

The "Vindictive" Treaty

Herbert L. Stewart

While our soldiers still continued to fall, President Wilson continued to meditate on the object of these battles, battles such as history had never yet known. He had begun by declaring them unworthy of American attention, but now they were leading to a world crisis, to solve which he needed no fewer than fourteen points of world organization.

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

Were I myself a Frenchman, and were the greatness of France as dear to me as the greatness of Germany now is, then I too could not and would not act otherwise than as Clemenceau acted.

ADOLF HITLER

A fair judgment upon the whole settlement, a simple explanation of how it arose, cannot leave the authors of the new map of Europe under any serious reproach. To an overwhelming extent the wishes of the various populations prevailed.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

WITH extraordinary success, ingenious youth has been led to believe that a chief cause of Europe's disorder which culminated in the Second World War was the "vindictive" Treaty by which the First World War was closed. It is to exposure of the falsity of such explanation that the present article is devoted.

The explanation is plausibly worked out. At Versailles (young students have been taught in numerous propagandist publications) the "Big Four" made a settlement in which the conditions—the famous Fourteen Points, through offer of which the Germans had been induced to surrender—were ignored. It was a settlement (according to this story) which drove to madness a proud and resourceful people, thus creating a new German type, the generation born within the last thirty years, for whom that accursed Treaty has been the answer to every question about German suffering and shame. Its clauses are recalled: especially those which deprived Germany of one-eighth of her land and one-tenth of

her European population; the one cutting a corridor for the Poles two hundred and sixty miles long and eighty miles wide through East Prussia; the provisions taking from Germany her whole merchant fleet, most of her coal and iron, and all her colonies—on the explicit ground that Germans as a people had shown themselves unfit for colonial trusteeship. Not to mention the gigantic bill for "reparations", the reduction of her imperial navy and army to a police force, the transfer of her navigable rivers to an international Commission, and the "war-guilt" clause in which she had to accept for herself, over her signature, sole blame for the four years suffering of Europe. The reader of these historical brochures is asked "Does not memory of such a document account, in a haughty people, for what was begun twenty-five years later by a Fuehrer to whom revenge was a passion and whose sense of the dramatic in place and time was a mania? Might it not well have developed in a people and a

leader even without such predisposing qualities?"

The difficulty about this explanation is twofold. In the first place, it misrepresents on an enormous scale not merely the conditions which preceded the Armistice and the surrender of 1918, but also what the *Treaty of Versailles*, concluded in the following year, contained. In the second place, it thoroughly mistakes the nature of the problem which it professes to solve.

I

THE Treaty was drawn by men who believed that the war of 1914 had been started by Germany to achieve for her the dominance of Europe, and that it was highly probable she would renew the attempt as soon as she should see a chance of success. They believed that the manner in which she had waged the war confirmed this conception of her ambitious ruthlessness, and that the first necessity of Europe was to provide against the risk of her "doing it again". The Treaty-makers at Versailles did *not* believe (with some recent historians and political scientists) that responsibility for what began in the first week of August, 1914, belonged in equal degree to Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, Britain, or that the conduct of the hostilities showed each of these belligerents equally a menace to peaceful civilization. I do not say whether the historians and political scientists, who think their own insight so much clearer than that of the Treaty-makers, are right or wrong. The behavior of Nazi Germany proved at least corroborative of the darker view of Hohenzollern Germany—unless one supposes that the *Treaty of Versailles* changed in some profound way her national purpose. This last assumption seems to be just what is supposed by the critics I have in mind, and my argument will be that it is altogether gratuitous. But my immediate point is that the settlement at Versailles was not markedly different from other settlements at the close of war, in none of which the victor (least of all Germany, when she had been victorious) had been

at pains to avoid "vindictiveness"; that in this case, more than in most others which history records, the danger of recurrence, against which precautions had to be taken, proved to be intense, and that remissness in enforcing certain parts of the Treaty, much more than excessive harshness in its terms, is accountable for what later took place.

The chief German complaint has been that Britain and France refused, on various pretexts, to disarm, although they had secured the disarmament of Germany by a pledge to follow her example. It is a baseless charge; for, in the first place, it was not by the inducement of any British or French pledge that the disarming of Germany was secured, and, in the second place, nowhere in the *Treaty of Versailles* is there any clause binding either Britain or France to disarm.

What nonsense is this, about German commanders, lured by the promise of Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points", seeking an armistice which they would otherwise have disdained! Nine months of heavy fighting had passed since the proposal known as Fourteen Points was issued in Washington. Perhaps it exerted influence during that period upon Arabs, upon Croats and Slovenes, even upon some sections of the German people, stirring them to discontent with war-lords who preferred further sacrifice of life to a settlement that would have been—under the circumstances—so moderate. The surrender of Bulgaria and that of Austria-Hungary are said to have been at least thus hastened by the gesture of apparent generosity from the White House. But the gesture was made at the beginning of January, and not until October was a Liberal Ministry set up at Berlin, under the Chancellorship of Prince Max of Baden, to sue for peace on the basis of the terms which President Wilson had indicated. In the interval, Ludendorff had played all his remaining battle cards, and if negotiations were then begun, it was because for Germany the war prospects had become utterly desperate.

Such is the truth, hidden by limitless later fiction about treachery behind the German lines, about sabotage by agents

of international Jewry, about a trustful people whose own sense of honor made them unsuspecting of fraud by an American President. Fiction, too, about unbeaten Germans, who, if they had for a moment thought such betrayal possible, would have fought victoriously to the end! The whole story is part of the Hitler legend, not a surprise by its prevalence among wishful thinkers of the *Reich*, but astonishing indeed for its naive circulation in American or Canadian books of "history".

FROM innumerable witnesses of the battle scene in the Fall of 1918, I select one who, whatever else may be suspected of him, will at least be absolved of any purpose to underrate the strength of Germany's case against the Western Allies respecting the Treaty. Here is the picture of the situation which left no alternative to surrender, as drawn by Dr. Otto Strasser in his *History in My Time*:

"Round about the beleaguered stronghold, the walls of the fronts now collapse. Bulgaria has fallen. In October follows, just as rapidly, the collapse of Turkey. Cut off from the Central Powers, she cannot fight on. In Syria the British are advancing; from Armenia to the Mediterranean rage the risings of Christians, Kurds and Arabs. In Constantinople the dictatorship of the fantastic Enver Pasha disintegrates.

"The western front is still a wall that wanders backward. On October 2nd the British occupy Armentières, on the 9th Cambrai, on the 13th the French take Laon, on the 17th the Germans evacuate Ostend, on November 3rd the British and Belgians enter Ghent. . . It is all one where Foch attacks. This is no longer strategy, but the organized application of a twofold and threefold superior strength against a weaker enemy, of full bellies against empty ones, of tanks, aeroplanes, new guns and new machine guns against the old iron of an army which in every point is at its last gasp."

That sounds very different from the story about the Germans being in a position to bargain, with no necessity for unconditional surrender, and consenting to a compromise when they might have fought successfully to a finish because they trusted, alas on insufficient ground, in Woodrow Wilson.

Equally baseless is the contention that a pledge of general disarmament, used by Britain and France to induce Germany

to lay down her arms, was violated when it had served this purpose. The passage in the *Treaty of Versailles* to which reference is habitually made (though it is seldom exactly quoted) in support of this indictment is not a contractual clause: it is a sentence of preamble, specifying a general purpose which Great Britain and France designed to promote by the disarming they imposed on Germany. The exact words were these (Preamble to Part V, entitled "Military, Naval and Air Clauses"):

"In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow."

At what date might one look for the extremely limited result of rendering it possible that limitation of armaments should be initiated? Any lawyer, interpreting such a sentence with professional candor to his client, would say at once that it was to be welcomed as a token of good will, but that as a binding contract it was not worth the paper on which it was written. So much was left in it to "unilateral" discretion.

If it is urged that the spirit of this passage about disarmament was clear, though there was no enforceable contract, the answer is twofold. In the first place, that so far as Great Britain was concerned, disarmament proceeded with positively alarming speed: in the second place, that very quickly German secret rearming had become such as ought to have reversed at once the purpose of limiting their own armed forces which Great Britain and France had in principle adopted. Notoriously, the British Air Force was brought down in strength until it had passed from the first to the fifth place in such world competition. What the Washington Conference of 1922 achieved in the reduction of British sea power, we were later to realize to our sorrow. And all the while, concealing it under a fraud of whose skill they would later exultantly boast, pretending *Youth Movement, Gymnastics, Strength through Joy* and the rest, the German authorities were putting strenuously into force all that was of value in

Conscription. The *Kapp Putsch* in 1920 was but an ill-judged and premature explosion. Social-Democratic leaders in the Weimar Republic—the sort that rallied round Stresemann—were probably honest in their effort at what was called “treaty-fulfilment”. But, from the beginning, any observant visitor could detect how deep and swift was the current beneath them, by which their fragile bark would soon be engulfed unless a resolute foreign hand should again seize the control. “There are outrages on the street in various interests”, said the hospitably-minded critic; “it is hard to apportion blame between ‘Right’ and ‘Left’.” On the contrary, it was simple indeed to fix proportionate blame. The record shows that in 1921 and 1922 there occurred in Germany 350 political murders on the side of the Right: on the side of the Left, in the same period—not one!

II

HOW far is there evidence that it was anger about the Treaty which—whether reasonable or unreasonable—was at least the psychological determinant of the Nazi triumph over the constitution of the German Republic?

During the first ten years of his propagandism against the *Treaty of Versailles* Adolph Hitler made little impression on the German people. Not until the Great Depression had created a new opportunity for the rabble-rouser, did that expert in demagogic arts achieve real success. Later, as an argument to the observing world abroad, this grievance of the Treaty did indeed play a conspicuous part. The Nazi agents in various countries talked without ceasing, after Hitler had been called to the Chancellorship, about inhuman “dictation” to their country by the Anglo-French victors at the Conference Table. But it was to outsiders that this was presented, as justification for what the Nazis had done, and still more for what they intended to do: the plea about a proud people driven to fury had a better chance to impress the generous foreigner than acknowledgement of the

reason really operative. The generous foreigner, especially in proportion as he had suffered least at German hands, was full of the ideas in Woodrow Wilson’s earlier “Notes”—about peace without victors and without vanquished. His mind was much occupied with the obligation of magnanimity to which someone else ought to conform, and when such a publicist wrote in Philadelphia or in San Francisco about the duty of the people of Lorraine to forget about “Reparations”, it did not seem to the French reader that the advice was opportune, or sensible, or indeed enduring. Neither, for that matter, did the German reader feel that this talk about equality between victor and vanquished was anything but doctrinaire nonsense by someone (probably a professor) who knew war only through reading about it.

In short, such analysis as a Harry Elmer Barnes in America or a George Lansbury in England used to offer regarding the faults of the *Treaty of Versailles* will not be found in Hitler’s speeches or in the text of *Mein Kampf*. The Fuehrer at least never urged that what was wrong with the Peace was its “partiality”. Would so military-minded a people as the Germans have had patience, or leisure, for such a talk—fit as it might be for some Conferences we have later known? Imagine a German audience taking seriously the suggestion that a treaty at the close of war should never be “dictated”, but should come through what lawyers call “meeting of minds”, with watchful considerateness lest the proportionate shares of blame for the original quarrel should fail to be reflected in the terms of settlement! Nazi propagandists abroad might work upon sympathy with a plea like this. But a German audience would have laughed in such a speaker’s face. Men who knew how Bismarck had shown Thiers just what and where he was to sign in the *Treaty of Frankfurt*, and how General Max Hoffman had taken his own way with Trotsky about the *Treaty of Brest-Litovsk*, were not to be fooled regarding the manner of settlement appropriate at the close of a victorious campaign.

Half-way through the first decade of the Twenty Years Truce it appeared indeed

that rhetoric about the unjust *Treaty of Versailles* was finding fewer and fewer German listeners. There were two general elections in 1924, and at the second the Hitler Movement lost more than half the seats it had secured at the first: scarcely enough (14 in all, to be exact) remained to its credit for recognition of the group as a distinct party in the Reichstag. The following year Adolf Hitler emerged from serving his prison sentence for the Beer Hall *Putsch* of 1923, and resumed leadership of the Movement he had started. But within a few months of his return a deep cleft suddenly opened in the ranks. Not only had the Party been reduced to a small fraction of its former strength at the polls, but it became clear that its remaining members were at cross-purposes with each other. What was at issue was whether the Movement would remain true to the project of domestic reform embodied in Hitler's original program of "Twenty-Five Points", or would seek the financial support of great German landowners and industrialists by predominant emphasis on German national patriotism. Hitler, following his instinct for mob psychology, risked his future at this critical moment on an extraordinary blend. He would appeal at once to the enthusiasm of the German working-class for social reform and to the anxiety of German magnates about their wealth. The double name "National Socialism" was manipulated, without regard to any kind of sincerity. With fine show of bringing together two ideals that should never have been separated (making the social reformer also a patriot and making the nationalist also a zealot for social justice), he would turn to his own advantage a disguise of his purpose for both. He would stigmatize by such malodorous names as "Communism" or "Marxism" whatever projects of social reform meant anything really dangerous to his wealthy paymasters in the cities of the Ruhr or on the estates of East Prussia, while he entertained his proletarian following with rhetorical pledges of what the Third Reich would do for Labor—how it would enact universal compulsion to work and would "break the slave chains of interest". Whether he intended impartial

rough treatment for both the groups which he thus incited simultaneously against each other was long a matter of dispute among those who knew him well—for example, between Dr. Otto Strasser, who felt sure it was the working class that Hitler meant to disappoint, and Gregor Strasser, who looked forward to his sharp discipline of the rich.

THE break in the ranks was unmistakable in 1930, when some men who had been Hitler's principal organizers openly arraigned his policy as apostate from the cause, and when the press that served as his organ began to encounter a hostile press directed by those who had done much to win for him the public ear. As that quarrel developed, it was felt by German republican leaders who from the first had detested National Socialism that the monster was happily dissolving inside, and as late as 1931 Adolf Hitler was being airily discounted as a spent force. Though that year saw the most spectacular advance in Reichstag support of the Movement, it saw likewise the Movement disintegrating and the Chief's personal authority challenged within it. Opinions differ regarding the source from which, and the methods by which, this apparent decay was transformed into a new and tremendous vitality. But at least the propaganda that soon swept Germany for Hitler, and won for him such popular strength that he could drown party dissension in the "Blood Bath" of 1934, was no revival of the angry rhetoric about *Treaty of Versailles*, which had been tried so long with such slight result. Among the Fuehrer's talents, so lamentably keen, was that of detecting and abandoning in favor of a new technique the propagandist procedure that had proved unproductive.

In September, 1930, the National Socialist cause, despite this inner dispute among its titular leaders, was obviously being lifted somehow to the crest of the wave. National Socialist voting strength at the polls rose from about 1 million to more than 6 million. To those on the spot it was clear that the influences most powerfully at work were wholly unconnected with anything in the Terms of Peace.

The personality which then counted for most with the German people was that of Hindenburg, and he had been notoriously contemptuous in his references to "the Bohemian corporal". He had been President of the German Republic for little more than a year, elected after a popular campaign in which he had taken no personal part, but had relied successfully on his unique repute. Hindenburg had no love for the Republic, but he had sworn to be its faithful administrator, and—though often importuned to betray it—he would keep that oath, as he had kept his oath to the Kaiser, with military fidelity. In the same month, however, in which he was elected President by a vote of over 14½ million ballots, 6½ million Germans had voted National Socialist in the election of a Reichstag, and had won for that group more than 100 seats. Everyone knew that it was the unemployed, the victims of economic depression who had thus turned Nazi in their anger. Were they worrying, for the first time on such a scale, about *Treaty of Versailles*? Had they waited ten years to discover its injustices, until the hardships it inflicted had become lighter and lighter? Reparations were being whittled down. In 1932 the Reparation bill was cancelled entirely, and whoever else brought that relief (under the *Treaty of Lausanne*) Adolf Hitler at least deserved no credit for it. Yet within a year afterwards he was Chancellor of the Reich, and his support, which began in 1930 to show rapid and enormous increase, came by no means from the sort of Germans likely to be hypersensitive, or sensitive at all, about the "Versailles Dictate" forcing Germany to acknowledge war-guilt and insulting her about her unworthiness of colonial trusteeship. The vast augmentation in Hitler's vote came from those who had been hit, not by phrases humiliating to the Fatherland's dignity, but by sudden unemployment and shrinking of trade.

After the break in the American Stock Market in 1929, the enormous loans made by American financiers to reestablish old German industries and to promote new ones were sharply recalled, and trans-At-

lantic business for German manufacturers collapsed. Do we need any explanation of how at such a conjuncture old parties were forsaken for a new and daring leadership? How groups of varying politics, or previously no politics, came together at a call the more attractive for its startling novelty? Behind Hitler would soon be seen Social Democrats who had hated the Hohenzollern regime twenty years before, Communists who had rioted on the streets in support of every anti-war leader from Rosa Luxemburg to Thaelmann, business men who had suddenly found their banks refusing them the credit without which they must close their doors on the spot (the banks in turn having been thrown into financial disorder by a sudden move in Wall Street, New York)—all sorts whom the Great Depression had left either workless or tradeless, firms precipitated into bankruptcy or artisans reading a notice on the factory door that their jobs were gone. Such varied masses of voters turned in a fury to the standard of the revolutionary agitator. He in turn provided them with a cunning plausible account of their rally to his colors. Quickly he trained them to talk much and often about the almost forgotten *Treaty of Versailles*, as he would train his following a few years later to harp without ceasing on the wickedness of Jews. By degrees, perhaps, men came to believe what at first they had repeated to order.

But it was the Depression, not the Treaty, that had been effective. With such a Depression, a Hitler would have emerged even if there had been no Treaty. Psychologically, nothing can be more obvious. On this point, Dr. Otto Strasser has written to me as follows:

"Hitler, having started his propaganda 'against Versailles', changed after his Putsch. After 1924, and especially after consolidation of the Reichsmark, the German people were not very much interested in the *Treaty of Versailles*—until 1931 and 1932. . . You see that Hitler thus started (1921-22) with a nationalistic argument. Then came, through the influence of my brother Gregor and myself, the socialistic

propaganda (1925-30). After I left his party, Hitler fell back on the nationalistic slogan."

III

WHEN we pass from the period of Hitler's initial to that of his subsequent popularity, from the years when as agitator he exploited the Great Depression to the years when as Chancellor and President he exploited hatred of Communists and Jews, a scene to which considerations about the Treaty are still less relevant at once emerges. How could the harsh treatment of Germany by foreign Powers have led to her perpetration of such infamous cruelty on millions of her own people?

Nothing done by the treaty-makers at Versailles can explain why, fourteen years later, two million Germans were thrown into concentration camps by order of the Chief of their own State, and subjected to such cruelty there as appalled the civilized world. What grievance, be it ever so clear, that Germany had against Woodrow Wilson, against Clemenceau, against Lloyd George, supplies an intelligible ground for her to resolve to extinguish freedom of her own press, to forbid trade-union organizations, to conduct plebiscites and referendums only under the menace of police compelling the voter to vote as he is ordered? Why should rage against a war settlement that oppressed them have made Germans turn upon a racial group in their own country which had borne its full share of toil, of risk and of sacrifice in the national struggle, and order the names of all members of that race who had given their lives in battle for the Fatherland to be erased from the war memorials on which they had been inscribed?

An answer which at once suggests itself is that Hitler, as he constantly told his intimates, was determined at all costs upon "coming to power", and that the methods mentioned above were chosen to secure a completely unified people. He reflected that though Jews and trade-unionists and Communists had rendered high service to the Fatherland in the First World War, they were nevertheless notoriously given to independent thought,

and that an absolutely united effort—under unquestioning obedience to one Leader—was essential. Hence the need to put under effective restraint those who were "politically unreliable", whether journalists and university professors whose minds were too flexible, or ministers of religion loyal to a Leadership other than the Nazi, or over-reflective workmen talking an "International Labor" that might easily damp the national zeal. This answer to the difficulty I have raised is indeed altogether intelligible so far as it goes, but it stops just as the point where the essence of the difficulty begins.

Plain enough, in all conscience, is such an account of Nazi procedure, especially to those who recall the amazing scale of German valuation: how great is the concern about glory for the Reich, how slight by comparison the reluctance to inflict pain, however wide and deep. But the argument I have here reproduced is a most unfortunate choice for those who set out to find in the *Treaty of Versailles* some plea of justice for the Nazis. German dictation of the *Treaty of Brest-Litovsk* was long cited, by hecklers at Hitler's campaign meetings, when a platform speaker denounced "the Versailles Dictate". But what was imposed at Brest-Litovsk was imposed on a conquered enemy. The treatment of Communists, Jews, dissentients of any sort from the Hitler regime was indescribable barbarity to the despot's own people. To suggest that it was somehow an outcome of indignation for outraged justice is to be incoherent to a degree on which comment would be wasted.

IV

WHILE the *Treaty of Versailles* did not produce the later European chaos, it did provide considerable material which could be so presented as to disguise under plea of intolerable grievance the malignant motives really at work. On it the Nazi propagandist could exercise precisely the art prescribed to him by his Fuehrer for public deceit. As he tore clauses from their context, suppressed the explanatory reasons, supplemented the text with sheer

invention, distorted and falsified to fit the passions and prejudices of his particular audience, the strategic method set forth in Volume I, Chapter VI of *Mein Kampf* was followed with German exactness.

Not that the Peace Treaties of 1919 were free from the faults which have always marked a post-war settlement drawn when tempers were still high. For example, anger dictated that most foolish of clauses in which the Germans had to acknowledge complete, unshared war-guilt. A confession made under terrifying penalties for refusal had obviously no more real value than a recantation of heresy in presence of the stake? But, for the purposes of the treaty-makers, it had a disastrous consequence beyond any that the religious persecutor in his fury incurred. Unlike the recantation, this acknowledgement of guilt was being made by a victim on whose fidelity to other parts of the settlement reliance must be placed. And here the very springs of fidelity were being shattered! The whole *Treaty of Versailles* was affected to an incalculable extent through this introduction of one clause known by all the world to have been accepted in sheer hypocritical form, with no purpose to act upon it a moment after it could be safely disregarded. Perhaps the Germans would have been faithless in any event. But it was most undesirable to furnish them with a pretext under which the scruples of those among them less given to deception than others might be so plausibly overborne. How far, it could always be asked, did the routine submissiveness which was plainly all that the "Big Four" had required in the war-guilt clause extend to the acceptance of other commitments? There had been no more than a salaam of deference, executed with a derisive chuckle, in the matter of the "war guilt". Why should any more rigorous requirement be placed on the pledge not to introduce conscription, on the pledge not to rebuild an air force, or on the pledge to make such and such delivery of coal from the mines of the Ruhr?

Germany, in truth, never disarmed on anything like the scale she had promised; weapons which she had bound herself to

hand over were distributed from the first in places of concealment, with an efficiency of organization notable even for her. Conspiracies for "team work", to nullify the pledges on which her official seal had been set, were from the summer of 1919 occupying the keenest minds of those adored by her people as patriots. It was the most plausible of justifications that a Treaty one of whose clauses she had been forced to sign, though she had told the victor it was a lie, could be interpreted in respect of other clauses with a like elasticity.

ANOTHER side of the Peace Settlement is now equally beyond reasonable defence: the reparations bill, which formed no part of the Treaty, but for which—since it was the work of a Commission set up under the Treaty, and since the treaty-makers endorsed it—responsibility must be laid on the same shoulders. That bill was monstrously overdrawn. Like most other reproaches levelled against the Treaty (especially by those who have never read it) the complaint on this ground is often full of misstatement on sheer matters of fact. It is quite untrue, for example, (though the satiric legend still circulates pleasantly among the "political scientists" whose craft it flatters) that the monstrous figures of the bill arose from an over-riding of the economic expert by the ignorant, presumptuous and headstrong politician. The correspondence, which Lloyd George, after long toleration of this slander, was at length moved to publish, showed that on the contrary it was politicians who insisted on heavy abatement of a reparations bill which economic experts had declared it reasonable and proper to present. Still, after all abatements, the demand remained an impossible one, and in this respect it was typical of other exactions attempted at Versailles from which the better sense of succeeding years recoiled. It is very notable, however, that the period during which an effort was still made to exact these impossible payments from Germany was the period when National Socialism made no serious advance, that the Nazi triumph was never seen until the reparations bill had been completely cancelled, and that the negotiators to whose efforts

Germany owed its cancellation were not of Adolf Hitler's circle, but the uncompromising opponents of his movement.

THE argument of this paper has thus not been that the *Treaty of Versailles* was free from grave faults. I should, in writing what Kipling used to call "another story", lay strong emphasis on both its excesses and its defects. But these had very little to do with the rise of that "Hitlerism" so intelligible to anyone who has studied the sombre pathology of the Prussian temperament. My concern here has been to show how those who use the Treaty with such confidence for explan-

ation of the Nazi development grossly misstate what the Treaty contained, ignore cardinal features of the Nazi development to which provocation by the Treaty has no conceivable relevance, and refuse to face the proof so abundant in the record of the late 1930's and early 1940's of the extent to which the victors of 1918 trusted not too little but too much in German honor. The settlement of 1919 and its sequel are indeed abundantly suggestive for a settlement now. But that record, as written by numerous political scientists and absorbed from them too readily by ingenuous Canadian youth, needs a thorough expurgation.

Keeping the Windows Open

The right of freedom of speech is not only humanity's dearest treasure, but its greatest safeguard. Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger in the just published book *The American as a Reformer* restates this principle:

"For orderly progress it is better that crackpots rant in public than plot in private, and the very act, moreover, subjects their beliefs to comparison with the more constructive ideas of others. Only in this way can the critics be criticized, their proposals cut down to size and an appropriate course be arrived at democratically . . . Through this process of keeping the windows of discussion open, many a plausible reform has died of exposure, while others, more responsibly conceived, have won their way to public acceptance."