

# CURRENT MAGAZINES

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## "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER"

**How New Will the Better World Be?**—Mr. Carl Becker, in the *Yale Review*.

**A Lesson for Many**—Editorial, in *The Voice of Austria*.

**Unconditional Surrender**—Miss Dorothy Thompson, in the *New York Herald-Tribune*.

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PROJECTS for a negotiated peace are obviously the intense concern of enemy propaganda just now. As President Roosevelt points out, such is the shifting character of Nazi purpose that sometimes the plan is to induce the British-American allies to betray Soviet Russia, sometimes it is to bribe Soviet Russia into betraying her British-American allies. It is altogether natural that betrayal of *somebody* should serve as a passport to German cooperation. Also that the Strategy Board at Berlin should hesitate in choice between a crusade for Capitalism against Communism and one for Communism against Capitalism, because the needful publicity material for each, having been used in turn, is no doubt still available, classified and labelled with German thoroughness, in the Nazi archives. As Mr. Tadpole sagely observed to Mr. Taper in *Coningsby*, what is wanted is an effective "cry".

But even the most cautious approach, through Franco's Spain, to President Roosevelt, to Mr. Churchill, to Mr. Stalin, has encountered the cold warning that negotiation is impossible, and that only a message of unconditional surrender will be received from an enemy spokesman!

There has been much comment in the magazines of the last three months on this way of stating the terms of peace.

### I.

Among publicists, Miss Dorothy Thompson has established a right to be heard with close attention—for her knowledge, her critical acumen, and her intensity of zeal for justice.

She deprecates the use of the term "unconditional surrender", on the ground that it rules out—for Germany at least—any "palace revolution" of the sort she has hoped to see. Hitler and his inner circle know that *they* can make no conditions, but if it is announced that neither can any German group, even by overthrowing the Nazi régime, secure an audience with the victorious Allies, what inducement is left for an anti-Hitler revolt? "We desire", said the Lord Chancellor in a recent

speech, "to encourage in every way the opposition inside Germany". Miss Thompson finds in this requirement of unconditional surrender just the policy by which such opposition will be stifled. She challenges, too, with her usual adroitness of dialectic, the precedent which Mr. Roosevelt quoted. General Grant, in the American civil war of seventy years ago, refused to negotiate with General Lee, and coined this term which the Allies now adopt to indicate their demand from Germany. But, Miss Thompson points out, that was a *civil* war, in which the United States had to vindicate sovereignty over those who attempted rebellion: obviously no "conditions" could there be entertained, any more than a sovereign State can bargain with its law-breakers. Here, on the other hand, we have no international sovereign whose authority must be vindicated, no law of nations against which an intolerable challenge has been ventured:

There is no world governed by law, and there never has been. Nations are still considered as sovereign bodies; what has been called "international law" is merely agreements or treaties amongst sovereign nations which can be unilaterally denounced, broken or changed; no force exists, or ever has existed, to create, supervise or enforce any law above nations. And there is no indication in any official utterances of the President or Mr. Churchill that we intend to create such supernational institutions. "Unconditional surrender" in this case, therefore, means surrender without condition of some nations to other nations—not surrender to a constitution.

Herein is probably as clear and compact a statement of the case for some sort of settlement by treaty as will anywhere be found. Miss Thompson is as remote as anyone can be from the design of making negotiated peace a substitute for overwhelming victory. Not for a moment does she suggest negotiating *now*. But she feels that, for the reasons she has given, peace must ultimately be established with the Axis Powers on the basis of an agreement to which, as still sovereign, those Powers will have set their seal.

With all respect for so keen an analyst, I cannot see that her conclusion follows from the facts as she has presented them. Still less can I agree that it is conformable to the practical necessities of the situation.

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For concluding a war, the alternative to unconditional surrender is a contract. But contractual relationship implies a measure of good faith, and this precondition Germany has

rendered impossible of fulfilment. With whom in Berlin, after victory has been made complete, would Miss Thompson have the Allies negotiate? That there are Germans no less reliable than men of other races when they have given their word, is not open to doubt; nor can anyone presume to be sure that such individual reliability among that people is even exceptional. But this at least is certain, that *nationally* they have abandoned the very profession of keeping a covenant, and that any among them who condemn the method of international fraud are now quite impotent to affect their corporate policy. A research of great psychological interest will no doubt some day be undertaken into the German lack of respect for those sanctities which are essential to trust among nations; also into German lack of the normal impulses which make other civilized peoples resist, if need be by rebellion, a government's enterprize of cruelty and fraud. But for the time one must accept, unanalyzed, an indisputable state of things, and govern one's self accordingly. Two World Wars, separated now by almost a whole generation, have shown beyond the possibility of dispute that on the German people collectively we cannot depend for moral inhibitions or restraints which we can assume in other races of western civilization. To make a treaty with a Power implies readiness to risk something on that Power's promise: will anyone suggest that the country of Hitler and Goering and Goebbels is, in this respect, what insurance companies call "a fair risk"? If she is not, a peculiar responsibility rests on Great Britain and the United States for a venture which would specially involve the continental neighbors of Germany. The horrors of 1914 in Belgium were reproduced twenty-five years later in Poland, the spirit of outrage being essentially the same, while the mechanical resources for evil had been developed by scientific effort, and the last remains of pretence at honest dealing had been abandoned. As one thinks of Norwegians and Netherlanders, of Poles and Czechs, of Belgians and Yugoslavs, how can one suggest that Germany's signature to a covenant be accepted as reliable again?

To refuse this risk is quite consistent with accepting the Bishop of Chichester's charitable picture of "two Germany's, one Nazi, the other anti-Nazi". It is indeed incredible that moral fibre has been quite destroyed in the kinsmen of Lessing and Kant, of Schiller and Lotze and Martin Niemöller. But how strong "the righteous remnant" is, or what prospect it has of asserting itself, no one can tell, and this uncertainty

makes enormous practical difference. Lord Vansittart, who as British Under-Secretary of State negotiated with Germans from 1933 to 1939, likens the anti-Nazi group to one of Euclid's points, "with position, but no magnitude". He may here be exaggerating. Perhaps the author of *The Black Record* had been too deeply disgusted with what he had to meet during those six years at the Foreign Office to be altogether fair in estimate of the German race. He may well have felt, like the British ambassador to Berlin in 1914, that lying had there become such an official habit as to justify initial belief in anything a German Minister denied. One thing surely is clear—that having twice within a generation incurred such tragic penalties for the more charitable assumption about German character, we can risk nothing on such a guess again. What matter if there are millions of silent dissentients from the Nazi policy within the borders of the *Reich*? There is nothing to show that at next venture the forces of darkness would have any greater difficulty than before in securing their obsequious acquiescence. One cannot blame Lord Vansittart for the notice he served upon the House of Lords—that he would join eagerly in a British revolt against any Government whose charity would give yet another chance to Germans with "the broken bodies of the young and the broken hearts of the old".

No doubt enemy groups otherwise likely to cooperate with us would be repelled, as Miss Dorothy Thompson foresees, by the requirement of surrender while totally in the dark about the sort of international system the victors will impose. Axis propagandists incessantly warn them that they have nothing more to gain by compromise or to lose by holding out to the uttermost, because the purpose of the Allies in either event is merciless. Dr. Goebbels put this with his usual succinct mendacity: "The choice for us is no longer between peace and war; it is between war and extermination". But "unconditional surrender" implies no such dilemma. It implies, indeed, that no risk will be taken in reliance upon Germany's word: there can be no peace this time by *treaty*, because Germany has herself destroyed the very foundations of all treaty-making. This time it must be indeed what Hitler calls a "Dictate". But it has been made abundantly plain, by the reiterated commitments of Mr. Churchill, President Roosevelt and Mr. Stalin, that the Allies will seize no territory, will interfere in no manner with the right of the conquered nations to self-government, will menace in no degree the racial dignity of German or Italian people. Point

IV of the *Atlantic Charter* even pledges cooperation by the victors to promote on a great scale the peaceful industry of the countries to which such a grim lesson will have been taught upon the danger of following "war-lords". In short, repeatedly and at very great personal risk, the spokesmen for the United Nations have met the lying Axis propagandism with an announcement in surprising detail of the generous measures Italy and Germany may expect, once adequate safeguard has been taken against repetition of their offence.

But the measures must be adequate. That means complete and permanent military disablement. When we say "unconditional", we mean that on this matter there can be no debate. The conquered nations must await direction as to what they shall do. It ought to be, for them at least, a familiar attitude. If Duce and Fuehrer have trained them to anything, it is to the habit of subordination. Humiliating indeed, but in this reference altogether necessary.

## II

As we recall experience of the previous war and of the previous peace, there is many an apparent analogy that may mislead rather than illumine. But there is one warning that it should be impossible either to neglect or to misconstrue. At the end of last war, the projects of those who not only hoped for a better world order but set to work at constructing it were quickly discredited by volleys of cynical mockery. The mockers were of two brands of cynicism. Some affected such intellectual detachment, far beyond the enthusiasms of the multitude, as to know that there had been nothing to choose "morally" between the combatants, and that the professed "ideological contrast" was but an imposture of Entente leaders upon the *naïveté* of the British and French and American public. Others, with a still more radical contempt, not merely for the moral professions of a particular group but for human nature everywhere and always, argued that the whole Woodrow Wilson purpose of an improved international order was the nonsense of a "visionary". How they sneered at phrases about the need to have the world "redeemed spiritually" before it could recover economically! And at the delusion of one in whom the blend of schoolmaster and parson had been disastrously accepted by a gullible electorate for responsibilities at such a time in the White House! "A dreamy idealist", said Lord Birkenhead, "of the type exemplified just now by too many in England".

Thus, twenty-four years ago, with much show of realistic sagacity, the anti-League intriguers set to work. It soon became usual in Europe to say that a group of American senators, members of the omnipotent Foreign Relations Committee, wrecked the promise of the *Covenant*. But the fault was not theirs alone. Far-reaching resources, even without American partnership, were at the disposal of the League for enforcing peace if its members had worked earnestly together. But the "wilful men at Washington", of whom Woodrow Wilson spoke so mournfully, had European associates in the architecture of ruin. If those who did the damage were here to suffer the result, one might see a measure of poetic justice in what has taken place. But most of the chief offenders are gone, and of those who remain some have made their escape to the ranks of the enemy. One remembers the scripture about fathers having eaten sour grapes and their children's teeth being set on edge! There is a use, for the days ahead, in recalling some of these sombre events.

When Poland found, in 1939, that the League could do nothing to protect her, must not the more reflective Poles have remembered with remorse that the first lethal blow against League influence was struck by Marshal Pilsudski, when he seized the Lithuanian city of Vilna and annexed vast tracts of White Russia in scornful disregard of the Geneva voice? What historically-minded Frenchman could fail, amid the shame of June, 1940, to think of what France had done—under Poincaré, under Flandin, under Laval—to turn into an idle jest the safeguard which she might otherwise have invoked? And when the time comes for Italian spokesmen to face the tribunal of the victorious Allies, pleading against "dismemberment" and appealing to the principle of self-determination, will not many a memory come back—of Fiume, of Corfu, of Albania—where their Duce so embarrassed them for such a plea, with the most deadly of precedents?

The clear truth is that this war is a nemesis on the reckless resumption of "power politics" by the nations which, in 1919, made a brief experiment on a higher plane. Often a resourceful brigand will strike for his personal advantage at the cost of shaking the general security, but he can seldom find encouragement from reputable neighbors acknowledging that, after all, to refrain from a manoeuvre against the police is more than one should ask of adventurous human nature. The brigand nation, however, was thus not only excused but facilitated, by other nations—until the very idea of an international system

in which covenants are reliable became a joke for the comic press. This Second World War is the outcome, and how could the outcome have been different? Rabindranath Tagore put well the case of those who avoid all thought of moral repair for the world's tragedy, and who resort instead to new contrivances of law or economics. Like the glutton, he says, who insists on keeping his habits unchanged, and depends on drugs to overcome his nightmares of indigestion!

Will the Second World War serve thus to startle into wisdom where the First World War failed? It is far from certain. Already the familiar voices, though somewhat more cautiously muffled, are insinuating the familiar cynicism.

### III

The "appeasement" group of five years ago may intervene again on the dictatorial side. There are indeed ominous indications that the spirit which led through shame to tragedy in 1938 is not yet extinct. "Great Britain and France," Mr. Churchill then said, "having had to choose between war and dishonor, chose dishonor: now they will have war." Never, surely, had prescience more tragic fulfilment. As one thinks of the hurricane of abuse under which pro-Fascist and pro-Nazi publicists, British and French, then drowned the voice of protest, it seems not too soon to take precautions against a like activity again. Certain misleaders of the public mind in those bygone days have relapsed into a silence which does credit at least to their discretion. For example, it is a long time since one heard from Lord Baldwin, or from Lord Runciman—doubtless they both feel that they have already taxed their countrymen's patience too far. Viscount Simon has been, for the most part, relegated to the innocuous exercise of his legal talent, and in House of Lords debates on policy towards Japan he offers no further advice which might bring back intolerable memories of his period in the Foreign Office. Lord Londonderry has been in general reticent, though after the Tunisian victory he took such open share in the general rejoicing as re-awakened in many of us the feelings of anger and disgust with which we had read his *Germany and Ourselves*. In other quarters, however, an actual revival of the tone of 1938 appeasement may be detected, and if the public are to be immunized against this danger, it cannot be too soon brought to public notice. Once again a profession of deep historical knowledge, and of superior

subtlety in criticism, should put the simple but honest public on guard. The public so lately suffered from such agencies of demoralization.

An example, in itself trifling but typical, is the magazine called *The Voice of Austria*, which still circulates, from a New York office, through the Canadian mails! I make no objection to its currency: we need to recognize at the earliest possible moment the dangers we must face, and *The Voice of Austria* is more outspoken than some other organs by which the policy of the allied leaders is being opposed. Here is a specimen passage, which it copies with glee from the writings of a Canadian historian, Professor H. N. Fieldhouse, of the University of Manitoba:

From 1915 to 1939 the only way to acquire a reputation as a "democrat" in foreign affairs was to give an exhibition of international bad manners by abusing any country whose government was not moulded on Westminster. Any country, that is, except Russia.

The result was what might have been expected. If there is any considerable body of pro-Germans in the Mediterranean countries, it is not because of their ideologies, but because of the lack of knowledge and sympathy with which we handled those countries before 1939. Abuse a man long enough, and he is apt to regard your enemies as his friends. . . . Call a man pro-German long enough, and you drive him to become pro-German in fact.

By "the Mediterranean countries" Professor Fieldhouse makes it clear that he means Franco's Spain and Mussolini's Italy. The only difference, he says, which separates the spirit of government there from our own is that our good fortune has enabled us to preserve order with less sacrifice of personal liberty. Nazi Germany, on the other hand, is arraigned for "denial of every principle on which the western world has rested for nineteen centuries". One is glad to observe that the war has thus not been without its revelations for Professor Fieldhouse. To indict Hitlerism in this fashion goes far beyond his cautious censure three years ago, when he wrote: "The present régime in Germany does indeed ride roughly over human rights, but, with all its harshness, it is, after all, the mildest of tyrannies compared with its neighbor in Russia"! Not yet, however, has the critic altered his judgment that our British attitude to Fascist Italy was prompted by mere national conceit.

What is the meaning of this effort, at a time such as the present, to exempt the régime of Benito Mussolini from the



condemnation one passes on that of Adolf Hitler? It is true that there are differences. At least in the earlier period of Fascism, there was no pretence to be a "master-race", no pogrom in Italy against "non-Aryans": the anti-Semitism against which even Pius XII has protested in vain is an acquired, not a native, quality of the Fascists—acquired to Hitler's order. Nor has there been a record of diabolical cruelty on Italian penal islands comparable, at least in extent, to that shown in German concentration camps. The Fascist "Isles of Banishment" are gruesome enough, but though they may well have set a pattern for Nazi Brown Houses, there is not in the Italian temperament that sadistic delight to inflict pain which Hitler has found so serviceable among his German agents. Like Shylock, the Fuehrer has "bettered" the instruction—from Lipari and Lampedusa. But how do these differences bear upon the essence of our quarrel with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy alike? Above all—for this is the point of vital significance with a settlement in view—what reason do they afford to think that the victors should enter into a *treaty* with Fascists, though the surrender of Nazis must be unconditional?

The quarrel of the United Nations with the Axis has nothing to do with matters of domestic government. In all conscience, wherever else they were to blame, they maintained the most cautious self-restraint in circumstances such as exhausted the patience of a previous generation. There are Englishmen still living whose octogenarian memories bring back the tones of Gladstone's voice on his Midlothian campaign, denouncing Turkish barbarity in Bulgaria, and men not long past middle age recall a like outspoken eloquence against "Abdul the Damned" for the Armenian massacres. When Lord Rosebery, as Prime Minister in 1893, said "I am haunted by the horrors of Asia Minor", no British publicist—so far as I am aware—upbraided him for national presumption, described him as seeking cheap popularity at home by setting up Westminster as a model for Constantinople, or deplored his exhibition of international bad manners. But not even the Turkish outrages in Bulgaria two generations ago, or those in Armenia during the last decade of the nineteenth century, equalled in their refinement of cruelty what we have watched in Europe since 1933. So far from sharing Professor Fieldhouse's regret at obtrusive, critical meddling with other people's business, a future generation of Englishmen may well find it a chief national shame of 1938 that the Rothermeres, the Runcimans, the Garvins of the time

were so successful with their incessant advocacy of "non-intervention".

There were men in England who then urged the sordid scheme of buying off Germany, Italy and Japan from threat to British interests by connivance at every outrage these Powers might inflict elsewhere. They hoped that at least for "our time" (as Neville Chamberlain put it, more frankly than generously) there might be enough to sate the dictatorial lust in Abyssinia, in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, in Manchuria, in North China, and that the reckoning with Britain might be thus at all events postponed until it should become the burden of others to deal with it. The compromise arrangement known as "the Hoare-Laval Plan" was typical of this sort of statesmanship, and although admirers of Sir Samuel Hoare (who lately tried, happily in vain, to make him Viceroy of India) hate to hear that partnership of 1935 recalled, it seems unchivalrous to heap the blame on Pierre Laval alone. How familiar, how transparent, and now in retrospect how humiliating is the contention that Britain made two tremendous mistakes—by alienating Japan through her championship of China in the League, and by alienating Italy through her "sanctionist" measures in the cause of Abyssinia! A short respite might perhaps have been bought, by thus paying blackmail out of other people's rights and through dishonoring our own covenants. It would have been a *short* respite, but immediate relief is pleasant—and "Who knows what may later turn up?" There were even those in the England of 1939 who whispered (as long as they dared) that the Poles must be sacrificed in "appeasement" as the Czechs had been a year before. But that coming British historian, who notes these ignoble proposals with distress, will note at the same time with pride how quick and sharp was the action of the British people once they realized what was being manoeuvred in their name. On Professor Fieldhouse's statement that Russia was in general exempt during the years 1915 to 1939 from the "democratic" abuse showered in Britain upon all other European countries in which the Westminster form of government was not reproduced, comment is needless. I leave it to anyone who remembers the prevailing attitude in British press and parliament towards Soviet Russia—so long definitely an outcast from diplomatic and even trade relations with London, object during the general election in 1924 of the wildest anti-foreign rage ever known on British hustings, her goods laid later under punitive embargo, the butt of the

themselves fundamentally desire. At other times they justify the position of Mussolini and Hitler (though not, somewhat capriciously, that of Stalin) as one of enthronement in autocracy by the popular will. For those attached to the principle of government by consent, they argue that in Germany and in Italy authoritarianism is the true "will of the people", and that freedom of contract fairly includes the right to contract one's freedom away<sup>1</sup>. For others, with no crotchet of that kind, they contend that plebiscites, general elections, the whole apparatus of a so-called "mandate", originated in mob presumption, and should count for nothing with the superman strong enough to ignore what Nietzsche called "herd-morality". Thus, after the rule of a very different enterprize, when persecuted in one argument they flee unto another, extolling the *Fuehrer* or the *Duce* conception first because it is in the truest sense democratic—a sense indeed never before realized or tried—and next because it is utterly anti-democratic, an escape from the nonsense about equality and freedom which spiritual aristocrats had too long shrunk from challenging. To both these lines of argument the experience of twenty years of Mussolini and ten years of Hitler may well dispense one from offering a reply. *Res ipsa loquitur*. If the dictators are confident of popular support, why all the terrorism with which they surround what they facetiously call a "plebiscite"? And where shall we look, in the record of the most corrupt or inefficient of democratic States, for a spectacle of human misery such as "the leadership principle" has brought upon the world?

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Such are some reasons why surrender must be unconditional, and why no distinction can in this respect be drawn between partners in the Axis. It is not too soon to develop a public opinion watchful against propaganda for a settlement of quite different sort. The more subtle advocates of this emphasize,

1. e.g. Mr. G. Ward Price, in *I know these Dictators*: speaking of dictatorship, he says: "That term is accurate in the sense that their authority is supreme and overruling, but it does not mean that Hitler and Mussolini have subjected reluctant and resentful peoples to their will . . . Both of them have the support and approval of a much greater proportion of their fellow-countrymen than has ever voted for the Government of any democratic State." Mr. Ward Price, of course, is aware of the enlistment of private armies, of the Black Shirt and Brown Shirt organization. His way of conceiving democracy has the defect of implying that none but a democratic system has ever existed anywhere, because the people must be assumed to approve what they do not overturn!

without ceasing, a contrast really fictitious between the two European dictatorships. Abandoning as hopeless the plea for another Pact with Hitler, they concentrate on a friendly approach, if not to Mussolini, then perhaps to Count Ciano, or Marshal Badoglio, or other "moderate Fascist"—with much earnest warning that means must be taken to save Italy from lapse to "chaos". A variant of the strategic method is a plea for acceptance of General Franco as negotiator, or even Otto von Habsburg! But after the experience through which we have passed, to be forewarned on such a matter should make us forearmed. As these lines are composed, the radio tells me how Royal Air Force and American Fortresses are writing the settlement with Fascism in the only way it can be written to last—with the only sort of ink that is on such a surface indelible. Having completed their job on the other Italian islands, they are now moving on Sicily. How soon the "jackal" of Mr. Churchill's apt figure will be thrust aside by associates who were eager to share his successful wickedness, but are now seeking to disentangle themselves from his doom, we have still to see. The spectacle is curiously interesting, though not very important. Least of all should it divert attention from the stern work still to be done. When the surrender of the whole brigand gang, with no irrelevant distinction between Fascist and Nazi, has been unconditionally made, let no pseudo-charitable or pseudo-scientific voice dissuade us from so finishing the job that it will last not for "our time" alone, but longer.

H. L. S.