment of another. There are certain peculiar laws of war also, which are of all things most strictly to be observed in the commonwealth. For there are two sorts of disputing in the world—the one by the use of reason and the other by open force, the former being that which is agreeable to the nature of man, and the latter to that of brutes. When we cannot obtain what is our right by the one, we must of necessity have recourse to the other. It is allowable, therefore, to undertake wars, but it must always be with the design of obtaining a secure peace: and when we have got the better of our enemies we should rest content with the victory alone, and show ourselves merciful and kind to them afterwards, unless they are such as have been very cruel and have committed inhuman barbarities in the war."

That the conduct of the Allies in levying war against Germany finds plenary justification in the terms of the principle so expounded by Cicero is beyond question. It is to the everlasting disgrace of modern Germany that her people have failed to relate their international conduct to the ethical standards

formulated by a Roman philosopher before the beginning of the Christian era, and substantially affirmed in the "Essay on Perpetual Peace" written by their own philosopher Immanuel Kant at the close of the eighteenth century of that era.

Speaking of the impact of adverse opinion throughout the world on the chances for success of an unrighteous war, the late Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher said :

"The lesson of the last war was that no country can affront the moral conscience of mankind without in the end paying the penalty. Germany lost the war because it was believed that when she might have had peace she preferred war, and that once embarked on hostilities she waged them without regard to the restraints of international law and humanity. The violation of Belgian neutrality, the introduction of gas warfare, the unrestricted submarine campaign mobilized opinion against her. With a tremendous initial advantage in material power, she fell because the world deliberately concluded that her cause was wrong." (*The Common Weal*, p. 281.)

In sheer diabolism German warfare now surpasses that of twenty-five years ago, and as a result the shocked conscience of the world serves to strengthen the will of the Allies to achieve success in their glorious undertaking.

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