GERMANY AND EUROPE

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GERMANY'S relationship to the rest of Europe is one of the issues of this war. This relationship is not fixed but in the process of evolution, and will not receive its final form until some time in the future. Nevertheless, in this article our approach to the subject will be a historical one. The viewpoint from which history is written has always shifted with the times. At present we regard it purely from the political point of view. In other words, we do not wish to reconstruct the past as if it were a thing complete in itself, in order to be able to delve into the spirit of those days; we wish to perceive the great forces and currents which were inevitable, which have produced our Today and which will flow on just as inevitably tomorrow. History is there to teach and interpret politics to us. It is that which moves us to survey history in wide sweeps and to look for those currents that are still flowing today.

What is happening in Europe at the present time has been called a renaissance. It is the second European renaissance. The first one, that of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which spread from Italy all over Europe as far as Paris and London, Basel, Nuremberg and Prague, represented a revival of ancient Greco-Roman culture in its widest sense. It linked the old Mediterranean Europe in spirit with the new Europe of the German and Romanic peoples. Today we are entering upon a second renaissance, a genuine rebirth. What is being reborn is the living unity of Europe. And, just as five hundred years ago, the realization of the Greco-Roman heritage led to a new Occidental culture, so the realization of the Germanic heritage is leading to the forming of a new European family of nations.

THE BIRTH OF EUROPE

The spade, and the exact scientific analysis of that which the spade has brought to light, have presented us with an entirely new vision of Europe's infancy, a vision which has turned the vague feeling of an original unity into certainty. We know now that the European peoples came to be as a result of events affecting the entire continent. A host of people, all of the same race and with the same language and forms of culture, spread out over Europe during the two thousand years from 3000 to 1000 B.C. The starting point was the seaboard area of southern Scandinavia and northern Germany. The borders of this migration, which radiated in all directions, lay in the west in England and France, in the south in Gibraltar, Sicily, and Crete, in the east from Lake Peipus to the Black Sea. One long arm, which quickly withered, reached out across Persia into India.

It cannot be denied that the migrants did not move into empty territory, that sometimes they met with superior forms of culture—e.g., in the eastern Mediterranean—that they joined up and intermixed with those peoples in whose territory they settled. But they were not absorbed; they remained as masters. This original race of Europeans—which we call Indo-Germanic when we mean its affinity of language, and Aryan when we mean its race—made Europe a united
continent by putting its stamp on the various races, languages, and civilizations existing then. Racial mixtures arose everywhere, according to what the original migrating race had found; thus the Greeks and the Romans, the Illyrians, the Gauls, and the Celts came into being. The strongest ingredient, however, in these racial mixtures was represented by the migrants from the north, who had a share in all the new peoples and whose blood constituted the family link. The fact that today, three thousand years after the birth pangs were ended, all the peoples of Europe speak languages which are homogenous in etymology and the structure of sentences and which differentiate only as do the dialects of the same basic form, reveals more vitally than anything else the unifying force of the first European migration.

There followed a thousand years in which the new peoples took on definite character. Then a second migration started from the same regions on the North Sea and the Baltic. It was the migration of those parts of what we have called the original European people which had stayed at home and had evolved into the Germanic people. This Germanic migration, which took place in the dawn of the early Middle Ages, corresponded in extent to the first; it encompassed the entire continent and touched on Asia Minor and the northern rim of Africa. It represented a resuscitation with the old common Aryan blood and was the first Germanic wave to pass over the Occident. Although the states founded in the migration were not long-lived, it is in this very renewal of the blood relationship that we see the meaning of the Germanic migration to Europe.

EUROPE AND THE GERMAN EMPERORS

Goths and Lombards, Vandals and Burgundians, and many other tribes that participated in the migration vanished from history. Only the Frankish state remained. This small Frankish state on both sides of the Rhine was destined to become the new germ cell of the Occident. It developed into the powerful empire of Charlemagne which carried on the traditions of Rome and thereby became the first organized exponent of the new, now Christian Europe.

But Europe had become small. It revolved around the axis of the Rhine and actually only included what is now France, Germany, and Italy. It was based on Romanic and Germanic groups living together. During the ninth century these groups split up again: the German and the French peoples began to take shape and, above all, the German kingdom, the German state, was formed. And now it was the German people which developed its state into that medieval empire which, at least in its claims and ideas, turned European unity into a political reality. The nucleus of the empire was German, but the empire as a whole was European or, to employ the ideas of those times, Christian.

It was founded on three principles: politically, on the idea of the Roman Empire; culturally, on the conception of Greco-Roman culture; in regard to religion, on Christianity. All three pillars of the mighty edifice were supra-national, i.e., Occidental. The human foundation, however, the leadership, was German. The community of European peoples under German leadership—that is what we may call the structure of the Middle Ages. After Occidental life had been flourishing for a thousand years on the warm coasts of the Mediterranean, around Athens and Rome, it returned once again to its original home in central and northern Europe.

PARTS AGAINST THE WHOLE

The unity of medieval Europe did not remain unchallenged for a single moment. The parts of this Europe were fighting for their rights, their rights to develop their own character. But these parts were the peoples or, to be more exact, those groups of human beings which now developed into nations. The general process was that nations were formed, awakened to a realization of their individuality, and strove toward having their own national state. As a parallel development in Germany—namely, the gradual separation of the Church and of
various territories—weakened the empire, one secession followed upon another. The ideal unity of the Middle Ages was destroyed by the process of individualization in the national, territorial, religious, and social spheres. The European and the German processes reached their common climax in the Westphalian Peace of 1648. The German Empire was split up into countless states of all sizes. Europe became a mosaic of independent states which would have nothing to do with each other. There was neither any linking political idea nor any feeling of cohesion, especially as the incipient colonial expansion of the western states directed the latters’ forces overseas.

FRANCE AS THE MASTER OF EUROPE?

So-called equality has never existed in Europe. In every state lives the desire for power. When medieval Germany lost her leading position, France did everything to become her successor. The France of Richelieu and Louix XIV approached this goal, and the France of Napoleon achieved it, although only for a few years. Both Richelieu and Napoleon were aware of the fact that a French hegemony in Europe required the elimination of Germany as a power, indeed, the smashing up of Germany into a number of small rival states. And they acted accordingly. There can be no doubt that Napoleon’s policy was not directed at the welfare of the French national state only; the Corsican was aiming at a European empire. That explains his war against Russia to force her into his European system, and against England who, turned as she was toward the ocean, regarded any European unity as a threat to her rear and consequently opposed any attempt to create such unity.

What Napoleon wanted was not a federation of European peoples but the dissolving of these peoples into a single “Frenchified” large state ruled by France. This idea, typical of French rationalism, awakened the most profound forces in those nations threatened by destruction and led to the irresistible rising of the peoples, the fall of Napoleon, and the sudden end of the planned hegemony.

Those who wish to unify Europe in the future can learn one thing from the Corsican’s experiment: Europe cannot be unified against the will of or without the nations. A united Europe cannot arise from the destruction of the nations but only if the peoples are allowed free rein in their process of development and maturing. England, France, and Spain were early in reaching the stage of maturity. Italy, Greece, Germany, Russia, and the small Slavic and Baltic states of Europe, however, were in the days of Napoleon still on the way to this maturity. These peoples were striving with all their political might for their national states, i.e., for the free and independent organization of their national territory.

So national states were created: Greece, Italy, and Germany in the first wave in the nineteenth century, the Baltic and Slavic states in a second wave in the twentieth century. The European family was split up into individuals. Its members developed their own character more and more clearly and set it in contrast to those of the other members. The fact that the new states were born in revolutions and wars will not surprise any one who has ever looked at the kaleidoscopic picture of Europe: within narrow confines, a multitude of talented and ambitious peoples of great energy and pronounced self-confidence, dwelling close together and frequently intermixing, unrestricted by any superior power in their pursuit of naïve national egoism.

THE II REICH AND EUROPE

Germany had to obtain her national state by fighting against France, in whose tradition it was to regard German unity as a threat to her own greatness. January 18, 1871, the day on which the second German Empire was founded, changed all former foundations and combinations. The vacuum in the middle of the continent no longer existed. In its place arose a new state which, by reason of its extent and population, the industriousness and high culture of its
The Marienburg on the River Nogat near Danzig. Started in 1274 and completed in 1308, this fortress is one of the finest examples of German Gothic brick architecture. In 1309, Marienburg became the seat of the Grand Master of the Order of the German Knights and thus the center of the political life of Eastern Europe.

GERMANIC BUILDINGS IN EUROPE
The Order of the German Knights carried Christianity and German culture far into the East of Europe. At Narva (a place recently much in the news), it built a border stronghold. This castle, shown on the right of our photograph, is characterized by its vertical architecture. A hundred years later, in 1492, Tsar Ivan III of Russia erected the fortress of Ivangorod on the opposite bank of the Narva River. The horizontal lines of this building mirror the endless plains of the Slavic East.

The so-called “Tower of Frederick Barbarossa” in Termoli on the Adriatic. It is known that Emperor Frederick II erected a castle here in the first half of the 13th century. The present castle, however, was probably entirely rebuilt in the 15th and 16th centuries. Other castles built by Frederick II are to be found in Sicily, mighty witnesses to the Mediterranean policy of the Emperors of the 12th and 13th centuries.

In Ravenna stands the mausoleum which Theoderick the Great, the King of the Ostrogoths, built for himself before his death in 526. The hexagonal building is roofed by a huge round stone slab, providing a link between the Germanic barrow and Roman architecture.

Outposts
inhabitants, its military strength and the superior leadership of Bismarck, formed a powerful center to Europe.

How did Bismarck’s empire behave toward Europe? Did it attempt to lead and unite the continent from its central position? Bismarck refrained from any such ideas and limited himself entirely to safeguarding that which had been achieved. Germany and Europe—to him that meant nothing more than Germany in a position of equality among the other states. Europe—that meant a combination of national states among which a balance of power was to be maintained as far as possible. Bismarck knew that Germany needed peace in order to outgrow infancy and attain manhood.

So much for Bismarck. His neighbors, however, thought differently. A newcomer wanted to dine at the same table, a newcomer had snatched a piece of power. But power in its totality does not grow; and what Germany now possessed was taken from others. Although England and Russia had looked on idly when Germany warded off France’s interference, they now felt that the new partner in the European business and on the world markets was becoming too big. They had now to undo that which they had failed to prevent. That is the meaning of the Great War of 1914-18, at least as far as Europe was concerned.

VERSAILLES AND EUROPE

What did the outcome of the Great War, what did the peace dictates mean to the issue of Germany and Europe? Europe had become smaller, for England withdrew again into her imperial sphere, and Russia was eliminated for some time. So Europe was dominated by France, the real victor on the continent. Indeed, Clemenceau had not achieved all he had set out to do—he had been able to enforce neither the dissolution of Germany nor the acquisition of the entire Rhine for France—and his disappointed people sent him into political exile. But Germany’s leading position in the center of the continent was demolished, and all of central and eastern Europe was drawn into the magnetic field of French diplomacy and financial power. The ring of French vassal states extended from Poland to Yugoslavia. The old dream of a European system led by France, where the center was powerless on account of internal weakness and external encirclement, and where the small and medium-sized states were nothing but political and military branch offices of Paris—this old dream seemed at last to be coming true.

For almost twenty years Europe lived under French leadership, until the French system broke down hopelessly. It was bound to break down, as it was built up on conditions which were contrary to all that was essential to the existence of the continent. For France to maintain her leadership, the following three conditions had to be fulfilled: (1) the German center of Europe had to be kept powerless and passive, which seemed to have been achieved by Versailles; (2) the eastern and central European states had to be kept in a condition of hostility toward Germany and toward each other, which was to be provided for by the new borders and the resulting national minorities; (3) these same eastern and central European states had to be included in the French system. The French system could only exist if the body of Europe was stricken with fever, and it was obliged to feed this fever for its own sake.

EUROPE AT THE ABYSS

The result was disastrous. In view of the terrible threat represented by Communist Russia, the disorganization of eastern Europe menaced not only that particular flank but the whole of the continent. Simultaneously, Europe’s weakness gave free rein to British and American imperialism. While France could fall back on her African possessions, the rest of Europe became more and more the object of Anglo-Saxon world capitalism. This exploitation was consciously or unconsciously collaborating with the revolutionaries in Moscow, who saw in the destruction of Europe their
great chance to deliver up the old world to the Communist International. The secret co-operation between capitalism and Communism has now turned into an open alliance, so that the recent past is revealed in the glaring light of the present. Sick Europe was in mortal danger between the two attacking international powers. The downfall of Germany was bound to be the beginning of the end, and Germany's rise the prerequisite for Europe's salvation.

THE THIRD REICH AND EUROPE

This was what that January 30, 1933, the day on which National-Socialism came into power, meant to Germany and Europe. The new Germany, stabilized politically, socially, economically, in possession of a strong army, once again filled the center of Europe with her strength and erected the most powerful obstacle against the Soviet rule of Europe. The new Reich now set about doing what each nation must regard as its natural task: uniting all its parts into one state. It united with Austria and was determined to clear up the national problems in eastern Europe. The continent was crying out for a reorganization of its eastern parts which, owing to Versailles, offered a spectacle of senseless mutilation and of utterly opposed nationalities yoked together in misery. It was the disparity between states and peoples which allowed no peace to the regions between the Baltic and the Balkans.

The multitude of peoples living in Eastern Europe are intermixed and interlocked in their territories. The peoples governing the various states usually represented only a percentage of the total population of these states. Poland and Czechoslovakia, however, the very states which were most mixed, did not travel the path of national tolerance and equality but tried to maintain their supremacy by violence. The fate of millions of Germans outside of the borders of Versailles forced the Reich to intervene. In doing so, the German policy planned to do away with the disintegration of Eastern Europe by a generous settlement of national differences according to the principle of every nation's right to live, a close economic union among the small countries and with the Reich, and finally the creation of a unified political determination to ward off Communism. Germany's attempts in this direction were halted by the outbreak of the present war.

The situation was similar to that of 1914. After the anti-German powers had been unable to prevent the formation of the Third Reich, they attempted now to destroy it and—this is what is important—simultaneously to stifle any European community of nations that might be forming. England, America, and the USSR all agreed in this: England's traditional policy of balance of power meant the dismemberment of Europe; America saw in the new economic system and strength of the continent, which was being brought about by the Reich, an encroachment on her capitalist interests; and Soviet Russia's most powerful trends, imperialism and world communism, aimed at the same goal, namely, to make Europe Russian and Communist, i.e., to destroy it. The question now is, what is to come: a strong, united Europe, or a chaos in which England, America, and the USSR, will quarrel over the booty?

UNITY IS ESSENTIAL

But is not Europe only a word? A geographical term of quite arbitrary borders? Is it not a mere Utopia to speak of a united Europe, after its peoples have for centuries been waging bitter wars upon each other?

We are bold enough to believe in Europe, for we are aware of the strong roots from which the idea of Europe has grown and which nourish it. The community of the Occident is not an ideology—it is founded on the most durable base there is: blood relation. For that reason we placed the birth of Europe from one original race at the beginning of this essay. As a result of this relationship and three thousand years of common history, there is a harmony in the cultural stamp as well as in the mentality and attitude of all Europeans which has long
produced unity in the spiritual and moral spheres. All great changes in religious, artistic, and moral life were common to all Europe: Christianity, the Renaissance and the Reformation, baroque and rococo, rationalism and liberalism, classicism and romanticsim. And in the same way the new political and social conceptions of National-Socialism are already, in a different form in each nation, becoming visibly common to all of Europe. No one can see and feel this more clearly than the European living in Asia or the Asiatic visiting Europe.

So far, however, the racial and cultural links have not been strong enough to unite the continent. The coercion of political reason had to be added. More openly and cynically than ever before, the Allies proclaimed their war aims during the last few months and announced the coming annihilation of the European peoples. And if there is any disagreement among the Allies in this respect, it is only whether the continent is to be turned into Soviet republics or Anglo-American colonies. Without a strong Germany, no individual state in Europe will be able to maintain itself between the huge jaws of Moscow and New York. Europe cannot suffer another fratricidal war among its own nations without falling victim to these jaws. Seen both from the political and economic points of view, Europe will either continue to fight out its own disputes and cease to exist, or unite and live. Today this is no longer mere theoretical speculation but desperate political necessity.

We cannot predict in detail how the new Europe will look. But it will be based on the peoples as representing the indestructible pillars holding up the structure. These peoples cannot be destroyed, nor can they be mixed and, so to speak, put into a chemical retort in order to distill them into a new "European people." Our knowledge of biology prevents us from believing in the possibility of such a solution. That for which the peoples fought for centuries, their national life, will not be abolished. The peoples have developed their own personalities and are conscious of this fact.

The goal will be to unite the peoples into a European federation of nations without any attempt at destroying the personality of each nation. We can compare the nature of this federation and its path through history to that of the human family: at the beginning there is complete unity among all members; then a feeling of independence awakens among the children, they gravitate away from the family, they become individuals who develop their personalities in conflict with each other, and they deny the ties of family; and finally they return into the family and form a new relationship—that of free and equal beings.

While those who eternally live in the past are still discussing a thousand possibilities of saving their own little selves without the aid of all the others, the living conception of Europe is daily and hourly being turned into reality. On the battlefields of the east and at their working places at home, the members of all European nations are now standing in close conjunction with their German leaders, are facing Bolshevist shells or Anglo-American bombs, are working and fighting for the new community of peoples.

Once again, to maintain itself, Europe must preserve its creative center. In fighting for the Reich, the Germans are fighting for the future of the Occidental family of nations. These of the nations which have joined in this struggle are fighting not only for their own people but for a community which alone can safeguard the lives of its members.