CURRENT MAGAZINES

WAR AIMS AND THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

The Beveridge Report—Editorial in New York *Nation*.

The Church and Politics—The Bishop of Gloucester, in the *Church of England Newspaper*.

The Protestant Churches in Europe—Dr. Karl Barth, in *Foreign Affairs*.

IN the last number of THE DALHOUSIE REVIEW it was pointed out, under the title "Organizing the Reactionaries", that certain threatened interests were already assembling in battle array against the *Atlantic Charter*. President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill had disturbed a hornets' nest! The organization proceeds apace, illustrating again a very old story in social development. One cannot mistake the familiar anti-reform slogans, heard in such variety for a hundred years—ever since English landowners clamored for maintenance of the Corn Laws, English industrialists denounced the Factory Acts, and a coalition of industrialists with landowners (for once, like Pilate and Herod, made friends) ridiculed together the project of educating the poor man's child at a free school. There is indeed a curious lack of originality in devising fresh mottoes for reaction, even when the old ones have lost so much of their effectiveness by being used so often in vain.

The party of social progress, however, has been thrilled in Britain within the last three months by *The Beveridge Report*. Its proposals, which have been hailed with such widespread acclaim, impart to the war effort a purpose far beyond either the attainment or the restraint of international ambition. They set forth *a new way of life* as among our war aims. It is not to be supposed that resistance to the spirit of the Report, still—at this time of writing—without any strident expression, is negligible. On the contrary, the magazine literature of the last three months has shown how in some very important British quarters a psychological climate against such reform has been prepared.

I

One notices, first, an effort to divert the English clergy in advance from promoting "idealistic" post-war measures. Especially by creating division on this matter in clerical ranks.

The activities of the Archbishop of Canterbury have called forth professional antagonism.

Such strategic move was to be expected. To establish a genuinely new order of life—in respect of social justice, mutual considerateness, international fair play (all so horribly outraged in the war world)—might well be a deep concern for leaders of British and American religion. The risk was promptly appreciated by the sort of men described in *Picture Post* as hating plans for a better world. Those reluctant to see any tampering with an order which they have found personally so profitable turn just now an anxious eye upon the Church. They fear a move in the name of religion against social privilege. Queen Elizabeth, who understood so well both the value and the method of propaganda, took great pains with what she called "tuning the pulpits". They are harder to tune in the twentieth century than they were in the sixteenth, but at least the men in the pulpits may be prevented—by appeal to twentieth century clerical individualism — from bringing united support to the social reformers. If a serviceable harmony is unattainable, the second best is a serviceable discord, and readers of the *Church of England Newspaper* during the last three months must have noticed how the leadership of the Primate is being challenged by vociferous insurgents.

The line of attack is insistence on the "purely spiritual" office of the Church, with corresponding admonition to "leave politics alone". In a careful, and in some respects a very impressive, letter the Bishop of Gloucester argues that the Church will have missed her way if she identifies herself as an organization with any particular scheme of political or social change, that religious leadership should be strictly limited to developing a certain type of personal character, and that the projects of government to which men thus religiously educated will devote their effort are for themselves to choose. Dr. W. R. Inge supported the Bishop of Gloucester in an almost passionate communication, declaring it sheer impertinence on the part of any man to proclaim his own view on highly controversial political issues as "the Christian view", and thus by implication to brand high-minded men of different politics as apostate.

This argument might plainly be used to justify very narrow restrictions upon "the prophetic office of the Church". No longer would it permit the preacher to denounce, with Amos or Micah, the institutions and usages of social privilege bearing hard upon the poor; to protest, like Ezekiel, against a foreign alliance

that compromises or degrades the national character; to distinguish after the manner of Isaiah between political policies that are in harmony and those that are at discord with the will of God. Hebrew seers did not make their message less exacting, or blunt the edge of their reproof, by the use of language harmlessly abstract: they said, concretely, what they meant, applying it to the scene before them. They intervened, with no cautious equivocation, in what these recent contributors to the *Church of England Newspaper* would avoid as "politics". Perhaps they had not thought out as carefully as Dr. Inge the principle of mutual considerateness in religious debate: that they were in practice less charitable than he to those from whom they differed in opinion, the reader of *Outspoken Essays* will be slow to believe. Such charity, too, may become more a vice than a virtue. One can practise much soothing imposture, not merely upon the minds of others but even upon one's own mind, by magnifying the difficulties of moral decision about a State problem. Just now a favorite expedient in this casuistry is to dwell upon one's lack of technical knowledge. Perhaps we need to be expert ethnologists in order to judge Hitler's case against the Jews, or trained international lawyers to assess the proposed justification for Japan's raid on Manchuria, or acquainted with numerous local details before we can think both justly and intelligently about the doings in Nazi "Brown Houses" or on Fascist "Isles of Banishment". How easy thus to put ourselves off with an appearance of modesty and of self-distrust, when the motive is altogether different! The attitude of Church leaders in England on the Abyssinian affair and the Czechoslovakian affair called for another Pascal to do it justice. Another *Provincial Letter*, to let sunlight play upon an ecclesiastical dark spot!

We have of late had much irrelevant eloquence, with devotional ring, of the sort I have quoted from the *Church of England Newspaper*. The writers, no doubt, are quite sincere. As Mr. Eugene Lyons has said, in speaking of the Dean of Canterbury, one is often equally impressed by the goodness of a Church leader's heart and by the strangeness of his mind. At least, however, there is nothing mysterious about the mind of certain other public managers whose advantage is served by an austere mysticism in Church leadership. They are quick to emphasize the importance of keeping the Church "purely spiritual". Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler are famous on the continent of Europe for this quasi-devotional doctrine. They have declared their readiness, even their eagerness, to promote the Church's

activity "within her proper sphere", and they always insist to interviewers that their so-called "persecution" of Churchmen has been meant only to check the intrusion upon politics by "unspiritual" divines who would thus misuse their sacred office. Pierre Laval has lately appeared in suggestive support of the same pious isolation. To the Pope's remonstrance on his cruel treatment of Jews in France, the retort came from Laval that priests should limit their concern to religion, leaving government to those whose business it is. Unlike Niemöller, who so notably recognized no such restriction as the Bishop of Gloucester and Dr. Inge would impose! From the Lutheran pulpit at Dahlem very bold language proceeded, regarding the anti-Christian spirit of Nazi government. Niemöller's central thought about this may be found in the very title of his volume of sermons, *God is my Fuehrer.*

II

The spirit of the *Atlantic Charter* is being resisted also by a quite different group, whose method is quite different. No one who remembers the journalism of 1920, in Britain and America, can fail to notice how the systematic disparagement then directed against the *Covenant of the League of Nations* is in action again. Not, indeed, as yet, so freely. President Roosevelt's prestige is still too great at least in Britain, and Mr. Churchill's in the United States, to permit in journals of repute the campaign of ridicule and abuse levelled twenty-two years ago against Woodrow Wilson. But the preliminaries are unmistakable, and sometimes an adventurous publicist, long straining at the leash, bursts forth—to the alarm of his more judicious friends—in a tirade of premature frankness. Lord Cross, for example, in his famous speech about the glories of British imperial rule, and the folly of supposing that the record called anywhere for apologies! The *Daily Express* made haste to apologize for Lord Cross, asking its readers to regard him as what dealers in antique furniture call "a period piece": it was of such interest to hear still, somewhere, from the living voice, sentiments of a generation long gone by. But Mr. Wendell Willkie at least is not to be so put off with excuses. He sees in such men as Lord Cross only a spirit of naive candor that proclaims now, at an inopportune moment, what others are holding strategically in reserve. Mr. Willkie is not satisfied even with Mr. Churchill, finding fault with the Prime Minister's statement that he did not propose to "preside at the liquidation

of the British Empire". Does anyone whose views are of any importance, in Britain or in America, desire to see the British Empire liquidated? Not certainly Mr. Willkie, as his later Toronto speech made so clear. All the more suggestive on that account was the interchange, in which for a moment tempers threatened to rise, though in essence neither was asserting what the other in essence denied. Mr. Willkie had, no doubt, been reading the articles or speeches of imperialists very different from Mr. Churchill, and misconstrued the Prime Minister's language in a sense given it by his least responsible followers.

What those impatient imperialists demand (from motives painfully obvious) is what Point IV of the *Atlantic Charter* has repudiated. To them, as to the men described in a certain merry tale by Mr. H. G. Wells, foreign policy is a game of international sharping, and the British Empire is useful as a conspiracy in restraint of trade. If there is to be (as Point IV provides) equal access for all nations to the essentials of peaceful industry, what will become of interests whose advantage has so long been that of national monopolists and whose weapon has been the tariff. This is the question in many a manufacturer's mind, and there is nothing to puzzle one in the present angry chorus, business alarm disguising itself in the language of patriotism, about sacrifice of the imperial heritage. As Canada's late Minister of Justice used to say, "Profiteering and patrioteering too often coincide".

That there is a genuine difficulty and danger in Point IV of the Roosevelt-Churchill manifesto, is not to be denied. How shall access to the essentials of peaceful industry be provided for defeated militarist Powers without enabling them to rearm for another war? The coal, the cotton, the oil, the fats and much more, by lack of which the "have-not" nations are handicapped for projects we wish to promote, have uses also for projects they must be forbidden. How shall effective surveillance, directed by our tragic memory about "pocket battleships", "purely commercial planes", and other impostures of the twenty-years truce, be contrived to meet this risk? There seems to be no answer except in terms of prolonged military occupation of German and Japanese territory. To this, I think, we must make up our minds. But to safeguard peace is one purpose, to preserve advantages of monopolist trade is quite another, and the tumultuous chorus against "dreamy idealism" is an attempt to confuse the two. "Our trade our politics" is an old, familiar motto. It is the in-

spiration of the noisiest clamor of the moment against clear defining of war aims.

One hates to think that those participating in this clamor do so because they want to nullify the *Atlantic Charter*, and thus for strategic purposes oppose its more detailed statement. Vagueness and ambiguity so lend themselves to evasion! But it is hard to see how anyone can just now participate in the clamor against clarifying war aims, except those either too stupid to realize the needs of "the propagandist front" or too selfish to imperil a trade interest in the common cause. This resistance to clarification is itself among the very reasons which render clarification more urgent, for it is widely construed to mean that the Charter was indeed, in the words of the *National Review*, nothing but "blather and blarney". Paul Josef Goebels and Virginio Gayda are quick to interpret it so. From those best able to judge about feeling in the enemy countries, the most competent of German and Italian exiles in Britain or in America, we have had warning after warning that the chief damper of revolutionary spirit in Germany and Italy is doubt about the sort of European order which the victorious Allies would establish. Professor Salvemini makes bitter lament that short-wave broadcasts in English to Italy have been so disheartening: they commit, he says, the fatal mistake of singling out Mussolini as the sole culprit, and thus convey to the Italian people that once the Duce has been overthrown, the régime of the Royal Family, supported by the Badoglios and Grandis and other accomplices of Fascism, will proceed with the victors' complete approval. In like manner Dr. Hermann Rauschning deplores the persistent neglect (broken, he joyfully acknowledges, by the issue of the *Atlantic Charter*) to set before anti-Hitler Germans in Germany, at least in outline, the spirit which would govern European reconstruction. Can we wonder if Poles and Czechs have their moments of alarm lest a project of "appeasement" may still be biding its time? Or at the fierce outburst from Mr. Wendell Willkie, after his lightning trip to the East, where he had discovered how a pseudo-Imperialism, that fundamentally misrepresented the British purpose, had borne such bitter fruit in Malaya, in Burma, in India?

III

Most suggestive of all that has happened in the last three months to connect British war aims with a new "way of life" has been the publication of *The Beveridge Report*. No such

sweeping programme of State Socialism was ever ventured either in Britain by James Ramsay Macdonald or in France by Leon Blum. Here is the proposal for statutory enactment of Utopia, coming from a Commission set up by Winston S. Churchill, leader of British Conservatives. A plan to abolish the hazards and hardships of poverty, those very hardships and hazards which men of Mr. Churchill's school had so often emphasized as essential for human discipline! A plan to make everyone in Britain so "secure" that, whether employed or unemployed, he or she need have no economic fear about disablement by illness, about responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, or about a destitute old age! What can have so transformed the mental attitude one had learned to expect in a British economist?

In an interview he granted to the press immediately after the publication of his Report, Sir William Beveridge was at pains to show that his proposals are of neither Russian nor American but of purely British origin. No inspiration from the New Deal: none from the Bolshevists! The only important influence he will acknowledge is that from New Zealand practice, and this does not carry him outside the imperial family. Perhaps unintentionally, but for that very reason the more convincingly, he shows his British cast of mind when he argues that his scheme is just a fulfilment and expansion of social policies to which Great Britain has been long committed. Its principle, he says, was forecast in the health insurance and unemployment insurance begun by British Liberals a generation ago, and for the new features he is indebted to the instruction of thirty years trial. This is skilful propagandism for the project, in a country which likes to stick to precedent: an ingratiating touch, which may help with the more easily ruffled of English tempers. It ought not, indeed, especially just now, to count against the wisdom of a Report if one could show the author to have benefited by the social ventures of either our American or our Russian ally. But Sir William has a scientist's concern for accurate statement, and he insists on the vital contrast of his scheme with anything tried either in Moscow or in Washington.

The contrast comes out in such points as these. In the United States there has never been State insurance against sickness: the American employee contributes nothing to a fund for his protection against unemployment, and the amount allowed him when out of work varies with the rate of his past earnings—an inequality of treatment which the Beveridge Plan avoids. Equally remote is the practice of the Soviet Union: there, too,

no personal contributions come from the insured; the amount of allowance from the State in sickness depends on what the employee had been able to earn, and there is no model whatever for the British unemployment proposals—for the simple reason that Soviet Russia has no unemployed.

One can readily understand how previous British experimentation in social security, rather than anything tried elsewhere, was indeed the stimulus of this reformer, when one looks back upon his personal record. A full generation ago, the man whose name is now on countless lips for his revolutionary programme was a young English economist and social thinker, in the rank and file of the reforming party led by Mr. Lloyd George. Those were the piping times of peace—the years 1910,1911,1912—when the chief controversy of British parties (except for the Irish Question and the Women's Suffrage Question) was about the insecure lot of the British workman. Not that the menace of a European war was even then without its haunting anxiety for the more thoughtful! It could not be said that in the years I have mentioned there was everywhere a mood among Englishmen like that of the obstinate optimists just before the Flood, who merely "ate and drank, married and were given in marriage". Announcements of German naval construction on a surprising scale, or demands made suddenly sharper upon the German conscript, disturbed many an Englishman's composure and started many a grave dinner-table interchange. One of the company would observe with emphasis that the trouble all came from stupid disregard of the advice given by Lord Roberts about need for conscription; another would object (with what one now feels to have been pathetic naivete) that the hope of peace lay not in armament but in organized International Labor, and that British workers should "stretch forth their hands to their German brethren"! But the dominant interest in those years at Westminster was in home, not in foreign, affairs, and the principle of cooperative insurance—State and employer acting as partners with the workman against poverty's major perils—had been launched. What Sir William Beveridge proposes now is to press it further, using it to safeguard interests far beyond any which the most daring innovator of 1911 would have ventured to include. With smiling urbanity such as has seldom accompanied an economist's cold logic, he insists that the principle remains the same, and that thus –to be consistent—one should go either backward or forward. It is a safe guess that he has listeners, not a few, who would greatly prefer to go backward, but in the

present public temper they think it indiscreet to say so. What they can more safely risk is the old plea of Lord Baldwin: "Who worries about abstract consistency? British common sense sticks to the judicious concrete."

The hush that has fallen upon those sections of criticism from which protest against proposals such as these has in the past been quick and vehement may indeed be the proverbial lull before the storm. It is incredible, for example, that the organizers of "the Individualist Movement," which last summer filled so conspicuous a place in the London press, will continue silent when Socialism on such unexampled scale is being set forth with apparent official authority. We shall hear again the familiar argument about the vital need for competition, about the peril to industry and thrift if the State relieves the careless and the idle of the chief fears which drive such men to at least intermittent effort. This is an argument with real point, and those whose favorite butt of ridicule is *laissez faire* make a great mistake in speaking of that theory of government as in all respects either foolish or inhuman. It would not so long have held its ground against the State paternalism which it displaced, if it had been as despicable as our present-day Socialists represent it. What the Beveridge Commission, however, urges with a force hard to resist is that the educative advantages of competition can be assured without reducing a great proportion of the British working class to utter penury. Discipline by enterprize and self-reliance does not require that a child be left to learn traffic rules in a crowded city by "the method of trial and error", nor is it needful to preserve the very darkest terrors which have beset the lot of the poor in order to stimulate wholesome rivalry for the satisfactions of a richer life. And what could be further from the "anarchic demagogy" often alleged as a vice of social reformers than the new plan to compel all classes in the nation to save money from their earnings against the proverbial rainy day?

An objection more effective than any which can come from the partisans of a vanished individualism is that based on Sir William Beveridge's own warning about a certain prerequisite for his proposals. They cannot, he says, work at all unless there is cessation of the armaments race, and substitution of cooperative peaceful industry among the nations. So, although it is an all-British scheme, it depends for success upon a change of international practice which many will dismiss as visionary! Obviously no Power will drop out of the armaments race unless it can

be assured that its dangerous neighbors will do the same, and how is this assurance to be obtained? In the sphere of commercial conflict, too, how is it possible for a country handicapped by the higher cost of production which the Beveridge insurance system would involve to meet successfully its rivals? One recalls how Lenin held that Socialism cannot succeed in a single country, because the capitalist operating on lower production costs could always undersell the products of a more generously conducted régime? Will not the foreign manufacturer, free from the burden of Beveridge Scheme premiums, have a controlling advantage in the market? These are difficulties which adoption of Federal Union might remove. And it may be that the Beveridge Commissioners had just this remedy in mind. To propound what plainly cannot be done unless a certain prerequisite is fulfilled is to demand, by implication, the prerequisite.

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The preceding pages were complete when there came into my hands the remarkable article written by Dr. Karl Barth for *Foreign Affairs*, to set forth the spiritual conflict as he had himself watched it within Hitler's Germany during 1933 and 1934, and as he has since watched it from the Swiss frontier city of Basle. I commend to such churchmen as the Bishop of Gloucester and Dr. Inge the accounts here given of an effort not unlike their own at a mystical piety which shuns contamination with "politics".

Dr. Barth writes in no censorious mood of that early attempt by the German clergy to avoid either endorsing or condemning the Nazi movement. He acknowledges that it was his own effort throughout 1933 to "relegate political opposition to the background" and to insist only on being left alone by the State to exercise a religious office. For him and his associates it would then have been enough that they should not be forced into explicit advocacy of the Fuehrer's political and racial doctrine: they made no demands for immunity in denouncing it. If this seems to a foreign critic unworthy weakness, if the note of bitter reproach rises in the foreign press against German Democrats and Social Democrats who had not the strength of character then to speak their mind, Dr. Barth bids us remember the Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans who, as late as 1938, "permitted themselves to be received as honored guests in Berlin, and recorded a reverential—even somewhat envious—admiration of what

they saw there". One's memory confirms this—not without pain; phrases from British journals of the appeasement period, about Hitler's restoration to Germans of their self-respect, come back remorsefully to mind. As if the writers did not know, even then, what it was that Hitler had restored to action in the German temperament!

It was precisely the habit one may call "isolationism in thought" which facilitated, in Dr. Barth's view, the disastrous mistake he now deplores in himself as in others of that German period ten years ago. The separation they attempted was one impossible to maintain. Let it never be forgotten that even the limited resistance at first offered by the anti-Nazi clergy was an act of signal, indeed of unique, courage: "While the German political parties, German jurisprudence, science, art and philosophy capitulated, the churches formed the first opposition to the current which was sweeping all before it." Not because they began as they did, but because "they did not go on from there", Dr. Barth arraigns them. How, he asks, was it possible to mistake a human authority, however powerful, for that of God? A community of "race, blood and soil" for the Communion of Saints? The might of brutality for the power of truth? "Wherever the Christian revelation is recognized and understood, the struggle against National Socialism ceases to be accidental and superficial, and becomes fundamental and essential."

The struggle not only against National Socialism, but against many another social horror, and—by implication—the struggle for social progress. Certainly for the fundamental war aims of a war that is a crusade. Perhaps for a Beveridge Report! Let the impotence of German churches, beginning with their mystical detachment from "politics", be to us something other and more important than an object of lamentation or censure. The most eloquent voice among churchmen of the continent of Europe has here been raised in an indictment which is also a confession. It should serve to warn British churchmen by an example so vivid and so startling.

H. L. S.