

I

The development of recent weeks and months has not brought us nearer to answering the question, who will bet the so-called 'victor' in the present struggle. And yet it has become more and more obvious to all thinking people that western civilisation as such is dangerously threatened in its spiritual and material fundamentals. The following features which characterise the present European situation should be kept in mind as they may shortly determine conditions in the entire world.

(1) Intensified mass destruction of life and economic substance. Economic losses, inescapably bound up with the war, are bringing about such general impoverishment that even victor nations will be grievously affected by them for many decades.

Human losses will be of a magnitude which threatens the very continuance of civilized society for years after the war. This portains not only to the powers at war, but to all nations which, although not directly involved in the struggle, suffer from its manifold repercussions (famine, epidemics, etc.).

(2) Increasingly totalitarian control of national life everywhere. The absorption of all national reserves and resources, economic as well as human, by total warfare is becoming unavoidable even in countries which by temperament and on principle are opposed totalitarianism. Restrictions necessary during such a war are bound to thwart the realm of personal freedom, its cultural and economic productiveness to the point of suffocation.

(3) Trend towards anarchical dissolution. The gradual breakdown of personal security and civil life has already created an extremely vulnerable state of affairs all over Europe. It is impossible to ignore the danger of a complete breakdown of the framework of civilized existence. The military and diplomatic achievements of the Soviet Union are giving a strong impetus of illegal sells of the Third International everywhere in Europe. And Soviet methods in Finland, in the Baltic, Poland and Romania are as applied in 1939-40 do not justify the belief that bolshevism has as yet charged into a form of government adapted to western standards.

II

In view of this situation and its potentialities of catastrophe we consider it necessary to address ourselves to all those on this side of the Atlantic and beyond it who can still realize the scope of danger. We consider it [as] an irrefutable fact that in spite of all differences between individual countries there is as yet such similarity of conditions and community of spiritual heritage between ourselves and the West that the attempts to discuss certain vital dangers which threaten the essence of our common future should be made under all circumstances.

We do not intend to justify our own position, we are ready to accept our due share of responsibility and of guilt. But we feel justified to appeal to the solidarity and fairness which some responsible groups in the West are extending to those forces in Germany which have consistently fought against Nihilism and its national socialist manifestations. The consciousness of this solidarity in thoughts and in deeds seems to us an indispensable condition for continuing this exchange of views. Such solidarity should first express itself in the fact that appeals like this are not flaunted and discredited by wrong use in the press as it has happened in the past. We would particularly ask our friends to do everything in their power to prevent this in the future. Matters which may appear as sensational news on your side of the frontier are often of such a precarious character on ours that a minimum of sympathetic imagination should prevent giving publicity of them. Deliberate attempts to discredit the forces standing behind a message like the present one have been noticeable even in the Christian periodical press. In this respect we can only appeal to your conscience.

III

The most urgent and immediate task to stave off catastrophe in Europe is the earliest possible overthrow of the Regime in Germany. The change can take place either by way of anarchical dissolution or by the establishment of a Government which would return to the standards of civilized Europe.

The first possibility would be tantamount to a wholesale European catastrophe. It would be inevitably linked up with Soviet military success and form the first step towards world revolution by military means.

A success of the second possibility is only conceivable if it is also linked up outside Germany with the final overcoming of European nationalism particularly in its military expression.

The forces in Germany striving for the latter possibility are inspired by the ideas and the circles of the Christian opposition which has crystallized in year of struggle against national socialism. Militant Christianity in its widest sense is the only unbroken core of resistance within the Nazi state, and it has new formed powerful contacts with groups hitherto indifferent to Church and Religion. The key to their common efforts is a desperate attempt to rescue the substance of personal human integrity, equally threatened by Nazism and anarchic Bolshevism. Restitution of the unalienable right, divine and natural, of the human person forms their basic aim. The political and constitutional reconstruction, for which they are working, is conceived in terms of a practical application of the Christian European tradition to modern human needs in the social, political, economic and international sphere.

Seizure of power by these forces in Germany is hindered by the following obstacles:

- (a) The dire necessity of national defence against the Soviet Union and against anarchical developments on the eastern frontier of Germany as well as in the Balkans.

- (b) Existing control of the entire national life by police (Gestapo) and the anticipated difficulty of dealing with Nazi remnants and anarchical outbreaks after the Nazi overthrow.
- (c) The complete uncertainty of the British and American attitude towards a change of government in Germany.
- (d) The movements of indiscriminate hatred anticipated in the event of a sudden relaxation of German control in the occupied parts of Europe.

The last two problems cannot be overcome without international co-operation even at this stage.

IV

Without, for obvious reasons, giving further details of names, dates and programme, it can be said here that our support is drawn from the following groups:

- (1) Substantial parts of the working class
- (2) Influential circles in the army and bureaucracy
- (3) The militant groups in the Churches

These groups agree on the following lines and principles of reconstruction:

- (a) Self-government and decentralisation within Germany.

The structure of the State thus achieved, would be characterized as follows: Breaking up the masses by the creation of smaller and greater units of local self-administration. Application of modern socialist principles in all sectors of political and economic life.

- (b) Self-government and federalism within Germany should be organically connected with federalism within Europe (including Britain) and close international co-operation with the other continents.

This European Federalism within Germany would have the following results: Re-establishment of the right of self-determination within the frame of the European Federation for all nations, particularly those actually under Nazi rule.

We believe in the necessity to reconstitute a free Polish and a free Czech state within the limits of their ethnographic frontiers.

Progressive achievement of general disarmament which we consider to be an economic and social problem as much as a problem of national policy.

- (c) Renunciation of economic autarchy in exchange for free access to raw materials overseas.
- (d) The political and economic reorganisation of Europe must be free of concepts such as 'status quo' and 'status quo ante'. The main emphasis must lie on social and political security.

- (e) The New Germany would be willing to co-operate in any international solution of the Jewish problem.
- (f) Germany would be willing to co-operate with all other nations in order to overcome the misery existing in the countries now under Nazi rule.

V

We consider these points a first basis for talks on a wider and more detailed scale and are ready to join in with all those who are determined to halt this tremendous destruction of all human values. An exchange of ideas seems to us hopeless only as long as we are faced with a one-sided tendency to blame and to judge. There is a definite difference between active crime and criminal negligence. But, whatever the responsibilities are, there should be a common recognition of our failure to deal in a Christian manner with the historical, geographic, economic and psychological factors which have brought the world to the present situation.

We sincerely hope that our still inadequate attempt to do so will be met with frank co-operation in the practical task to face a common future beyond the catastrophe now confronting us all.