

CHAPTER XV: THE RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENCE

After we had laid down our arms, in November 1918, a policy was adopted which, as far as man could foretell, was bound to lead gradually to our complete subjugation.

Analogous examples culled from history show that those nations which lay down their arms without being absolutely forced to do so, subsequently prefer to submit to the greatest humiliations and exactions rather than try to change their fate by resorting to arms again.

That can be explained on purely human grounds. A shrewd conqueror will always enforce his demands on the conquered only by stages, as far as that is possible.

Then he may be reasonably certain that a people who have lost all strength of character (which is always true of every nation that voluntarily submits to the threats of an opponent) will not find in any of these acts of oppression, if one be enforced apart from the other, sufficient grounds for taking up arms again.

The more often the conquered nation submits to extortion, the less justifiable in its eyes is the final revolt against a fresh and apparently isolated, but constantly recurring act of extortion, especially if more and greater misfortunes have already been borne in silence and with patience.

The fall of Carthage is a terrible example of the slow destruction of a people for which they themselves were to blame.

In his *Drei Bekenntnisse*, Clausewitz expressed this idea admirably and gave it a definite form when he said, 'The stigma of shame incurred by cowardly submission can never be effaced. The drop of poison which thus enters the blood of a nation will be transmitted to posterity. It will undermine and paralyse the strength of later generations.'

But he added that, on the contrary, 'even the loss of liberty after a sanguinary and honourable struggle ensures the resurgence of a nation and is the vital nucleus from which a new tree will one day put forth sound roots.'

Naturally, a nation which has lost all sense of honour and all strength of character will not feel the force of such a doctrine, but any nation that takes it

to heart will never fall so low. Only those who forget it or do not wish to acknowledge it will collapse. Hence, those responsible for a cowardly submission cannot be expected suddenly to change their line of conduct in accordance with the dictates of common sense and human experience.

On the contrary, they will repudiate such a doctrine, either until the people becomes habituated to the yoke of slavery or until the better elements of the nation come to the fore and wrest the power from the hands of the infamous corrupter.

In the first case these who hold power will be pleased with the state of affairs, because the conquerors often entrust them with the duties of slave-driver, and they, as utterly characterless beings, are then more cruel in the exercise of their authority over their own countrymen than the most cruel alien appointed to the task by the enemy.

The events which happened in Germany after 1918 prove how the hope of securing the clemency of the victor by means of a voluntary submission had the most disastrous influence on the political attitude and conduct of the broad masses.

I say 'the broad masses' expressly, because I cannot persuade myself that the things which were done or left undone by the leaders of the people are to be attributed to a similar disastrous illusion.

Seeing that since the war our fate has been in the hands of the Jews, and to-day admittedly so, it is impossible to assume that a defective knowledge of the state of affairs was the sole cause of our misfortunes.

On the contrary, we may take it for granted that our people were intentionally brought to ruin.

Looked at from this point of view the apparent insanity of our government's foreign policy is revealed as a piece of shrewd calculating logic, put into effect in order to promote the Jewish idea of a struggle for world-mastery.

Thus it appears comprehensible that the same period of seven years, which, after 1806, sufficed to imbue Prussia (which had been in a state of collapse) with fresh vitality and the zeal for battle, has to-day not only been wasted, but has led to a steady sapping of the vital strength of the State.

Seven years after November 1918 the Locarno Pact was signed. Thus the development which occurred took the form I have indicated above.

Once the shameful Armistice had been signed, our people were unable to pluck up sufficient courage and energy to offer a sudden resistance to the oppressive measures adopted and constantly repeated by the enemy, who was too shrewd to put forward too many demands at once.

He invariably limited his exactions to, amounts which, in his opinion and that of our German Government, could be submitted to for the moment, thus avoiding the risk of an outburst of public feeling.

But, the more frequently single impositions were accepted and tolerated, the less justifiable did it appear to do now, on account of one single imposition or attempted humiliation, what had not been done previously in the case of so many others, namely, to offer resistance. That is the 'drop of poison' of which Clausewitz speaks. Once this lack of character is manifested the resultant condition becomes steadily aggravated and weighs like an evil heritage on all future decisions.

It may become a millstone round the nation's neck, which cannot be shaken off, but which forces it to drag out its existence in slavery.

Thus, in Germany measures enforcing disarmament, oppression, economic spoliation and measures designed to render us politically defenceless followed one upon the other.

The result of all this was to create that mood which made so many look upon the Dawes Plan as a blessing and the Locarno Pact as a success.

From a higher point of view we may speak of one sole blessing in the midst of so much misery, namely, that, though men may be fooled, Heaven cannot be bribed, for Heaven withheld its blessing.

Since that time misery and anxiety have been the constant companions of our people, and distress is the one ally that has remained loyal to us.

Here, too, Destiny has made no exceptions. It has given us our deserts. Since we did not know how to value honour, it has taught us to value liberty through want of bread.

Now that the nation has learned to cry for bread, it may one day learn to

pray for freedom.

Bitter and obvious as the collapse of our nation was in the years following 1918 that was nevertheless the time chosen to persecute with the utmost severity anyone who presumed to foretell what afterwards invariably took place.

This was particularly so when it was a question of 'silencing' warning voices which were unwelcome because unpleasant.

The government to which our people submitted was as hopelessly incompetent as it was conceited, and this was evinced in their attitude towards those who made themselves unpopular by issuing disconcerting warnings.

Then we saw, as we can see to-day, the greatest parliamentary nincompoops, really common saddlers and glove-makers (not merely by trade, for that would signify very little) suddenly raised to the rank of statesmen and sermonising to humble mortals from that pedestal.

It did not matter, and it still does not matter, that such a 'statesman,' after having displayed his talents for six months is shown up for what he is, namely, a mere windbag, and becomes the object of public scorn.

It does not matter that he has given the most conclusive proof of complete incompetency.

On the contrary, the less real the service parliamentary statesmen of this Republic render the country, the more savagely do they persecute all who expect them to achieve something or who dare to point to their failures and to predict similar failures in the future.

Should anyone finally succeed in pinning down one of these parliamentarians to hard facts, so that this 'statesman' is unable to deny the failure of his whole policy and its results, he will find innumerable excuses for his lack of success, but will in no way admit that he himself, is the chief cause of the evil.

By the winter of 1922–23, at the latest, it ought to have, been generally recognised that, even after the conclusion of peace, France was still endeavouring with iron consistency to realise her original war aims. It is inconceivable that for four and a half years France should have continued to sacrifice the none too abundant supply of her national blood in the most

decisive struggle throughout her history in order subsequently to obtain compensation through reparations for the damages sustained.

Even Alsace and Lorraine, taken by themselves, would not account for the energy with which the French conducted the War, if Alsace-Lorraine were not already considered as a part of the really vast programme which French foreign policy had envisaged for the future.

The aim of that programme was the dismemberment of Germany into a number of small states. It was for this that chauvinist France waged war, and in so doing she was in reality selling her people as mercenaries to the international Jew.

This French war aim would have been attained through the World War if, as was originally hoped in Paris, the struggle had been fought out on German soil.

Let us imagine the bloody battles of the World War not as having taken place on the Somme, in Flanders, in Artois, outside Warsaw, Nishni-Novogorod, Kowno and Riga, but in Germany, in the Ruhr or on the Maine, on the Elbe, outside Hanover, Leipzig, Nürnberg, etc.; had this happened, then we must admit that the destruction of Germany might have been accomplished.

It is very doubtful whether our young federal State could have borne the hard struggle for four and a half years, as it was borne by a France that had been centralised for centuries, with the whole national imagination focussed on Paris.

If this titanic conflict between the nations took place beyond the frontiers of our Fatherland, not only is all the merit due to the immortal service rendered by our old Army, but it was also very fortunate for the future of Germany.

I am of the firm conviction (and this conviction often fills me with dread) that if things had taken a different course there would no longer be a German Reich, but only 'German states,' and that is the only reason why the blood which was shed by our friends and brothers during the War was not shed quite in vain.

Events took a different turn. In November 1918 Germany did indeed collapse with lightning suddenness, but when the catastrophe took place at home the Army was still holding a line deep in the enemy's country.

At that time France's first preoccupation was not the dismemberment of Germany, but the problem of how to get the German troops out of France, and Belgium as quickly as possible. In order to put an end to the War, the first thing that had to be done by the French Government was to disarm the German troops and push them back into Germany if possible.

Until this was done the French could not devote their attention to realising their own particular and original war aims.

France was, however, hindered in this by the fact that as far as Britain was concerned, the War was really only won when Germany was destroyed as a colonial and commercial power, and was reduced to the rank of a second-class State.

It was not to Britain's interest to wipe out the German State altogether. In fact, on many grounds it was desirable for her to have a future rival against France in Europe.

France was therefore forced to carry on by peaceful means the work for which the War had paved the way; and Clemenceau's statement, that for him peace was merely a continuation of the War, thus acquired added significance.

Persistently and at every possible opportunity the effort to dislocate the framework of the Reich had to be continued. By perpetually sending new notes that demanded disarmament, on the one hand, and by the imposition of economic levies, on the other, which could be carried out as a result of the process of disarmament, it was hoped in Paris that the framework of the Reich would gradually become unstable.

The more the Germans lost their sense of national honour, the more would economic pressure and continued economic distress be effective as factors of political destruction.

Such a policy of political oppression and economic exploitation, carried out for ten or twenty years, must it was believed, in the long run steadily ruin and eventually disintegrate the most solid national body.

Then the French war aims would have been definitely attained. By the winter of 1922–23 the intentions of the French must have long been obvious.

There remained only two possible ways of confronting the situation. It was hoped that either French determination might be blunted by the toughness

of the German national body, or, that it might at least be possible to do what was bound to become inevitable one day—that is to say, under the provocation of some particularly brutal act of oppression to put the helm of the German ship of state to roundabout and ram the enemy.

That would naturally involve a life-and-death struggle. The chance of surviving this struggle depended on whether France could be so far isolated beforehand that in this second conflict, Germany would not have to fight against the whole world, but in defence of Germany against a France that was persistently disturbing the peace of the world.

I insist on this point, and I am profoundly convinced that it is inevitable that this second alternative will one day come about.

I shall never believe that France will of herself alter her intentions towards us, because they are, at bottom, only the expression of the French instinct for self-preservation.

Were I a Frenchman, and were the greatness of France as dear to me as that of Germany is sacred, I neither could nor would act otherwise than a Clemenceau.

The French nation, which is slowly dying out, not so much through depopulation as through the progressive disappearance of the best elements of the race, can continue to play an important role in the world only if Germany be dismembered.

French policy may make a thousand detours on the march towards its fixed goal, but the destruction of Germany is the end which it always has in view as the fulfilment of the most profound desire and ultimate intentions of the French.

Now, it is a mistake to believe that if the will on one side remains merely passive and intent on its own self-preservation, it can hold out permanently against another will which is not less forceful, but is active.

As long as the eternal conflict between France and Germany is waged only in the form of a German defence against the French attack, it will never be brought to a conclusion, although Germany will, in the course of centuries, lose one foothold after another.

If we study the changes, the line of demarcation of the German language

has undergone from the twelfth century up to our day, in the frontier, within which the German language is spoken, we can hardly hope for future success from an attitude and development which have hitherto been so detrimental to us.

Only when the Germans have fully realised all this will they cease to allow the national will to live to peter out in passive defence, but will rally it for a last decisive contest with France and a final struggle for the realisation of Germany's highest aims.

Only then will it be possible to put an end to the eternal Franco-German conflict which has hitherto proved so sterile. Of course it is here presumed that Germany sees in the suppression of France nothing more than a means which will make it possible for our people finally to expand in another direction.

To-day there are eighty million Germans in Europe, and our foreign policy will be recognised as rightly conducted only when, after barely a hundred years, there will be two hundred and fifty million Germans living on this Continent, not packed together like coolies and working in factories at the bidding of the rest of the world, but as tillers of the soil and workers whose labours will be a mutual guarantee for their existence.

In December 1922, the situation between Germany and France assumed a particularly threatening aspect. France had new and comprehensive oppressive measures in view and needed pledges.

Political pressure had to precede economic exploitation, and the French believed that only by making a violent attack upon the central nervous system of German life would they be able to make our 'recalcitrant' people bow to their galling yoke.

By the occupation of the Ruhr, it was hoped in France that not only would the moral backbone of Germany be finally broken, but that we should be reduced to such grave economic straits that we should be forced to subscribe willy-nilly to the heaviest possible obligations.

It was a question of bending and breaking Germany. At first Germany bent and subsequently broke down completely.

Through the occupation of the Ruhr, Fate once more reached out its hand to the German people and gave them the chance to arise, for what at first appeared as a heavy stroke of misfortune was found, on closer examination, to

be an extremely promising opportunity of bringing Germany's sufferings to an end.

As regards foreign politics, the action of France in occupying the Ruhr really estranged Britain for the first time, Indeed it estranged not merely British diplomatic circles, which had concluded, appraised and upheld the Anglo-French alliance in a spirit of calm and objective calculation, but it also estranged large sections of the British public.

The English business-world in particular ill concealed its displeasure at this incredible additional strengthening of the power of France on the Continent.

Not only had France now assumed from the military standpoint alone a position in Europe such as Germany herself had not held previously, but she thus obtained control of economic resources which, from the practical point of view, combined her ability to compete in the political world with economic advantages almost amounting to a monopoly.

The most important iron and coal mines in Europe were now all in the hands of one nation which, in contrast to Germany, had hitherto defended its vital interests in an active and resolute fashion and which had, during the Great War, given the world fresh proof of its military efficiency. The French occupation of the Ruhr coal-fields effectively cancelled all that Britain had gained by the War, and the victors were no longer the diligent and painstaking British statesmen, but Marshal Foch and the France he represented.

In Italy also the attitude towards France, which, in any case, had not been very favourable since the end of the War, now became positively hostile.

The great and critical moment had come when the Allies of yesterday might become the enemies of to-morrow. The fact that events took another course and that the Allies did not suddenly come into conflict with one another, as in the Second Balkan War, was due to the fact that Germany had no Enver Pasha, but merely a Cuno, as Chancellor of the Reich.

Nevertheless, the French invasion of the Ruhr opened up great possibilities for the future, not only in the field of Germany's foreign policy, but also of her internal politics.

A considerable section of our people who, thanks to the persistent influence of a mendacious press, had looked upon France as the champion of

progress and liberty, were suddenly cured of its illusion.

As in 1914 the dream of international solidarity was suddenly banished from the minds of our German working class and they were brought back to the world of everlasting struggle, where one creature feeds on the other and where the death of the weaker implies the life of the stronger, so again in the spring of 1923.

When the French put their threat into effect and penetrated, at first hesitatingly and cautiously, into the coalfield of the Ruhr the hour of destiny had struck for Germany.

If, at that moment, our people had changed not only their frame of mind, but also their conduct, the German Ruhr could have been made for France what Moscow was for Napoleon.

Indeed, there were only two possibilities—either to tolerate this new move, in addition to all the rest and to do nothing, or to focus the attention of the German people on, that region of sweltering forges and blazing furnaces, thus firing them with the determination to put an end to this persistent humiliation and to face the horrors of the moment rather than submit to a terror that was endless.

Cuno, who was then Chancellor of the Reich, can claim the immortal merit of having discovered a third way, and our German bourgeois political parties merit the still greater glory of having admired him and collaborated with him.

I shall first deal as briefly as possible with the second alternative. By occupying the Ruhr, France committed a flagrant violation of the Versailles Treaty. Her action brought her into conflict with several of the guarantor Powers, and especially with Britain and Italy.

She could no longer hope that those States would back her in her egotistic act of brigandage. She could only count on bringing the adventure, for such it was at the start, to a satisfactory conclusion by her own unaided efforts.

For a German National Government there was only one alternative, namely, the course which honour prescribed.

Certainly at the beginning we could not have opposed France with active armed resistance, but it should have been clearly recognised that any

negotiations which did not have the argument of force to back them up would turn out futile and ridiculous.

It was absurd to adopt the attitude, 'We refuse to take part in any negotiations,' unless there was a possibility of offering active resistance, but it was still more absurd to consent finally to negotiate without having meantime organised a supporting force.

At the same time, it was, of course, impossible for us to prevent the occupation of the Ruhr by the adoption of military measures.

Only a madman could have recommended such a course, but while the impression made by the French action lasted and during the time that that action was being carried out, measures could have been, and should have been undertaken without any regard to the Versailles Treaty—which France herself had violated—to collect a military force which would serve as a collateral argument to back up the negotiators later on.

For it was quite clear from the beginning that the fate of this district occupied by the French would one day be decided at some conference table or other.

It must also be quite clear to everybody that even the best negotiators have little hope of success as long as the ground on which they stand and the very chair on which they sit are not under the armed protection of their own people.

A weak pigmy cannot argue with athletes and a negotiator without armed defence at his back must always acquiesce when a Brennus throws his sword into the scales on the enemy's side, unless he can preserve the balance with an equally mighty sword of his own.

It was distressing to watch the comedy of negotiations which, ever since 1918, regularly preceded each arbitrary dictate that the enemy imposed upon us.

We presented a sorry spectacle in the eyes of the whole world when we were invited, as if in derision, to attend conferences, simply to be presented with decisions and programmes which had already been drawn up and passed a long time previously, and which, though we were permitted to discuss them, had, from the outset, to be considered as unalterable.

It is true that in scarcely a single instance were our negotiators men of more than mediocre ability. For the most part they justified only too well the sarcastic remark made by Lloyd George with reference to Herr Simon, an ex-cabinet minister of the Reich, that the Germans were not able to choose men of intelligence as their leaders and representatives.

But in face of the enemy's resolute determination to acquire power, on the one side, and the lamentable defencelessness of Germany, on the other, even a genius could have achieved but little.

In the spring of 1923, however, anyone who weighed the possibility of seizing the opportunity of the French invasion of the Ruhr to reconstruct the military power of Germany would first have had to restore to the nation its moral weapons, to reinforce its will-power, and to do away with those who had destroyed this most valuable element of national strength.

Just as in 1918 we had to pay with our blood for failure to crush the Marxist serpent underfoot once and for all in 1914 and 1915, we have now to suffer retribution for the fact that in the spring of 1923, we did not seize the opportunity then offered us for finally putting a stop to the mischief being done by the Marxist traitors and murderers.

Any idea of offering real resistance to the French was pure folly as long as the fight had not been taken up against those forces which, five years previously, had broken German resistance on the battlefields by the influence which they exercised at home.

Only bourgeois minds could have arrived at the 'incredible conviction that Marxism had probably become quite a different thing now and that the unprincipled ringleaders of 1918, who callously used the bodies of our two million dead as stepping-stones on which they climbed into various government positions, would now, in the year 1923, suddenly show themselves ready to pay tribute to the national conscience.

It was veritably a piece of incredible folly to expect that those traitors would suddenly appear as the champions of German freedom.

They had no intention of doing so. Just as a hyena will not abandon its carrion, a Marxist will not give up betraying his country. It is beside the point to put forward the stupid argument, that so and so many workers gave their lives for Germany. That is true, but then they were no longer internationally-

minded Marxists.

If, in 1914, the German working class had consisted of real Marxists, the War would have ended within three weeks. Germany would have collapsed before the first soldier had put a foot beyond the frontier.

The fact that the German people carried on the War proved that the Marxist delusion had not yet penetrated deeply, but as the War dragged on German soldiers and workers gradually fell once more under the spell of the Marxist leaders, and to the same degree in which they relapsed, their country was bereft of their services. If, at the beginning of the War, or even during the War, twelve or, fifteen thousand of these Jewish corruptors of the people had been forced to submit to poison-gas, just as hundreds of thousands of our best German workers from every social class and from every trade and calling had to face it in the field, then the millions of sacrifices made at the front would not have been made in vain.

On the contrary, if twelve thousand of these malefactors had been eliminated in time, probably the lives of a million decent men, who would have been of service to Germany in the future, might have been saved.

But it was in accordance with bourgeois 'statesmanship' to hand over, without batting an eyelid, millions of human beings to be slaughtered on the battlefield, and to look upon ten or twelve thousand public traitors, profiteers, usurers and swindlers, as the nation's most precious and most sacred asset and to publicly proclaim their persons inviolable.

Indeed it would be hard to, say what is the most outstanding feature of these bourgeois circles, mental debility, moral weakness and cowardice, or rascally ideology. It is a class that is certainly doomed to go under, but, unhappily, it drags down the whole nation with it into the depths.

The situation in 1923 was similar to that of 1918. No matter what form of resistance was decided upon, the first prerequisite for taking action was the elimination of the Marxist poison from the body of the nation, and in my opinion it was the first task of a really National government to seek and to find those forces that were determined to wage a war of annihilation against Marxism and to give those forces a free hand.

It was their duty not to bow down before the fetish of 'law and order' at a moment when the enemy from without was dealing the Fatherland a death-

blow and when high treason was lurking at every streetcorner at home.

A really National government ought then to have welcomed disorder and unrest, if this turmoil afforded an opportunity of finally settling with the Marxists, who are the mortal enemies of our people.

This opportunity having been neglected, it was sheer folly to think of resisting, no matter what form that resistance might take.

Of course, to settle accounts with the Marxists on a scale which would be of genuine historical and universal importance could not be effected along lines laid down by some secret council or according to a plan concocted in the worn-out brain of some cabinet minister.

It would have to be in accordance with the eternal laws of life on this Earth which are, and will remain those of a ceaseless struggle for existence.

It must be remembered, that in many instances a hardy and healthy nation has emerged from the ordeal of bloody civil war, while from peace conditions which had been artificially maintained there often resulted a state of national putrescence that reeked to heaven.

The fate of a nation cannot be altered with the velvet glove and in 1923 the iron hand should have been used ruthlessly to crush the vipers that batten on the body of the nation. Only after this had been done would preparations for active resistance have had any point.

At that time I often talked myself hoarse trying to make clear, at least to the so-called national circles, how much was then at stake, and that by repeating the errors committed in 1914 and the subsequent years we would inevitably meet with the same catastrophe as in 1918.

I frequently implored them to let Fate have a free hand and to make it possible for our Movement to settle with the Marxists, but I preached to deaf ears.

All of them, including the Chief of the Defence Forces, thought they knew better, until finally they found themselves forced to subscribe to the vilest capitulation in the records of history.

I then became profoundly convinced that the German bourgeoisie had come to the end of its mission and was not capable of fulfilling any further

function.

Then, too, I recognised that all the bourgeois parties had been fighting Marxism merely out of a spirit of competition without sincerely wishing to destroy it.

They had long ago become reconciled to the idea that their country was doomed to destruction and their one care was to secure good seats at the funeral banquet. It was for this alone that they kept on 'fighting.'

At that time (I admit it freely) I conceived a profound admiration for the great man beyond the Alps, whose ardent love for his people inspired him not to bargain with Italy's internal enemies, but to use every possible means in an effort to wipe them out.

What places Mussolini in the ranks of the world's great men is his decision not to share Italy with the Marxists, but to redeem his country from Marxism by destroying internationalism.

What miserable pygmies our sham statesmen in Germany appear by comparison with him!

How nauseating it is to witness the conceit and effrontery of these nonentities in criticising a man who is a thousand times greater than they, and how humiliating it is to think that this takes place in a country which as recently fifty years ago had a Bismarck for its leader!

The attitude adopted by the bourgeoisie in 1923 and the way in which they dealt kindly with Marxism decided from the outset the fate of any attempt at active resistance in the Ruhr.

With that deadly enemy in our own ranks it was sheer folly to think of fighting France. The most that could then be done was to stage a sham fight in order to satisfy the German national element to some extent, to tranquillize the 'seething indignation of the public,' or dope it, which was what was really intended.

Had they really believed in what they did, they ought to have recognised that the strength of a nation lies, primarily, not in its arms, but in its will, and that before setting out to conquer the external enemy, the enemy at home must be exterminated; otherwise, disaster must result if victory be not achieved on the very first day of the fight.

The shadow of one defeat is sufficient to break the resistance of a nation that has not been liberated from its internal enemies, and give the adversary the final victory.

In the spring of 1923 all this might have been foreseen. It is useless to ask whether it was then possible to count on a military success against France, for had the result of the German action in regard to the French invasion of the Ruhr been only the destruction of Marxism at home, success would have been on our side.

Once liberated from the deadly enemies of her present and future existence, Germany would possess forces which no power in the world could strangle again.

On the day when Marxism is broken in Germany, the chains that bind her will be smashed for ever, for never in the course of our history have we been conquered by the might of our enemies, but only through our own failings and the enemy in our own camp.

Since the German Government of that day were unable to decide on such a heroic step, the only alternative left was to house the first course, namely, to do nothing and let things slide.

But, at this crucial moment, Heaven sent Germany a great man in the person of Herr Cuno. He was neither a statesman nor a politician by profession, still less a born politician, but he was a kind of political office-boy who was entrusted with odd jobs.

Apart from that, he was more of a business-man. It was Germany's misfortune that this politicising business-man looked upon politics in the light of business and acted accordingly.

'France has occupied the Ruhr. What is there in the Ruhr? Coal. Then France has occupied the Ruhr for the sake of its coal!'

What was more natural than that Herr Cuno should hit on the idea of a strike in order to prevent the French from obtaining coal?

Then (at least so argued Herr Cuno), they would leave the Ruhr one fine day since the occupation had not turned out to be a paying speculation. Such were approximately the lines along which that outstanding national statesman reasoned.

At Stuttgart and in other places he addressed 'his people' and his people were lost in admiration. Of course they needed the Marxists for the strike, because the strike had necessarily to be an action undertaken by the workers. It was, therefore, essential to bring the worker (who to a bourgeois statesman such as Cuno, was one and the same thing as a Marxist) into a united front with all other Germans.

It was wonderful to see how the countenances of these moth-eaten bourgeois party politicians beamed with delight when the great genius spoke the word of revelation to them. Here was a nationalist and a man of genius.

At last they had discovered what they had so long sought, for now the gulf between Marxism and themselves could be bridged over. Thus it became possible for the pseudo-nationalist to play the heavy Teuton to adopt a nationalist pose and at the same time to extend the trusty hand of friendship to the internationalist traitors of his country.

The traitors readily grasped that hand, because, just as Herr Cuno had need of the Marxist chiefs for his 'united front,' the Marxist chiefs needed Herr Cuno's money. Both parties, therefore, benefited by the transaction.

Cuno obtained his united front, constituted of nationalist chatterboxes and anti-national swindlers, and now, with the help of the money paid to them by the State, the international imposters were able to pursue their glorious mission, which was to destroy the national economic system, this time at the expense of the State.

It was a stroke of genius to think of saving a nation by means of a general strike in which the strikers were paid by the State. It was a command that could be enthusiastically obeyed by the most indifferent of loafers.

Everybody knows that prayers will not liberate a nation, but history has yet to show whether a nation can be set free by 'downing tools.'

If instead of promoting a paid general strike at that, time, and making this the basis of his 'united front,' Herr Cuno had demanded two hours more work from every German, then the swindle of the 'united front' would have been over and done with, within three days.

Nations do not obtain their freedom by refusing to work, but by making sacrifices.

Anyhow, the so-called passive resistance could not last long. Nobody but a man entirely ignorant of war could imagine that an army of occupation could be frightened and driven out by such ridiculous means, and yet this could have been the only purpose of an action for which the country had to pay out milliards and which contributed seriously to devalue the national currency.

Of course, the French were able to settle down comfortably in the Ruhr with an easy mind the moment they saw that such ridiculous measures were being adopted against them.

We ourselves had shown them the best way of bringing a recalcitrant civilian population to a sense of reason, if its conduct implied a serious danger to the officials which the army of occupation had placed in authority. Nine years previously we had with lightning-like rapidity wiped out bands of Belgian *francs-tireurs* and made the civilian population clearly understand the seriousness of the situation, when the activities of these bands threatened grave danger to the German Army.

Similarly, if passive resistance in the Ruhr had really become a menace to the French, the armies of occupation would have needed no more than eight days to bring the whole piece of childish nonsense to a gruesome end.

The fundamental question will always be, what are we to do if passive resistance reaches a point where it really gets on the nerves of our opponents and they proceed to suppress it with force and bloodshed?

Are we still to resist? If so, then we must, whether we like it or not, submit to severe and bloody persecution, and in that case we shall be faced with the same situation which we should have had to face, had we offered active resistance, in other words, we should have to fight.

Therefore, so-called passive resistance would be logical only if supported by the determination to continue this resistance, if necessary, either in an open fight or by means of guerilla warfare.

Generally speaking, such a struggle is never carried on, except in the conviction that success is possible.

A besieged stronghold, hard pressed by the enemy, surrenders, to all practical purposes, at that moment when it is forced to abandon all hope of relief, especially if, in such a case, the defenders are attracted by the promise of life instead of probable death.

Let the garrison of a citadel which has been completely encircled by the enemy once lose all hope of deliverance, and the spirit of the defenders is broken immediately.

That is why, if one considers the consequences to which it must inevitably have led, if it was to prove successful, passive resistance in the Ruhr had no practical meaning unless an active front had been organised to support it.

In that case a tremendous effort might have been demanded of our nation. If all the Westphalians in the Ruhr could have been assured that the home country had mobilised an army of eighty or a hundred divisions to support them, the French would have found themselves treading on thorns.

Surely a greater number of courageous men could have been found to sacrifice themselves for a successful enterprise than for an enterprise that was manifestly futile.

This was the classic occasion that induced us National Socialists to take up a resolute stand against the so-called national battle-cry.

During those months I was attacked by people whose patriotism was a mixture of stupidity and humbug and who took part in the general hue and cry because of the pleasant sensation they felt at being suddenly enabled to show themselves as nationalists, without thereby incurring any danger. In my estimation, this despicable united front was one of the most ridiculous phenomena imaginable, and events proved that I was right. As soon as the trade-unions had nearly filled their treasuries with Cuno's contributions, and the moment had come for passive resistance to change over from inert defence to active aggression, the 'Red' hyenas suddenly broke out of the national sheepfold and appeared in their true light.

Silently, Herr Cuno stole back to his business. Germany was richer by one experience and poorer by the loss of one great hope.

Up to midsummer of that year several officers, who certainly were not the least brave and honourable of their kind, had not really believed that the course of things could take a turn that wits so humiliating.

They had all hoped that—if not openly, then at least secretly—the necessary measures would be taken to make this insolent French invasion a turning-point in German history.

In our ranks also there were many who counted on the intervention of the Reich Army. That conviction was so ardent that it exerted a decisive influence on the conduct and especially on the training of innumerable young men.

But when the disgraceful collapse actually took place, and, after millions of German money had been spent in vain and thousands of young Germans who had been foolish enough to trust in the promises made by the rulers of the Reich had been sacrificed, the Government capitulated in the most humiliating way, public indignation at such a betrayal of our unhappy nation blazed forth.

Millions, of people now became fully convinced that Germany could be saved only if the whole prevailing system were destroyed root and branch.

There never had been a more propitious moment for such a solution. On the one hand, an act of high treason had been committed against the country, openly and shamelessly.

On the other, a nation was, economically speaking, delivered over to slow starvation. Since the State itself had trampled upon all precepts of faith and loyalty, made a mockery of the rights of its citizens, rendered the sacrifice of millions of its most loyal sons fruitless and robbed other millions of their last penny, it could no longer expect anything but hatred from its subjects.

This hatred against those who had ruined the people and the country was bound to find an outlet in one form or another.

In this connection I quote here the concluding sentence of a speech which I delivered at the great trial that took place in the spring of 1924.

“Let the judges of this State condemn us for our conduct at that time; History, the goddess of a higher truth and a finer justice, will smile as she tears up their verdict and will acquit us of all guilt.”

But History will then also summon before its own tribunal, those who, invested with power, have trampled on law and justice, condemning our people to misery and ruin, and who, in the hour of their country's misfortune, took more account of their own ego than of the life of the community.

I shall not here relate the history of the events leading up to November 8th, 1923, and ending with that date. I shall not do so, because I cannot see that this would serve any beneficial purpose in the future and also because no good could come of opening old sores that have only just healed.

Moreover, it would be out of place to talk about the guilt of men who, perhaps in the depths of their hearts, loved their people equally well and who merely failed to take the same path or did not recognise it as the right one to take.

In the face of the great misfortune which has befallen our Fatherland and which affects us all, I must abstain from offending and perhaps disuniting those men who must, at some future date, form one great united front which will be made up of true and loyal Germans and which will have to withstand the common front presented by the enemy of our people.

For I know that a time will come when those who then treated us as enemies will venerate the men who trod the bitter way of death for the sake of their people.

I have dedicated the first volume of this book to our eighteen fallen heroes.

Here, at the end of this second volume, let me again, before the adherents and champions of our ideals, evoke the memory of those men as heroes who, in the full consciousness of what they were doing, sacrificed their lives for us all.

They must always recall the weak and wavering to a sense of their duty—that same duty which they themselves fulfilled loyally even to the making of the supreme sacrifice.

I regard as one of their number that man who, as one of the best among us, devoted his life, in his works, in his philosophy and finally in action, to awakening the nation that was his and ours.

That man was DIETRICH ECKART.

