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A Liberal view of Germany from 1933 to 1939

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A LIBERAL VIEW OF GERMANY FROM 1933 TO 1939

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

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Sara Alpern's biography, Freda Kirchwey: A Woman of The Nation, came out in 1987, just as I was finishing this paper. I was glad to see that she corroborates much of my interpretation of The Nation's focus on Nazi Germany and fascism between 1933 and 1939. I am, also, deeply indebted to Alpern's work for an added dimension to this paper. Much of Sara Alpern's analysis of Kirchwey's partiality toward the Soviet Union is based on Freda Kirchwey's private papers housed in the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College. Understanding this bias in Kirchwey's views allowed me to focus clearly on her interpretation of collective security. However, I am not in total agreement with all of Sara Alpern's assessments. This difference does not detract from either of our arguments as we have dissimilar perspectives gained from a focus on different sources and issues.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The 1930s was a time of tremendous change and upheaval for both Europeans and Americans. Nazi Germany was both the cause and determiner of many of these changes. What were American reactions to these changes? This is a paper about liberal American attitudes toward Germany in the inter-war years, particularly during the years from the rise of Nazism in 1933 to the beginning of World War II in 1939. By examining The Nation's reactions to Hitler, Nazi Germany, and their policies, an understanding can be gained of how it effectively dealt with the ferment of the 1930s.

The Nation is important to focus upon and study on two accounts. First of all, although there may be no specific representative of the liberal press, The Nation was foremost among liberal periodicals. It was a widely read opinion maker whose influence went much further than its numbers in circulation would indicate. Secondly, The Nation demonstrated its ability to integrate its liberal beliefs with its reactions to Hitler and Nazi Germany. In this sense, The Nation is representative of the turmoil liberal thinkers of the 1930s underwent in their coming to grips

with Nazism and its repercussions for Europe and the United States.

The impact and aftermath of World War I led to the development of divergent strands of liberal thought. Some thinkers supported pacifism, others came to accept isolation, and still other liberals adopted collective security. Some judged it necessary to accept and support the Soviet Union while other liberals could not. Although liberals disagreed on the course of action to take in response to Nazism, they shared a common abhorrence and rejection of the policies and actions of the German National Socialists. No one has ever had to deal with the likes of Hitler and as a result, some liberals had difficulties accepting the truth about Nazi policies and actions. Instead they clung to their intellectual beliefs, which were quickly shown to be outdated and inadequate. The problems liberals confronted in coming to terms with Hitler were reflective of the same kinds of difficulties the American public had in responding to Hitler's dictatorship. Some liberals, however, were able to see the truth about Nazism and cope with the upheavals Hitler triggered without violating their liberal beliefs. The Nation is an excellent source because it was foremost among these progressive thinkers.

How The Nation viewed and reacted to Hitler and the Nazis was mainly determined by its liberal view point. A brief history of The Nation, its founder, editors, and basic

concerns will provide a perspective on its attitudes and concerns toward Nazi Germany.

The Nation was first published on July 6, 1865, by its founder and first editor, Edwin Lawrence Godkin. A publisher's prospectus listed the objectives of the newly formed Nation. Three were directed at the advancement of freedom and civil rights in the South. The other goals were "the accurate discussion of public affairs, the diffusion of democratic principles, an emphasis on the importance of public education and an art and literacy criticism."¹ Though the emphasis varied with each editor, The Nation, consistently, kept to its objectives. Godkin was greatly influenced by the liberal thought of his day and it had been his intention to found a liberal non-partisan weekly. Godkin's ambition was fulfilled by The Nation as "its standard of judgment through out all its history has been its conception of that congeries commonly referred to as 'liberalism'."²

What does liberalism mean in terms of the kinds of issues The Nation was concerned with? First of all, liberal thought is rooted in a main endeavor which strives for, as its chief aim, the happiness, freedom, and progress of all

¹Alan Pendelton Grimes, The Political Liberalism Of The New York Nation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. vii.

²Ibid., p. v.

mankind. American liberalism, in addition, counts as one of its tenets the concept of individuality. According to liberal ideas, the success or failure of a society can be measured by how well individuals attain their fullest potential. American liberalism is also identified with the defense of individual civil liberties, which translates to the defense of the minorities of a nation. The liberal concept of liberty includes every single aspect of human life. Freedom of thought, expression, and opportunity are important liberties. American liberals have been advocates for these essential liberties. In fact, liberalism

has demanded a positive program of governmental action to provide the conditions--economic, political, and other--which would give the common man the opportunity to realize the essential dignity to which he is entitled.³

All of the forgoing tenets of liberalism were adhered to by The Nation in its pages and it viewed itself as the defender of liberties not only in the United States but throughout the world. The principles of liberalism were used as the standard by which everything was analyzed in The Nation.⁴ That is why in 1919, the weekly advertised itself as "the foremost exponent of uncompromising liberalism in

³D. Joy Humes, Oswald Garrison Villard, Liberal of the 1920's (Binghamton: Syracuse University Press, 1960), p. 21.

⁴Alan Pendelton Grimes, The Political Liberalism Of The New York Nation, pp. v, ix.

America."⁵ Liberalism was an important element of the character of The Nation's new owner and editor, Oswald Garrison Villard, who took possession of the weekly in 1918. Karl L. Bickel, President of the United Press, declared, in 1928, that Villard's Nation was "[t]he best obtainable barometer on the state of the liberal opinion in the United States."⁶ Villard, who was a graduate of Harvard, pictured himself as a crusading editor and, under his guidance as Editor-in-chief, The Nation was to achieve foremost prominence in the United States as the conveyor of liberal thinking. Not only had the weekly gained the pinnacle of its notoriety under Villard, but its influence as well.

Who was reading The Nation for it to achieve such success and whom did it influence with its liberal opinions and concerns? The Nation was written for a more educated audience than the general masses and "it in part reflected, in part stimulated, but without doubt influenced the political thinking of America."⁷ Writing in 1939, Professor Arnold Thurman believed both The Nation and The New Republic deserved high praise and laurels for their place in American thought. "In this country, periodical literature has been

⁵The Nation 109 (October 25, 1919):536.

⁶Karl A. Bickel The Nation 147 (July 9, 1938):ii, facing p. 53. cited in Alan Pendelton Grimes, The Political Liberalism Of The New York Nation, p. ix.

⁷Alan Pendelton Grimes, The Political Liberalism Of The New York Nation, p. ix.

more important than books and there have been more new notions put across by these two publications than any other two in the history of American letters."⁸

The Nation garnered such high praise because it had tremendous influence upon liberal thinkers. In 1865, the weekly started with a circulation of 5,000, and by 1928, over 40,000 issues were being published each week.⁹ During the years of its publication, up to 1940, The Nation never achieved a vast circulation, yet it was able to influence important, prestigious people in the world: newspaper writers, college professors, and government leaders.¹⁰ The journal, in addition, counted among its subscribers libraries, universities, and other educational centers. The Nation's contributors included such influential people as Harold Laski, Ramsey McDonald, Archibald McLeish, William Gram Sumner, Stuart Chase, Freda Kirchwey, Bertrand Russell, H. L. Mencken, Louis Fischer, Reinhold Niebuhr, Thomas Mann, and many others.

Oswald Villard knew that The Nation was an influential part of American journalism, and when he left

⁸Arnold Thurman cited in Malcolm Cowley and Bernard Smith, Books That Changed Our Minds, (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1939), pp. 8-9.

⁹Michael Wreszin, Oswald Garrison Villard, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 196.

¹⁰Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey: A Woman of The Nation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 158.

the editorship in 1932, he wanted to insure the same high standards for its future. He asked Freda Kirchwey to become the executive editor of the editorial board. Villard believed Kirchwey would carry on the traditions at the weekly. Villard remained at The Nation writing his column, "Issues and Men." Freda Kirchwey wanted to maintain the same crusading nature of the journal. This was nothing new at the weekly. "'From the days of Godkin down The Nation has in the strictest sense been a propaganda journal. I mean simply a journal devoted to fighting with words for the particular set of beliefs which its editors and owners have held'."¹¹ There was a continuance of the same liberal standard through Kirchwey's fight against fascism. Even though Kirchwey carried on in the same spirit, there was a difference in her editorship. What was new in Kirchwey's use of The Nation was the stress she placed on it as a way to fight fascism and the ills it perpetuated. Kirchwey saw the fight against the fascists as a moral issue. The struggle against fascism, for the new editor, was a battle between "Good and Evil." She believed that if fascism won the battle, the world was doomed. Kirchwey, therefore, envisioned the fight against

¹¹Freda Kirchwey, speech, August 30, 1939, p. 2, #324, Freda Kirchwey papers Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, MC 280 (hereafter cited as FK MSS) cited in Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey, p. 100.

the Nazis as her crusade to create hope for the world by the "successful resistance to international fascism."¹²

So powerful was Kirchwey's desire to fight fascism, Hitler, and the Nazis that it interfered with her judgment of the Soviet Union's purges of 1934-38. Despite the abhorrent actions of the Soviets, she continued to include them as part of her collective security stance. The Nation, however, was not a mirror of Freda Kirchwey's viewpoint. The journal did not reflect only her views toward collective security. The whole range of liberal thought from extreme pacifism to a more militant collective security was presented in many issues of The Nation. Most of the editors at the weekly agreed with Kirchwey's assessment of collective security. American neutrality policy was supported by only one man, Villard. His disagreement with Kirchwey and the other editors grew so intense that by late 1939, Villard was forced to resign. In 1937, the weekly was sold to Kirchwey; as a consequence, her views toward the Soviet Union became more dominant in its pages.

The Nation's fight against fascism, Hitler, and the Nazis during the inter-war years and the preponderance of articles on the German situation is the main reason it was chosen as the primary source for this paper. Issues of both The Nation and The New Republic were examined for the years

¹²Freda Kirchwey to Hugo Van Arx, March 18, 1938, #108, FK MSS cited in Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey, p. 101.

between 1933 to 1938. The Nation's articles and editorials easily outnumbered The New Republic's output by a two to one margin. A more radical publication, The New Masses, realized, in 1933, that The Nation was leading the fight against fascism in Germany. An appeal was made to the readership of The New Masses. "There are two things we can do about the experience of the last six months in Germany. One is to scream like the Nation."¹³

Due to its high visibility on German fascism, The Nation makes an excellent source. The weekly is rich in material and its arguments are effectively presented in several formats. Some articles are in depth analyses of Nazi Germany and its policies while other articles are eyewitness accounts. Several reporters were sent to Germany to observe conditions first hand. Other articles were contributed by people who had actual experiences in Germany. For example, a memoir by a former concentration camp inmate was printed. Letters from Germany, detailing German events and atrocities, were printed in the pages of The Nation. In addition, the journal presented its attitudes and views in its editorials. Because The Nation printed such a variety of reporting, its crusade against fascism is more persuasive. All of The Nation's various forms of arguments, taken

¹³Scott Nearing, cited in "Against the Fascist Terror in Germany," The New Masses (April, 1933), p. 12.

together, were highly effective tools in Freda Kirchwey's battle against the German fascists.

Analyses of the various issues presented in The Nation reveal that the journal was concerned about several aspects of Nazi rule in Germany. Chapter II, of this paper, summarizes the attitudes of The Nation toward Hitler's coming to power in 1933, and the rulers of Nazi Germany. To begin with, the conditions that allowed Hitler to establish his dictatorship are accurately portrayed. In addition, the journal believed the fascist rulers to be deplorable men with no favorable personal characteristics. The weekly not only wanted to expose Nazi leaders for the kind of men they were, but it also desired to give its readers a view of the kind of man and leader Hitler actually was. Hitler had hypnotized the German people, but The Nation was not taken in by his effective rhetoric. This negative view of Hitler's character did not mean, however, that The Nation underestimated Hitler's abilities. On the contrary, the weekly understood what he was capable of in his rule. Hitler was the true dictator of Germany's future and this was portrayed by the journal with clarity.

The most destructive element of the Nazis was the violent nature of their personalities and, hence, the savage policies of the Third Reich. This argument is presented in Chapter III. The Nation believed the Nazis abused many people and persecuted various groups in Germany to cement

their dictatorship in place and to further their various policies. The Nazis, through legal means (by promulgation of laws) and illegal methods (generally violent in nature), were able to alter Germany to their desires and convictions. In general, women, most political and cultural groups, and minorities (especially the Jews) suffered the most under the Nazis actions. The Nation reported what happened to Nazi victims, the humiliation and the atrocities they suffered.

One of the groups of people which suffered considerably under Nazi rule was the workers of Germany. Chapter IV presents a summary of The Nation's report of the economic conditions in Germany during the inter-war years. Though the Nazis were unsuccessful at first in changing the economic conditions in Germany (which was what The Nation expected), the Nazis were able to achieve success by instituting full employment through their armament program. The weekly contended that the workers gained no benefit from any of the programs established by the Nazis. Only the state benefited and, in this case, the state meant Nazism. Individuals were not meant to benefit. Hitler instituted other programs and policies to achieve his aspirations. The Four-Year Plan, propaganda, heavy taxation of German citizens, and an increased national debt were methods utilized by Hitler to gain his goals. Hitler wanted a war time economy and financial independence from other nations to achieve his domestic and foreign policy aspirations. The

Nation linked Germany's lack of essential raw industrial resources to Nazi intent to seize regions and countries that could supply the needed materials to equip the Third Reich with the weaponry necessary for a highly mechanized war.

According to The Nation, Hitler needed the weaponry that German industry could supply because of his ambitious and aggressive foreign policy objectives. Chapter V is an analysis of Hitler's goals and how he intended to execute them. This chapter also summarizes the journal's response to Hitler's foreign policy. Hitler intended to revise the Treaty of Versailles. He wanted the regions and nations that he believed were Germany's right. The Nation realized Hitler wanted to achieve his pan-Germanic empire as swiftly as possible. The Third Reich began the process by pulling out of the League and starting its armament program. Next, Hitler marched his armies into the Rhineland and waited to see if Germany was going to be successful in its attempts at Anschluss with Austria.

If Hitler was to achieve all of his goals, The Nation believed he would have to use additional methods for his intended takeovers. Hitler used a couple of methods in his attempts to carry out his plans. Nazi agents and propaganda cells were recruited and organized to achieve Hitler's goals.

The rest of Europe was unable to stop Hitler. The Nation declared there was one answer to keeping the United

States out of the upcoming war. Collective security, expressed through economic sanctions and military involvement, if necessary, was advocated by all except one at the journal. In addition, collective security advocates delineated their objections to neutrality. By 1939, The Nation, through Freda Kirchwey, had progressed in its view to advocating the need for international military conscription to halt German fascism. The weekly asserted the United States was in real danger from the Nazis; therefore, American national security became part of the concerns of the weekly. The horrors and destruction that were occurring in the rest of the world could easily entangle the U.S. The Nation did not want America sucked into the Nazi vortex without preparation. The journal wanted the United States to emerge victorious from any such contest. The future of the world was at stake. The Nation assumed the worst of the National Socialists from the very moment they achieved power in 1933.

CHAPTER II

THE NATION'S ANALYSIS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THIRD REICH AND ITS ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NAZI LEADERSHIP

The Nation presented an accurate analysis of how Hitler attained power and entrenched his dictatorship in Germany in 1933. The times were indeed ripe for Hitler's effective techniques and manipulation. The weekly, on many different occasions, expressed its attitudes toward Hitler as the man and the leader of Germany. There is much to be learned from The Nation's attitudes toward Hitler and his spawn, National Socialism, as well as the rest of the Nazi leaders. The weekly saw no merit in Hitler's coming to power as it was certain his rule would have a destructive impact on Germany. The Germans' acceptance of Hitler was based on a fabric of lies, but because of their national character flaws, they shared the responsibility with the Nazis for following Hitler. The Nation did not accept that Hitler had the proper character to lead. He was considered an uneducated "barbarian" and the rest of the Nazis were described in less generous terms as moral degenerates. It was considered deplorable behavior when the Nazis lied about their treatment of the Jews and to governments to further

Nazi foreign policy goals. Though the journal was disgusted by Hitler and his behavior, it did not underestimate him in any way. The Nation did not consider him to be a dupe of any one individual or group; instead, Hitler was the one in complete control. Most of what was written in The Nation about Hitler, the man, came from the early period of the Third Reich and the time right before the war. The Nation never praised Hitler in an unsparing manner, nor did it ever want to validate any of his words and deeds. The Nation's consideration of Hitler began when he took office and became a menace to Germany.

The Nation examined how Hitler came to power in 1933. Germany, in the early 1930s, was a country in turmoil and, as a result, the Weimar Republic was in trouble. The rise of fascism as a solution for Germany's problems was not an inevitable outcome. It was the chance happening of people and events that coincided with circumstances, set up by history, that made Germany ripe for the fascists. Hitler was appointed Chancellor of the Republic by President von Hindenburg on January 30, 1933. He became the head of a coalition government which seemed to be dominated by conservatives. After the new government was formed, Hitler demanded the right to hold new elections. The Chancellor received his wish and the elections were set for the fifth of March. The Reichstag was dissolved on the first of February, only two days after Hitler had assumed office.

During the election campaign, the Nazis openly utilized terror tactics against all political opposition, especially the communists and social democrats. However, it was the burning of the Reichstag on the twenty-seventh of February that allowed Hitler to further his quest for absolute power. The Nazis arrested five men, who were alleged communists, for the arson. A communist scare was fomented throughout Germany by the Nazis. President von Hindenburg was persuaded by the cabinet to issue a decree which, in effect, abolished basic rights conferred by the Weimar constitution. This decree restricted the press and the activities of other political groups. It, in effect, muzzled the communists and the social democrats. In the plebiscite, on the fifth of March, the Nazis gained only 43.9 per cent of the votes cast by the Germans. It was only with the coalition of other nationalists that the Nazis were able to gain a majority of 51.9 per cent.¹ With the promulgation of the Enabling Law on the twenty-third of March, Hitler consolidated his powers and a totalitarian regime was established in Germany.

The Nation argued that many events and circumstances were behind the founding of a totalitarian Nazi regime in 1933. H. Brüning established a precedent for Hitler by initiating a method for avoiding the Reichstag. The President became the key. Brüning dissolved the Reichstag in

¹K. Hildebrand, The Third Reich, (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 5.

1930 and governed by decree. As a result, Brüning "became responsible not to the will of the Reichstag but to the whim of the President."² Because of Brüning and his methods, it therefore became possible for President von Hindenburg, an ailing 86 year old suspected of senility, to appoint Hitler to a position of power. In addition, Hitler would not have been able to achieve control of Germany without the existence of other conditions. One of these was the economic situation in Germany.

In 1932, German economic conditions were appalling as the Republic was one of the hardest hit by the depression. Fully one-half of the German workshops and businesses were closed and over one-third of the work force, 6 million, was out of work with no prospect of a change.³ The Nation believed the socialist governments, after the war, did not go far enough in their programs; they were not thorough enough in their reorganization of the old regime. Many reactionaries, imperialists, and militarists were left behind in Germany and not replaced by the new order. Also, the Treaty of Versailles, which was forced on the Germans after their defeat in 1918, made governing for the Weimar Republic more formidable. The collapse of the

²John Gunther, "Who Killed the German Republic?," The Nation 136 (May 10, 1933):527.

³"The German Republic Totters," The Nation 134 (June 22, 1932):695.

Republic was a direct result of these factors which occurred during the crucial years after 1918, according to The Nation. In summation, the weekly believed many factors were responsible:

the economic distress; the sense of infinite wrong done to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles; the false accusation of sole responsibility for the war; the Ruhr invasion; the frightful loss of wealth due both to the war and to the inflation, and many other factors.⁴

These incidents contributed to the Republic's inability to govern "plus the weakness of the government, the failure to carry the revolution through with vigor, and the survival of many militarists and monarchists are . . . the reasons why the German Republic totters" and would, eventually, fail.⁵

When Hitler won the elections in March 1933, a tone was established by The Nation during this period that was to be repeated over and over for the next few years. The weekly saw no merit in Hitler's coming to power. Europe, as a consequence, had gained another fascist dictator at the cost of the freedoms of the German people. The Nation contended "the only redeeming feature of this disaster to the democratic and liberal movements is that he won the Chancellorship by constitutional methods without resorting to violence."⁶ This particular comment is not to be

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Editorial, "Hitler Wins," The Nation 136 (March 15, 1933):277.

construed as a compliment. The journal believed Hitler to be "incompetent to lead," because he knew nothing of financial and economic issues. Hitler came to power because he "deluded the masses who have looked upon him as a veritable savior."⁷ Hitler was no such person; in fact, the truth could not be further from the Germans' perceptions. The final analysis, for The Nation, came to whether the German people would allow themselves to be intimidated "or will rise against the most unprincipled demagogue yet to curse Germany."⁸

Obviously the German people were not going to immediately overthrow Hitler. After Hitler had been in power for six months, The Nation analyzed the impact of the Nazis on Germany. In so doing, the weekly gave an open account of its attitudes toward Hitler. It recognized Hitler to be remarkable in at least one way; he persuaded the Germans to vote away their freedoms. The establishment of totalitarian regimes are common throughout history, "but never before has a nation enjoying full right of speech thrown out its arms to a tyrant and voluntarily riveted the chains about its own neck."⁹

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Harrison Brown, "Six Months of Hitlerism," The Nation 137 (August 2, 1933):121.

The German people believed in an aberration, who had persuaded them to accept him for something he was not, a leader. In these words The Nation described Germany's attraction to Hitler. The German people's belief in Hitler was based on more than a delusion as their faith in him was founded on a fabric of lies. Hitler did better in this than Machiavelli could wish for. "Never has there been a national movement so entirely built upon falsehoods and never have there been people so eager to swallow them as the exhausted and ill-treated Germans."¹⁰ Hitler had the capacity to see the attributes of the German people that he would be able to manipulate. Despite this particular ability, The Nation did not believe that Hitler was, in general, an educated or civilized person, deserving of the leadership of Germany. There were too many contradictions in Hitler's personality; in fact, he was crude and somewhat illiterate. A reading of Hitler's Mein Kampf would confirm these observations. The Nation described Hitler's book as "seven hundred leaden pages of autobiography."¹¹ It portrayed his book as a "turgid mass of undigested history and personal self-revelation which today cannot be quoted against him with[out] deadly effect. . . ."¹² Not only did Mein Kampf

¹⁰Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Nazi Child-Mind," The Nation 137 (November 29, 1933):614.

¹¹Harrison Brown, "Six Months of Hitlerism," p. 121.

¹²Ibid.

reveal much about Hitler's view of the world, it revealed much about the man. Hitler did not have the character needed to be the ruler of a great country. He was uncouth and illfitted for the role. "Rarely indeed can one aspiring to leadership so blatantly have dubbed himself an ignorant barbarian."¹³

Hitler was a "barbarian." This explained much of his behavior and his fellow Nazis' actions. In the process of taking control of the government in 1933, Hitler overthrew much of what The Nation valued in western civilization. The weekly reacted to these Nazi atrocities toward humanity with an almost palpable passion, rarely written with such eloquence in Western journalism.

It is to be noted that an attack of unrivaled strength and ferocity is being launched against the life of the mind as such, against all intellectual values, against all disinterestedness of thought, of research, of aspiration, against the slowly won rights of the human spirit and the freely functioning personality, against every principle and every truth and every freedom that men have lived for and often died for since the Renaissance, against all that has constituted for so long the very charter of humanity itself.¹⁴

The "barbarians of the north" were perpetrating these terrible crimes against humanity; what The Nation valued in western culture was being destroyed. To uphold its suppositions, the weekly quoted frequently from Hitler's

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ludwig Lewisohn, "The New Kultur," The Nation 136 (June 21, 1933):696.

autobiography. The evidence in his book revealed he would purposely lie if it suited his purposes. The Nation paraphrased Hitler's words in Mein Kampf to his followers, "quite plainly in order to achieve power they are justified in deceiving the German people and employing every form of violence."¹⁵ Hitler's government lied about many issues, The Nation insisted, by far the worst duplicity, on Hitler's part, was over the Jewish question.¹⁶ His government consistently denied that Jews were being physically abused or that their businesses were being confiscated and destroyed by German agents. The government also attempted to disassociate itself from any unpleasant incidents that occurred during the early days of the Nazi regime. Jewish survivors of atrocities committed in Germany were interviewed by The Nation's reporters. In every single instance, they reported, violence was committed by organized bands of Nazis, and usually they were acting under orders.¹⁷ The Nazi government "issues denials, punishes Jews for spreading atrocity stories, expels honest correspondents, and continues to encourage the very violence and

¹⁵Philip S. Bernstein, "Can Hitler Be Trusted?," The Nation 137 (December 27, 1933):728.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Richard Neuberger, "The New Germany," The Nation 137 (October 4, 1933):376-79. and Philip S. Bernstein, "Can Hitler Be Trusted?," p. 728.

confiscation it is denying."¹⁸ Murder, beatings, boycotts, and confiscation of property continued in the Third Reich. Apparently, Hitler learned he could not openly destroy a minority without enraging world opinion. Instead, he proceeded to crush the Jews and at the same time pacify world opinion with his ludicrous denials.

Although the denial of atrocities committed against Jews was part of Hitler's dishonesty, another side of his duplicity became clear to The Nation after the Third Reich began to fulfill its pan-Germanic policy. Hitler lied repeatedly to the leaders of other nations about his intentions toward the rest of Europe. He was not reliable; his word had no credibility. Hitler was completely "ruthless, and thinks no more of breaking a promise than he would of breaking a kitten's back. All his moves are calculated to achieve his objectives, and he is entirely devoid of scruples."¹⁹ Hitler would lie to achieve his goals, and he did so again and again. The Nation deplored the attitudes and conduct of Hitler, in particular as he was the leader of Germany. At times, the journal would vacillate between hope that Hitler's actions would be minimized by others, and acceptance of the consequences of his nature.

¹⁸Philip S. Bernstein, "Can Hitler Be Trusted?," p.728.

¹⁹Paul Y. Anderson, "It's All in 'Mein Kampf'," The Nation 147 (October 8, 1938):343.

This, to the contrary, did not mean that the journal underestimated Hitler in any way.²⁰ As early as 1934, The Nation expressed the opinion that even though Hitler was not what he seemed at times and that he was illiterate, he was not an idiot or fool and no other group controlled him.

Many people, during the first couple of years of Nazi rule in Germany, believed Hitler was the dupe of one group or another. If it was not the industrialists, then it was the military command of Germany that controlled Hitler. The Nation did not support either view. The most serious supposition was that Hitler was commanded by the army or that the Reichswehr would eventually overthrow him. "And I am convinced that it is an illusion to count on the overthrow of Hitler by the Reichswehr, and a mistake to suppose that he is under the domination of the military command."²¹ The military command probably needed Hitler more than Hitler needed it. Even though the winter of 1934 was evidently going to be a perilous one--with shortages of both food and fuel--most Germans still supported Hitler. The Führer was capable of this domination. "Hitler is really, not merely nominally, the complete master of Germany and is still the demi-god of the great majority of the German

²⁰Louis Fischer, "Fascism and Bolshevism," The Nation 138 (April 4, 1934):381.

²¹Robert Dell, "The Future of Hitler," The Nation 139 (September 19, 1934):321.

people."²² The military command must have been cognizant of this situation. The Nation's assessment of Hitler's mastery of the Reichswehr came before the evidence fully supported its supposition, as the army, later in 1938, was required to swear allegiance to Hitler alone. Was any of the Nazi leadership better than Hitler? The Nation discovered they were as bad as Hitler.

The weekly had another source in its formation of its opinion of Hitler and Nazism. It examined the rest of the Nazi leaders for abilities to lead and command. One could almost expect what The Nation believed these "destroyers of Humanity," the Nazis, were like. The journal did not mince words in its evaluation. "It is a horrifying fact that Germany today is ruled by men of a type such as have never before governed a great nation: drug addicts, murderers, thieves, forgers, and moral decedents."²³ One would think The Nation must be describing hooligans off the street rather than the leaders of a prominent European government. According to The Nation, these were not mere words of abuse, these were terms that it asserted "describe the commonly recognized character of most of the chief leaders of the movement."²⁴

²²Ibid.

²³Harrison Brown, "Six Months of Hitlerism," p. 124.

²⁴Ibid.

Most of the men, who followed Hitler, had lived on the fringes of society after the war "exercising the only trade they knew, hell-raising as outlaws. . . ." ²⁵ The Nation did not hesitate to delve into their characters just as it did with Hitler. Many of Hitler's cohorts were military men, remnants of the war. Though some had not served with the military, all were products of that era. Hermann GÖring, Aviation Minister of the Reich, had been a war ace in the last war. However, this did not speak well for GÖring because "he is, like RÖhm, accused of a secret vice, morphinism, which, impressive documents are adduced to show, once confined him in an asylum. . . ." ²⁶ Many of his other vices were well-known, including his liking of the sumptuous life style. Ernst RÖhm was leader of the SA division of the Brown Army and Reich Minister without portfolio. RÖhm's drug addiction was notorious and so were his sexual exploits with boys. Dr. Paul Josef Goebbles, Propaganda Minister, "is no longer a man. He is a titan, a god. His detractors are in jail and his play is performed, to empty houses but to the frenzied applause of all surviving drama critics." ²⁷ Many of the critics who criticized Goebbles novel, Michael, were interred in prison

²⁵ Miriam Beard, "Who's Who in Nazidom," The Nation 138 (May 2, 1934):501.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 502.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 503.

for their honesty. Several other Nazi faithful were rewarded guardianship of the "new Germanic soul." For example, the German Labor Front Minister, Dr. Ley was "a notorious rowdy and drunkard, condemned once by regular courts for assault."²⁸ Many Nazi leaders, mentioned by The Nation, had been tried for crimes of violence and a few were implicated in murders. This was not a group of highly respected citizens leading the new state. These were men the world could not respect and, thus, support. In short, "the Nazis are friends neither to peace nor to organized society. . . ."²⁹ The character of the Nazi leadership definitely betrayed what the National Socialist movement was all about. If the followers of Hitler shared equally with the Führer in responsibility, what of the German people themselves? What were the attitudes of The Nation toward them? Were the German people responsible and for what reasons were they willing to accept Hitler?

The Nation clearly believed the ready acceptance of Hitler by the people of Germany revealed faults in their national character. Hitler was successful because "the Germans, always victims of an inferiority complex and always stirred because the rest of the world will not accept them at their own valuation as the greatest of all

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p.504.

nations. . . ."30 Hitler was well aware that these feelings existed in the German people and they were "ready to believe anyone who plays up to their national prejudices and tells them what they wish to hear about their terrible maltreatment."31 Hitler's success with the Nazi movement was undoubtedly due to something in the German subconscious. Hitler was convinced that race decides the national character of a people. Race does not determine national character, according to The Nation, but other factors do. National history, environment, climate, upbringing, institutions, and other causes are responsible for the formation of national character.32 Of course not everyone shares in the same characteristics, but enough people must for a national character to exist.

The Nation explained about the German national characteristics that were their undoing in both 1914 and 1939. "In Germany an important factor has been the bad influence of certain German philosophers, notably Hegel and Fichte."33 The journal went on to single out the German

³⁰Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Nazi Child-Mind," p. 614.

³¹Ibid.

³²Robert Dell, "The Menace of a United Germany," The Nation 149 (December 23, 1939):704.

³³Ibid.

characteristics that got them into trouble in 1914 as well as 1939.

Among the chief German national characteristics are an inferiority complex, a craving for a FÜhrer, and an abnormal lack of common sense, which means a lack of political sense. . . . The unification of Germany in 1871 intensified the faults of the German character and converted Germany into a huge machine which crushed whatever independence there was and destroyed individual initiative.³⁴

A combination of German character flaws, along with the economic conditions in 1933 and the subsequent actions of both France and England, brought the Nazi movement to success in their bid for power. However, The Nation's position was that none of what happened in Germany after 1933 would have been possible, regardless of other circumstances, without the national characteristics of an inferiority complex, a need for strong leadership, and an inability, on the people's part, to see the political consequences of their actions.

Hitler commanded an abject following. The Nation clearly thought little of Hitler as a person and as the leader of Germany. It deplored his conduct and condemned his views. Hitler's goals and aspirations, first to control Germany and then Europe, destroyed all German freedoms. The Nation held these freedoms to be essential for humanity. With the destruction of German liberties, Hitler crushed the soul and character of the German nation. Other Nazi leaders

³⁴Ibid.

did not add to an acceptable picture of leadership in Germany. The German people shared some responsibility, their national character flaws allowed them to either accept or support Hitler. The deplorable Nazi character disrupted German life and the resultant consequences not only devastated personal liberties but racial minorities and dissident views as well.

CHAPTER III

NAZI ABUSES OF JEWS, GERMANS, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF GERMAN CULTURE

The Nation was concerned with the abuses the German people were suffering at the hands of the Nazis. From the time the Nazis gained control of the German government in 1933, basic freedoms were outlawed. Hitler smashed all opposition through either legal measures or violent suppression. Anti-Jewish laws were instituted as well as laws that affected most political groups. As a result, many people lost the right to their livelihood. Aryans were not allowed to buy in Jewish businesses and forms of repression were used. A world boycott of German goods caused the Nazis to try to cover up their persecution, but The Nation continued its expose. Many others, in addition to the minorities, were persecuted by the Third Reich. The whole of German culture was altered by the National Socialists. Practitioners of the arts, educators, and scientists, were either driven from Germany, subjected to repressive laws and actions, or were humiliated by the new German order. In addition, women also suffered under the Third Reich as their earning power and status in German society were altered by the Nazis' attitudes toward them.

Once Hitler's foreign policy aspirations became clear to The Nation, its fears extended beyond Germany to the other peoples of Europe. What happened to the oppressed Germans could happen to others. Freedoms that Americans take for granted and are, also, the backbone of liberalism, were outlawed by Hitler's regime. Free speech, freedom of the press, equal employment opportunities, freedom from racial and religious discrimination, and the right to vote were all suppressed by the Nazis. Not only were freedoms eliminated, but several groups of people were singled out by the Nazis for persecution and "special treatment." Hitler believed he had to destroy all opposition to insure his complete mastery of Germany. In order to do this, Hitler eliminated all political groups and persecuted other various people. But Nazi action affected more than just the groups they believed were their opponents; members of racial groups were chosen for persecution and destruction in addition. The persecuted, therefore, included, "liberals, Socialists, Communists, Jews or Catholics. . . ." ¹

In 1933, persecution of the various people in Germany took two basic forms: legal repression and physical abuse which sometimes went as far as death. Political groups were outlawed by Nazi promulgation in 1933 and Jews were denied equal status under the law. As early as 1933, The

¹"Nazis Against the World," The Nation 136 (April 5, 1933):361.

Nation advocated a loosening of American immigration laws to "facilitate the granting of visas . . . to permit the entry of the German victims of political persecution."² It has been an American tradition to grant asylum to the persecuted peoples of the world. This was to become a recurrent theme for The Nation.

Persecution of the Jews began in 1933. The pogroms exposed by the weekly were, however, only a foreshadowing of what was to come for the Jews in Germany and Europe under Nazi rule. Jewish people suffered many losses under Nazi subjugation. They were forced into ghettos and were the worst treated in concentration camps. They lost their property, businesses, and livelihood. Also, Jews lost their lives as Nazi suppression was extremely brutal. The Nation believed the anti-Semitic policy, pursued by the German fascists, was a direct result of Hitler's personal hatreds.

Due to the persecution and pogroms of the Nazis, many Jews, not yet aware that other countries would not allow them to immigrate, would try to leave Germany. Escape, however, became difficult for German Jews because in 1933 the Nazis instituted a sichtvermerk or special visa which was needed to leave the country and was required on all passports. This special visa was "only granted to

²Ibid.

'Aryans'."³ As a consequence, many Jews were trapped inside German borders and a dismal future awaited them.

The Nation recognized the Jews as being the most severely persecuted under Nazi oppression. No American could "imagine the pathological bloodthirstiness of the Nazi anti-Semitic campaign. . . . The moral tone and flavor of this whole movement is grossly pathological."⁴ All human and civil rights for the Jews were eradicated by Hitler. Anathema to the liberal principles held by The Nation was the elimination of basic human rights. This was the worst kind of oppression to the journal. "No one, Jew, or non-Jew, has any recourse in law against any aggression or any cruelty, expropriation, imprisonment, or execution."⁵ There were many other forms of mistreatment devised by the Nazis. The German fascists were going to deny all the civil rights of their alleged enemies.

Not only were the Jews harassed out of their professions, but by "law no municipal or federal employee [was] allowed to buy in a Jewish store."⁶ All Jewish stores were picketed and potential customers were hounded by the SA

³Letter, "Escaping the German Hell," The Nation 136 (April 26, 1933):470.

⁴Ludwig Lewisohn, "Germany's Lowest Depths," The Nation 136 (May 3, 1933):493.

⁵Ibid.

⁶"The Nazi Hexxenkessel--A Letter," The Nation 137 (September 6, 1933):269.

and other uniformed Nazis. Another format available in the Nazi arsenal of assault was the weekly paper, the Stürmer. The German weekly had a large circulation, and in every large town it was posted publicly for any to read. The paper claimed to be dedicated to the battle for truth, and it "stresses every week in large roman type that 'Jews Are Our Misfortune'." ⁷ If an Aryan slipped up, forgot, and bought from Jews, the Stürmer was sure to report it to the public. "It is a shame when two hereditary peasants, Georg Heinrich Sassmannshausen and Heinrich Dreisbach, both from Birkenfield, do business with the notorious Talmud Jew and Nazi-hater, Simon from Erndtebrück."⁸ This is an example of the kind of article run by the weekly paper. The Nation reported that Germans were named in this publication and then were subject to persecution for patronizing Jewish establishments. This was a highly effective tool of repression.

Much of the extreme treatment of the Jews in the first six months of the Nazi regime was given worldwide publicity. As a result, world opinion created a boycott against the Nazis which affected their pogroms in 1933. It might appear, according to The Nation, as if persecution had ended as a result of the boycott. But this was not so,

⁷Heinrich L. Schiller, "Prize Journalism Under Hitler," The Nation 141 (July 3, 1935):12.

⁸Ibid., p.13.

insisted a reporter who made a trip to the hamlets, villages, and areas that were less well-travelled by tourists. He saw treatment contrary to Nazi claims. "Everywhere I saw evidence of cruelty, violence, and death."⁹ This reporter had many experiences with the terror in Nazi Germany. One example should be sufficient to convey the horror he felt. Two Jewish girls were taken by the Nazis, stripped, beaten, raped, and left for dead in a meadow. The families feared for these girls' lives because they survived their torture and, as a consequence of their families' fear, were subsequently smuggled into Switzerland. This kind of savagery and even worse was rampant in Germany. Physical abuse, as well as other kinds of harassment, took a toll. "Socially and economically, as well as politically, the Jews have been ruined. Those who have not suffered physical violence are experiencing mental torture almost as severe."¹⁰ The Nation was one of the few publications in the U.S. that printed the truth about the persistent Nazi hostility and brutality toward the Jews. Most of the American press relied upon German sources for information regarding the treatment of the Jews in Germany and elsewhere.¹¹ The weekly printed a letter from a German woman

⁹Richard Neuberger, "The New Germany," p. 377.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 378.

¹¹Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey: A Woman of The Nation, p. 114.

who complained of the "gullibility" of Americans in their acceptance of Nazi lies as the truth.¹²

In 1936, the Nazis began one of the greatest anti-Jewish drives, "probably the last and greatest of them all."¹³ This was only a foretaste of what was to come, according to The Nation. Ghettos were established in Germany by the promulgation of the Nürnberg Laws on the fourteenth of September. These laws took away the final vestiges of Jewish economic independence. Many people, including some Jews, believed the creation of the Ghettos would bring respite for the Jewish people. Even though they would be denied their freedom of movement, it was assumed that they would, at least, be free from anxiety and have some assurance of their future. Such beliefs were ludicrous in the face of previous evidence and were doomed to disappoint those who looked optimistically upon the Nürnberg Laws. The Nation believed the Jews and others were grasping at straws.¹⁴ This law only legalized the current state of pogroms, boycotts, and other harsh treatment that existed in Germany prior to 1936.

¹²"The Nazi Hexxenkessel--A Personal Letter," p. 269.

¹³William Zuckerman, "Where the German Ghetto Leads," The Nation 142 (February 5, 1936):155.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 154-55.

As part of the The Nation's compilation of inhuman treatment, in 1936, also, came the revelation that Jews were the worst treated prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps. A prisoner, who survived the ordeal, told of the different groups confined in the camps. Criminals, Austrians, political prisoners, critics, and religious fanatics were included in the groups imprisoned by the Nazis. Among these various people the Jews were "the worst-treated prisoners. All occupations in the workshops [were] forbidden them. . . ." ¹⁵ The Jews had to perform all the hard, dirty work. The graves in the cemetery proved how hard it was for the Jews. The Jewish people, in other nations, were not going to be any safer from the ravages of Nazism than they were in Germany.

The fate of the Austrian Jews was, virtually, the same as that of the Jews in Germany. Only five months after the German Anschluss with Austria, 20,000 Jews were either arrested or placed in concentration camps. Jewish property and savings were confiscated and the people themselves were subject to "the grossest physical indignities." ¹⁶ The "cold pogroms" were, basically, economic and their aim was to drive the Jewish businessmen from the Reich. No one was

¹⁵Johann Schmidt, "Sojourn in Hell," The Nation 143 (September 12, 1936):301.

¹⁶William E. Dodd, "Germany Shocked Me," The Nation 147 (August 20, 1938):176.

allowed to buy from Jewish merchants, and if anyone did, they were, in turn, persecuted as in Germany.

The Nation feared the confiscation and closure of Jewish businesses in Germany threatened the Jews in a vital area. Other than the physical abuse, certainly, the gravest consequence for the Jews was their exclusion from earning a wage. In 1937, the weekly lamented that 75 per cent of all Jews who held positions in 1933 had been dismissed. The remaining 25 per cent were chiefly employed by other Jews.¹⁷ Not only were Jewish people denied employment, but education was denied to them, also. Jews could not join the army or go to labor camp. In 1937, there were still 375,000 Jews in Germany. Of this number, 100,000 were dependent for their support upon Jewish charitable agencies and another 100,000 were supported by their relatives. It was also reported by The Nation that every Jewish family that still had income supported three other Jewish families.

The Nation was concerned with what had happened to 225,000 Jews as in 1933, there had been approximately 600,000 Jews in Germany, and the number dwindled to 375,000 during the next four years. It was estimated that 125,000 left the country either before the restrictions or secretly escaped from Germany. The rest of the Jews were dead (100,000). Many were either killed by the Nazis or died from

¹⁷Philip S. Bernstein, "The Fate of German Jews," The Nation 145 (October 23, 1937):423.

causes attributable to the German fascists. No one living under these circumstances would want to have children; as a result, the death rate greatly outpaced the birth rate among the Jews. The Nation, therefore, concluded that "the Nazi assault upon the German Jews moves on from segregation to pauperization, to emigration [if possible], to annihilation."¹⁸ In fact, the only choice left for the Jews was either emigration or death. This was a very chilling forecast of the future.

In the face of these horrors, The Nation asked where this state-wide anti-Semitic policy originated and what were the causes? The weekly believed it had an answer. "It all stems from Hitler and from the philosophy explicitly stated in his book 'Mein Kampf'."¹⁹ The Nazis believed the Jewish people were the reason or explanation for a prostrate and humiliated post-war Germany. How else could the Aryan race have failed to win the war? If Hitler has his way, "by 1950 no Jew will be living within the boundaries of Germany, that they all will have been killed or driven into exile."²⁰ Although The Nation knew anti-Semitism was prevalent throughout Germany and the rest of Europe, only the Nazis

¹⁸Ibid., p. 425.

¹⁹William E. Dodd, "Germany Shocked Me," p. 178.

²⁰Ibid.

and their extreme hostilities could have fostered the fanatical policies of the Third Reich.

The Nation kept up a persistent appeal for worldwide aid for the Jews. Their alternative was extremely bleak if no aid was forthcoming. "The house of the Jews in Central Europe is aflame, and arson is the deliberate policy of fascism."²¹ Most nations, however, refused to open up their immigration policies to enable the refugees of Europe to have a place of safety. This refusal of help was followed by The Nation's condemnation, which included the United States. Americans did little to change Roosevelt's policy of not increasing the American quota. The weekly, in no uncertain terms, blamed the American people. "Behind this [the lack of change] lies the distressing apathy of the American people as a whole to the plight of the refugees. . . ."²² The weekly asserted every means should be explored for getting the victims of Nazi persecutions saved from certain death. This was not just a Jewish problem or a European one. Because the people of the United States were part of a worldwide community, Americans had to fight against this kind of Nazi oppression and deal with the resultant anguish. In particular, Americans must care about basic rights being subverted by the Nazis. "It is the fight of everyone who

²¹"Death Trap for Jews," The Nation 147 (July 16, 1938):61.

²²Ibid.

believes in personal liberty and civil rights, a fight for the principles on which America was founded."²³ There was a general consensus, at the journal, that this was the duty of Americans.

The Nation, frustrated by the lack of caring and response and because it was concerned for the Jews in Europe, continued its plea for help. The petition for assistance from other countries was again repeated as the savage attacks on Jews had not abated. For example, the anniversary of the Armistice in Germany in 1938 was celebrated by the Nazi youths' destruction of Jewish property. Their homes, shops, and synagogues were plundered and burned. Thousands of Jews were beaten and arrested while police and firemen looked on. "Never were mass cowardice, mass brutality, and mass destruction so gruesomely displayed."²⁴ The governments of the world must develop a refugee program to rescue the displaced of Europe. No longer could Americans deny their duty and heritage. This was an appeal for a "revival of the spirit that made the right of asylum a genuine part of our legacy of democratic ideas. . . ." ²⁵ The fascists had thrown a gauntlet at the

²³Richard Neuberger, "The New Germany," p. 379.

²⁴Editorial, "War Against the Jews," The Nation 147 (November 19, 1938):524.

²⁵Freda Kirchwey, "Jews and Refugees," (Editorial) The Nation 148 (May 20, 1937):577.

feet of the American people according to The Nation. "If we refuse to pick it up or pretend we don't see it, we shall have agreed in advance to the annihilation of every decent and humane value in life and have given Hitler his greatest bloodless victory."²⁶ The weekly supported the liberal belief that every non-fascist nation was, in some way, responsible for the fate of the European refugees. These countries had a responsibility to perform. The United States, in the forefront of the democracies, had a special duty which was held in common with the American heritage for providing asylum from any form of persecution. Not only did Nazi persecution affect the minorities, but every part of German culture was also touched by the new order. Oppression took a peculiar, but effective, form in Nazi Germany. All groups guilty of mental, economic, or political heresy were denied the basic right to livelihood. The government impounded savings, positions were denied to the oppressed, and those "who have not accepted the Nazi political and economic religion are doomed to starvation."²⁷

Americans should not only be concerned about the Jewish people, but as additional areas of German life came under Nazi attack, their concern must be for others, also. The free trade unions were suppressed in 1933, and many

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Editorial, "Back to Barbarism," The Nation 136 (April 12, 1933):388.

workers, including union leaders, were thrown into concentration camps. In areas all over Germany, another reporter met men who were lucky to outlive the camps as most did not. Many survivors were either deaf and or gruesomely mangled from various tortures devised by the Nazis.²⁸

Instead of their free trade unions, the workers were compelled to join the Nazi Arbeitsfront. Membership was mandatory in the Nazi worker's union and so was attendance at meetings. This was another method used by the Nazis to control and subjugate the German people, especially those whom were highly suspect, and the workers certainly were. Workers were under suspicion because, in general, they had been members of the labor parties and the Social Democratic Party, and as a consequence, the Nazis believed they warranted surveillance. Many Germans had not originally supported Hitler; therefore, many people were suspected by the Nazis.

Regardless of what the National Socialists reported, they certainly were aware that they did not have the complete support of the German people. The Nazis knew, for their dominance to be complete, all German citizens had to be under some form of Nazi authority. Almost all Germans were forced into Nazi controlled organizations. With workers it was the Arbeitsfront and with German young people the

²⁸Evelyn Lawrence, "The Hitler Terror Mounts," The Nation 139 (September 5, 1934):261.

form of manipulation and molding was, primarily, the Hitler Youth. The Nazis needed to master a whole nation and to do so Hitler had to subvert German law. For the Nazis to gain complete mastery of Germany, they altered German criminal law and the courts. The Penal Code Amendment Law went into effect on September 1, 1935 and The Nation believed the law would have far reaching impact. "The law codifies Nazi lynch justice, divorces jurisprudence from impartiality and makes the National Socialist Weltanschauung [creed or philosophy of life] the guiding star of criminal trials."²⁹ The revolution in German law was to be accomplished by requiring the judges' subservience to Nazi ideology. They were to respond to Nazi wishes. If the jurists did not do so, then they would be called to order by the State Attorney who was, obviously, a National Socialist.

No law had to be disobeyed for a crime to have been committed, only Nazi Weltanschauung need be violated. The new Nazi statute called for conviction and punishment to be based on "sound public sentiment." In other words, "'[i]f no definite criminal law applies to the deed, it must be punished in accordance with the law the basic ideas of which best fit it'."³⁰ According to The Nation, this new law put the complete control of German citizens into Nazi hands. If

²⁹Emil Lengyel, "Germany Codifies Lynch Law," The Nation 141 (September 4, 1935):263.

³⁰Ibid.

Germans did not conform to Nazi ideology, they were tried as criminals, convicted, thrown into jail or executed. The journal believed Nazi law cast a pall over German jurisprudence. "[U]nder the new [law] he may be found guilty even if he has broken no law fitting the case. The new law, in short, gives the Nazi state the legal means to crush political opposition of every imaginable kind."³¹ And not just political opposition, but Jewish and "Aryan" marriages, for example, were outlawed by the application of Weltanschauung. This was the kind of tyranny the Nazi law led to. Furthermore, the Nazi's ideology was to have even more far-reaching affect on the Jews.

In the process of dominating Germany and changing the laws to reflect Nazi ideology, the best of the Republic was to be replaced by a Germanic culture which would unite "racial intolerance with a blind and aggressive nationalism [and] all achievement, all leadership, all organization are to be according to the racial reinterpretation of history, arteigengeistig. . . ."³² Hitler's reinterpretation of German society would affect Germany in many painful and disruptive ways. Oppression, one of the tools used by the Nazis to restructure all of German society, was not solely physical in nature according to The Nation. It could include

³¹Ibid.

³²Ludwig Lore, "The Nazi Revolution at Work," p. 442 and Ludwig Lewisohn, "The New Kultur," p. 695.

emotional trauma as well as physical violence. Germans saw their scientists, writers, educators, and other intellectuals either interred or forced to flee into exile from Germany. Education, theatre, film, written materials, all marks of culture, were altered by contact with Hitler and the Nazis. Women, and their roles in society, were redefined in connection with Nazi constraints. The freedom to participate in German culture, as it was before the Nazis came to power, was an essential liberty which was denied by the Nazis according to The Nation.

Two months after Hitler came to power in 1933, the "government has swept like a devastating storm over creative Germany."³³ Atrocities were committed against persons in every creative field. Practitioners of the arts, letters, sciences, and all cultural fields had not escaped the Nazi wrath. The Nation understood that these acts by the Nazis were not uncontrolled passions released by their revolution. "They are part of a definite, carefully planned program of relentless persecution against those who refuse to accept the National Socialist super-national philosophy, or who, because of race or creed, have incurred the hatred of the present rulers."³⁴ More than a hundred actors were excluded from the stage in Germany. All managers and directors of

³³Ludwig Lore, "The Nazi Revolution at Work," p. 442.

³⁴Ibid.

theatres and opera houses were replaced by Nazis of dubious talent. Liberal and radical writers were driven from Germany. Among their ranks were writers such as, Thomas Mann and Heinrich Mann. Modern architects, city physicians, and editors of magazines and newspapers were asked to resign or were arrested by the Nazis. The National Socialists rejected, as false, all aspects of German intellectual culture achieved by the Second Reich and the Weimar Republic. The Nazis discarded all parts of the Weimar culture, which The Nation described as "the true torch-bearers of civilization in Germany. . . ." ³⁵ Instead, the Nazis retained and exalted "the worst aspects of Prussianism and Kaiserism. . . ." ³⁶

Many Germans were displaced, arrested, left without work, or were forced into exile because of the Nazi revolution which began in 1933. The areas of German life affected and the list of professions altered by the Nazis are too numerous to include in their entirety in this paper. Therefore, one area of German intellectual life will be examined, in more detail, to reveal the extent of the devastation portrayed by The Nation in its pages. The universities were hard hit by the Nazi intent to restructure German culture. The theoretical basis of Nazi culture was

³⁵Emil Lengyel, "German Culture in Exile," The Nation 136 (May 31, 1933):607.

³⁶Ibid.

found in Ernst Krick's book: The National Socialist Education. Krick's book rapidly became the Bible of Nazi teachers. An example of Nazi theory: "'The Age of pure reason and of unprejudiced free science is over'. . . ."37 The Nation bemoaned the fact that Krick was the foundation of Nazi education. No longer would free thinking be allowed by the Nazis. Only National Socialist dogma was acceptable as the source of subject material in the schools of the Third Reich. Teachers had to submit to the Nazis. "The Third Reich glories in the suppression of individuality, and the ideal of the community must be the 'volkisches Mensch,' the 'race man' bare of personal traits, subordinating his knowledge and will to the Fatherland."38 Obviously some professors would have difficulty subordinating their "knowledge and will to the Fatherland." By May 1933, 250 professors were known to have been dismissed from their posts in German universities. According to The Nation, the reasons for dismissal were shaped by the Nazi desire to purge the universities of undesirables. Of the number deprived of their appointments, 40 per cent were known to be Jewish and the rest were liberals and pacifists. Many more professors, though the numbers were uncertain, resigned their positions in protest to Nazi action. Nazi student

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

corporations issued "certificates of confidence" to professors whose political beliefs they supported. Nazi students also boycotted those lectures of professors known to possess political beliefs contrary to Nazi dogma. In Prussia alone, more than thirty non-Aryan and Marxist professors were dismissed because of student instigation.³⁹ Nazi student agitation did not effect only male professors. Female professors were devastated by the German fascists.

The most thorough cleansing process in German universities, was with the dismissal of women professors; they were all purged from their positions. The Nation was concerned because of all the women in Germany, other than Jewish women, the hardest hit by the hatred of the Weimar culture were women intellectuals. These women not only had their livelihood snatched from them, but also, their whole lives invalidated, "for in The Third Reich there is no place for intellect and, outside of the kitchen no place for women."⁴⁰ Examples of women's treatment in the first two Reichs greatly influenced official Nazi policy for The Third Reich. Women in Barbarossa's First Reich were little more than chattel. From the Second Reich came the official Nazi policy toward women. Their policy is probably best defined

³⁹Ibid., pp. 607-08.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 608.

by Wilhelm II's own words: "'Kirche, Küche, Kinder'."⁴¹
This belief, although it found expression in the Second Reich, was not the official policy. Beyond the realm of this womanly domain--the church, kitchen, and children--women in Nazi Germany were not expected to contribute to their country in any other form whatsoever. A prime example of how this anti-women Nazi dogma affected women professors was given by The Nation. German sociologist, Mathilde Vaerting was a prominent faculty member at a prestigious German university. In particular, the Nazis renounced her research which set out to prove that men's dominance of women was based on sociological rather than biological factors. Vaerting's intellect was not considered worthy of the state. Her continued presence at a university belied the Nazi doctrine that all women should contribute to the state by remaining at home and bearing children. Professor Vaerting was fired. "Her dismissal is the most striking overt act so far committed in the Nazi war against the freedom of women."⁴²

These stringent restrictions did not apply equally, across the board, to women. The intentions of the Nazis were there, but it did not work out that way for them. By a law passed on June 1, 1933, Hitler intended to relieve

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Editorial, The Nation 137 (August 16, 1933):171.

unemployment by eliminating women workers. Was Hitler's policy successful and did the women benefit from the consequences? To begin with, women workers were not eliminated from holding jobs. In 1936, there were 5,470,000 women employed in Germany. There were 1,200,000 more women working in 1937 than in 1932, before Hitler. Women accounted for 31 per cent of the German labor force. More women were working in Germany than in either England or France.⁴³

Even with women working in increasing numbers, were women workers secure in their positions and had Nazi directives benefited them? These questions were of real concern to The Nation. It answered no to both of these inquiries. "The vigorous campaign against the employment of women has not led to their increased domesticity and security, but has been effective in squeezing them out of the better-paid positions into the sweated trades."⁴⁴ Not only were women forced into the sweated trades for lower wages, but women workers, in general, lost real income from 1933 to 1937. This, also, happened to employed men, but women lost more in comparison. (See Chapter IV for the details on what happened to male workers.) In 1937, the average male worker earned a net of \$11 to \$12 per week. The average weekly wage for a female worker was \$6 to \$8. For

⁴³Judith Gruenfeld, "Women Workers in Nazi Germany," The Nation 144 (March 13, 1937):295.

⁴⁴Ibid.

example, in the typographical trades, hourly earnings of women employees was 48.4 per cent lower than the rates for men. A comparison of these statistics to those of 1931 or 1932 reveals women's average income had dropped more than the men's income.⁴⁵ Because women were paid much less than men, it was easier for them to find employment and the process of lowering their rates was continued.

So much for women being eliminated from their employment by the Nazis' policy and law. In fact, Germany was dependent upon the labor of women workers because there was a shortage of male workers in Germany. Of the total 17.6 million German workers, 13.7 million were male workers. Even if every available male worker was employed, there would have been a shortage of 4.4 million workers. Women workers were, consequently, essential to German production of export commodities and the rearmament industry.

Did women benefit from their necessity in labor? Not according to The Nation. They generally worked in more dangerous and demeaning positions with longer, exhausting hours. Women, also, made less money than they did prior to Hitler. German women were worse off than were women in other parts of Europe. "Cultural progress tends to eliminate hard work for women and to facilitate their ascent to higher

⁴⁵Ibid.

professions. Fascism reverses this process."⁴⁶ Although women intellectuals lost the most, their professions as well as their sense of worth, in fascist Germany, women of lower classes were affected in far greater numbers by the stringent Nazi policies and attitudes toward women in the work place. Women not only lost their sense of worth, by being told they were inferior and that they could not make worthwhile contributions, they also lost their ability to provide for their families adequately as wages dropped. Instead, they were told by the Reich that they could remain at home and produce children for Germany.

The Nation recognized that all segments of German culture were affected by Nazi persecutions and their reorganization of the state. Many groups, as a result, were traumatized and destroyed by contact with Hitler's regime. The Nazis wanted to restructure German and European societies in the National Socialist image. This Nazi picture included the annihilation of the Jews, communists, and social democrats. Nazi reaction extended to anyone who opposed them or represented the Weimar culture. Persecution did not always take legal form, and whether it was or not did not matter to the Nazis. The Nation knew the end result, complete Nazi dominance was the primary goal. The Nazis considered their acts of terror, physical violence, and

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 296.

murder to be expedient methods which enabled them to reach their goals.

CHAPTER IV

ATTITUDES TOWARD NAZI ECONOMIC POLICY AND ITS EFFECTS

A central issue of Nazi policy, crucial to The Nation, was Germany's economic position and intended recovery. It saw the consequences of Nazi economic policies as a barometer of the Third Reich's success. The weekly, from the beginning of the Nazi regime in 1933, believed Hitler would be unsuccessful in his attempts to turn the German economy around. Even though Hitler attained success by 1936 with full employment due to the armament boom, The Nation's primary concern was whether this general prosperity really benefited the workers of Germany. The journal was also concerned with what Hitler's rearmament resolutions would lead the Nazis to attempt because of inadequate raw materials available in Germany.

In the early period under Nazi rule, the Germans, according to The Nation, were not successful in their recovery attempts. In 1933, Hitler wanted a moratorium on the interests of the debts settled on Germany by the terms of the Versailles Treaty. The general shrinking of both exports and imports for Germany indicated a worsening of its economic position, according to The Nation. The Reich's

recovery program was based on increased output and a reduction of wages to meet its obligations. The periodical editorialized that this was an unsound principle because it destroyed the buying power of the German people which would lead to a collapse of the internal market.¹ The Nation's prediction was accurate as the German domestic market did collapse. Every government effort made since the internal collapse led the nation's industries and financial institutions even deeper into the morass. "Under Hitler matters have gone from bad to worse."² Hitler put into effect high tariffs on food stuffs and in so doing set off another inflationary spiral with staple prices rising anywhere from 10-50 per cent. In a jab at the Nazis, the editorial concluded with, "[i]t proves the futility of the Chancellor's visionary projects for social and economic reconstruction on a gigantic scale. It also shows why Herr Hitler so assiduously emphasizes his peaceful intentions."³ Hitler had certainly not been able to manipulate the economic situation in Germany during the early years of Nazi control.

The Nation expressed considerable concern for the worker in Nazi Germany. Hitler was not able to achieve the

¹Editorial, The Nation 136 (June 7, 1933):658.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

economic changes needed to benefit the worker. There was also, some doubt at the weekly whether Hitler would want to benefit the worker if he was able to do so. As a consequence, The Nation asserted, the worker would gain the least and suffer the most (with the exception of the Jews) under Hitler's rule. The journal reported that the standard of living was steadily falling although employment had risen. There were 2,800,000 unemployed as compared with double that number when Hitler took office. The Nation, however, claimed that the figures for unemployment were juggled. But no evidence was offered to substantiate this claim. Improvement in unemployment could not be attributed solely to Nazi policy, according to the periodical. Reduction of unemployment was based largely on a worldwide increase in trade and economic conditions.

Even though the standard of living had fallen and many workers were no better off or in worse economic positions than they were in 1933, The Nation lamented the working class, in general, still supported Hitler. In part, this was due to the fall in unemployment; however, the weekly believed there was another reason for continued support of Hitler. "Like everybody else, they [the workers] are still being drugged by the almost overwhelming government propaganda, by Hitler's eloquence . . . they have not yet taken in the significance of Hitler's admission on April 17 that National Socialism can not abolish

unemployment."⁴ By August 1935, living costs had risen 6 per cent in four months, while average wages of unskilled workers dropped 18 per cent. Skilled labor, in comparison, lost 8.5 per cent in wages during the same period.⁵

The Nation was convinced, by 1935, the National Socialists were in trouble in Germany. Nazi policies were not successful in staving off the economic failures that the journal was sure had to come. There was little support of Hitler's economic policies as many German people lamented there had been little improvement in two years. There was growing unrest among small business men whom both the public and the government had accused of profiteering. Housewives resorted to consumer strikes and there were reports of wage movements in the industrial sections of Germany. "There are unmistakable signs of disintegration in the National Socialist regime. . . . [T]here is hardly a group or class in the nation that is satisfied with the present state of affairs."⁶

The Nazis, however, cheated The Nation out of its prediction. By 1938, full employment in Germany was achieved because of the armament boom which had begun in 1935 and resulted in a turn around of German attitudes toward Hitler

⁴Editorial, The Nation 139 (May 23, 1934):579.

⁵Editorial, The Nation 141 (August 7, 1935):145.

⁶Ibid., p. 146.

and the Nazis. Even with this apparent victory, the weekly believed the Nazis did not achieve true prosperity for the German workers. Wages in 1938 stood at 1933 levels, reported The Nation. The average wage for skilled labor in 1929 was 101.1 pfennigs per hour compared to 79 pfennigs in December of 1938. Already lowered wages were reduced further by heavy taxation, voluntary contributions, social-insurance contributions, and so forth. The size of these deductions can be inferred from the fact that taxes and donations totaled 47.1 per cent of the entire national income.⁷ The cost of living had also increased. If cost of living was estimated conservatively at a 10-15 per cent increase since 1933, real wages, were, thus, considerably smaller than in 1933. The five million unemployed of 1933 were better off in 1938-39, whereas "the thirteen million who had jobs when Hitler came to power have suffered a substantial loss in real income and had no share in the apparent prosperity."⁸ Therefore, The Nation believed that even though Germany enjoyed full employment, prosperity did not benefit everyone in the Third Reich. As a group, most workers were less well off than they were before Hitler's regime began in 1933.

The German worker had lost real income and was not truly benefited by full employment. The Nation felt the

⁷Adolf Strumthal, "The End of Hitler's Money Miracles," The Nation 148 (April 22, 1939):461.

⁸Ibid.

workers lost, additionally, because of the disabilities they suffered under the Third Reich's full employment policies. The weekly was convinced that overwork and undernourishment resulted in many millions of lost hours of labor due to illness and disability. Thirty-one workers per hundred, in 1932, were on illness disability compared to 46 per hundred in 1938.⁹ In January 1939, disability rates were 31.5 per cent greater than in December 1938. Most workers faced a work day in excess of eight hours, often working ten hours a day, and in some cases, fourteen hours a day in a work week of six days. The Nazis reacted with severe penalties for the many workers who slowed down or stayed away from work. Dr. Robert Ley, the head of the Labor Front, "put it bluntly, 'Socialism in the Third Reich is a hard manly socialism; not the well-being of the individual but that of the community matters'."¹⁰ The Nation was not in agreement with this assessment. The workers were needed for the state's armaments efforts. "His [Hitler's] labor policy is designed to get more work out of men who have less to eat. But even a dictator cannot override physical laws."¹¹ What were the benefits for the worker under the Reich's full employment? The weekly concluded, "[t]hus 'full employment' in Hitler's

⁹Judith Gruenfeld, "Why Hitler Must Bluff," The Nation 149 (July 8, 1939):36.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹Ibid., p. 36.

Reich is not identical with workers' well-being but actually entails their own complete exhaustion."¹² Health and disability issues coupled with the lack of improvement in real wages for the workers in Germany, led The Nation to down play any success claimed by the Nazis. The journal believed true success must also include improvement for all the workers and their working conditions.

Because full employment and Germany's economic independence were essential for the armament program, the country was put on the Four-Year Plan in 1936. This placed Germany on a war time economy and the entire German economy was mobilized in the process. Again, German workers suffered, this time, because of shortages. The Nation held "the unappeased appetite of the war industries has created a crisis in non-armament plants."¹³ Raw materials went first to war industries with the result that all goods were in short supply; there was little left over for civilian consumption. Secondly, one of the Four-Year Plan's principal reasons for existence was to alter the food habits of the nation. Inadequate supplies of staple products (fats, meats, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and grains) in combination with other shortages, have "made the German the

¹²Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹³L. F. Gittler, "No Food for War," The Nation 149 (July 8, 1939):39.

worst-fed and worst-clothed person in Europe."¹⁴ Doctors reported more cases of nutritional diseases during 1938 than in all ten years prior to Hitler's regime.

The Nation wanted to know how the Nazis combated the grumbling and discontent of the afflicted Germans. The weekly found the Nazis used propaganda, one of their favorite approaches for any problem. First, Nazi propaganda showed that Germans were not so badly off. Pictures of Americans, taken in the depths of the depression, showed there were worse conditions than in Germany. Second, Germany's poverty could be blamed on unfair treaties and reparations. Third, world Jewry cornered the international market in food stuffs and refused to sell them to the Reich. Fourth, luxury foods, such as white bread, were termed by Nazis as decadent indulgences that could be replaced with more wholesome foods. The Nation maintained that propaganda could not alter the facts; shortages existed and as a consequence workers were not prospering in the Third Reich.

The second purpose of the Plan was to foster German economic independence. The Four-Year Plan "is to insure the Reich against economic coercion, particularly in time of war."¹⁵ Considerable efforts were made to make Germany independent. For example, research was done on artificial

¹⁴Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁵John C. DeWilde, "Dr. Schacht and Germany's Future," The Nation 145 (October 16, 1937):402.

products to produce the goods and foodstuffs that Germany needed. However, one of the negative aspects of the Four-Year Plan, at least for business men and Dr. Schacht, Minister of Economics and President of the Reichsbank, was the acceleration of the trend toward government control over German business. By 1938 the Nazis controlled all foreign trade, rationed and stipulated uses of raw materials, fixed wages and prices, destroyed trade unions and as a result were in control of labor, invested capital where they saw fit, and used profits where prescribed by Nazi needs.¹⁶ Certainly The Nation believed that economic progress in Nazi Germany primarily benefited the state, as represented by Hitler, and what was good for the state did not correspond to what was good for the citizens.

On the other hand, there was every indication that Germany had made great economic strides. Just gearing up for the armament process was an industrial success in the face of overwhelming odds, but The Nation asked who benefited from these apparent accomplishments and how had the Reich been able to finance its rearmament? The Nazis accomplished their goals primarily through two finance measures. The first of these was direct borrowing. In January of 1938, the officially admitted debt stood at 18,600 million Reichmarks, which was twice the debt of 1933. Second, Germany used

¹⁶Ibid., p. 403.

taxation of its citizens as another avenue for obtaining finances. Germans in 1938 were some of the most highly taxed persons in Europe. Taxes in 1938 were double the amount of 1933, and the rise of income had not kept pace with this level in taxation.¹⁷ Nevertheless, even with the sharp rise in production and stable consumption figures, thanks to the Four-Year Plan, it was clear "that all gain has been devoted to armaments and state needs and has afforded little benefit to the individual."¹⁸

The Nation understood that the Nazi monetary requirements for their rearmament plans involved their need to buy raw materials or somehow gain control of the regions that produced their vital materials. Nazi Germany required more raw resources than it had available to supply its armament program. The coming war would be even more dependent upon machines than the last one.¹⁹ The next war, feared by most Europeans and Americans, would be won by those countries which could continue to produce war machinery while the war raged on.²⁰ Certain fundamentals for

¹⁷A. Vidakovic, "How Sound Is German Economy?," The Nation 146 (April 16, 1938):437.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 438.

¹⁹Fritz Sternberg, "Time Is With the Allies," The Nation 149 (October 14, 1939):407.

²⁰Maxwell S. Stewart, "Can Europe Afford War?," The Nation 143 (September 19, 1936):324-26; Fritz Sternberg, "Time Is With the Allies," p. 407.

an effective war industry were an established iron and steel industry, as well as established machine and chemical production. And, of course, assured supplies of coal, iron ore, and oil were essential to their armament production. Germany was not supplied with most of these vital raw materials. Coal being the only resource Germany adequately produced, the Reich had to trade for oil, iron ore, and chemicals. The Treaty of Versailles had taken away most of the regions that had supplied Germany's iron ore (75 per cent) and chemical needs. Germany had never had any oil of its own.²¹ For example, five-sixths of the Germans iron ore requirements came from other countries. In 1937, Germany produced 9.6 million tons of iron ore and imported 20.6 million tons. In addition, German ore was not as rich in iron as the imported sources. The Reich's war potential was, therefore, extremely dependent upon foreign sources.²² These raw materials, vital to Germany, were available to the east and the west. Rumania was rich in oil, Yugoslavia had many fine chemical deposits, and both Czechoslovakia and the Lorraine area of France were rich in iron ore.²³ The Nation believed that the Reich's need for raw materials was one of

²¹Maxwell S. Stewart, "Can Europe Afford War?," p. 325.

²²Joachim Joesten, "Germany vs. Russia in the North," The Nation 148 (June 24, 1939):719.

²³Maxwell S. Stewart, "Can Europe Afford War?," p. 325.

the reasons that it retook the Rhineland in 1936. The rich deposits and available resources in the countries and regions surrounding Germany were essential to the Reich's future war efforts. The Nation believed this to be true as early as 1936, its evidence was the retaking of the Rhineland. Industrial materials were so vital that "they might easily swing the balance in the next war. . . . If by reason of deficiency or foreign exchanges or sanctions these supplies were withheld, it is highly probable that they would be seized."²⁴ A highly astute assessment, by the weekly, of future events and German motivation. The Nation reasoned that Germany saw the development of their war industry as crucial for the Reich's survival in a future war. Weaponry was not only crucial for survival, but was needed by Hitler to fulfill his other planned foreign policy aspirations.

Although the Nazis got off to a rocky start in 1933, they were able to turn the German economy around by starting the rearmament process in 1934. The Nation, however, supported the supposition that full employment did not necessarily, benefit everyone in Germany. In particular, the journal was concerned for the workers and for good reason as its evidence shows. The Nation, also, linked the Nazi

²⁴Ibid., p. 326.

rearmament industry and the necessity for raw resources with the Nazi aspirations for territorial expansion.

CHAPTER V

HITLER'S FOREIGN POLICY ASPIRATIONS AND EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN RESPONSE

The Nation reacted to Hitler's foreign policy in two ways. First, the weekly analyzed what Hitler's goals were and how he intended to accomplish them. Hitler wanted to pursue an aggressive foreign policy. To justify his actions and methods with Germans and the rest of Europe, Hitler relied upon German history, Germany's economic needs, and the creation of pan-Germanism. The techniques the Nazis utilized were not subtle at all. They used agents who infiltrated other countries with the intention of overthrowing the governments of the coveted nations. In addition to this propaganda program, Hitler appealed to the duty and loyalty of Germans living in other countries. Hitler began his plan for the creation of a pan-Germanic empire by breaking Versailles and achieving Anschluss with Austria. Next Czechoslovakia was seized and, finally, Poland was captured.

Second, the weekly was concerned with the reactions Hitler's policies would bring. It knew war was probably inevitable if Hitler was allowed to continue with his plans unchecked. The Nation believed Americans had to adopt

policies that would keep them out of any European conflict. Collective security was the method of keeping the U.S. out of war that was advocated by the journal. The best expression of collective security was through economic sanctions. This policy also had the advantage, according to the collective security advocates, in that it might stop the German fascists which was the goal of its primary advocate, Freda Kirchwey. She was editor-in-chief and had a crusading devotion to the destruction of fascism. The other editors at The Nation also supported collective security. The one hold out was Oswald Garrison Villard, and he supported the American neutrality policy. However, Kirchwey could not accept neutrality as she believed it would not halt fascism, and just as importantly, it would not keep the United States out of a war. Hitler would be free to continue with his disruptive, aggressive aspirations if neutrality was adopted.

The Nation felt Hitler had to pursue a forceful policy to insure his dictatorship within the Third Reich. "Hitler can only consolidate his dictatorship by pursuing an aggressive foreign policy which, according to the Minister for Propaganda, leads toward a Teutonic empire embracing all the German-speaking peoples of Europe."¹ Dictators waging

¹Johannes Steel, "Europe Moves Toward War: V. The Mechanics of Nationalism," The Nation 138 (April 11, 1934):411.

wars was nothing new explained The Nation. Despots throughout history have had to consolidate themselves by embarking upon spectacular foreign conquests. Hitler joined the ranks of others such as: Alexander the Great, Julius Ceasar, Cromwell, and Napoleon.² The Nation added that Hitler had to pursue a belligerent foreign policy because of the economic situation in Germany. Economic conditions had grown progressively worse over the previous twelve months and by 1934, conditions were extremely grim. The German citizens were growing restive and disgruntled with Hitler's regime. The journal believed it would become imperative for Hitler to divert the Germans if he wanted to retain his power. "The only way to distract attention from political and economic developments within Germany is to embark on foreign political adventures bringing 'conquest and glory'."³

The Nation feared that Hitler's foreign policy was aimed at more than securing his position at home. He wanted to control Europe as well, and this particular aspiration was based, in part, on his sense of German history. The National Socialists final goal for their foreign strategy was the "restoration of the Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic race and its far-flung border lines, along which

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Barbarossa's stalwart crusaders converged a thousand years ago."⁴ These were the ultimate Nazi ambitions.

The Nation saw that part of Hitler's avowed foreign policy was his promise to remove Germany from the constraints of the Treaty of Versailles, which Germans felt was an intolerable outrage against every German. This meant that, in addition to other areas of the Treaty, the sections that took away German lands and colonies must be revised. As soon as he was able, Hitler acted on his pledge. In 1933, Hitler left the League of Nations. In 1935, he freed Germany from the disarmament clauses in the Treaty of Versailles. In 1936, Hitler violated the Locarno Pact by moving German troops into the Rhineland. As The Nation interpreted it, Hitler's victory over the Rhineland issue dealt a severe blow to the peace keeping system in Europe. The Locarno Pact was held to be a primary peace keeper in Europe and it was nullified by German actions. Also, the League of Nations was substantially weakened when the member nations failed to act on Germany's transgressions. Even so, The Nation continued to support the principle of the League's sanctions. The journal believed that the tactics and actions urged in Hitler's Mein Kampf constituted the backbone of Nazi policy

⁴Ernest Schulz, "Germany Prepares for War," The Nation 137 (September 27, 1933):353.

up to and including 1936.⁵ The occupation of the Rhineland was also part of Hitler's objective for the completion of a European pan-Germanic empire. "Germany's immediate ambitions lie toward the East, and to assure a free hand in such a campaign Hitler desires above all else a guaranty of stability in the West."⁶ With Germany once more in possession of the Rhineland, German soldiers were on the French border. France would not be able to come to the aid of her allies to the East without, first, contending with the German army. This explained why Hitler occupied the Rhineland before turning to the East. Actually Hitler desired more than stability in the West as The Nation observed later.

The Nation reported that the Nazis believed they had economic justification for their foreign policy aspirations. Nazi dreams of expansion were based on "economic theories which have been evolved solely to suit these ambitions."⁷ Every nation, according to the Nazis, had to extend its orbit of economic and political influence in order to survive in the modern world. Germany's natural area of economic and political influence extended from the Baltic

⁵Editorial, "Has Hitler Won Out?," The Nation 142 (April 1, 1936):401.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Johannes Steel, "Europe Moves Toward War: II. Germany's Dream of Expansion," The Nation 138 (March 21, 1934):324.

states to deep into the agricultural countries of the Balkan region. The Nazis held that the creation of a Third Empire would make Germany economically self-sufficient and independent of other countries influence. "These theories complement Hitler's racial, mystical, and Kulturgemeinschaft appeal."⁸ Furthermore, The Nation believed if one understood the Nazi aspirations, the drive to coordinate Austria with Germany was not an end in itself; it was instead "an initial step in the realization of the Nazi dreams of a self-contained Third Reich stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic."⁹

What was The Nation's attitude toward the Nazi expansionist plans? The weekly deplored the policy and actions of the Nazis in Europe. To begin with, The Nation was not in agreement with the Nazi's economic justification. It perceived, instead, that the National Socialists were covering up their own personal ambitions. The Nation's reaction can be summarized by Walter Duranty in a 1937 issue. Hitler and his minions were recognized as the "dark forces" in Europe. The struggle on the European continent was believed to be one between two ideologies. Mr. Duranty, in his analysis, cleverly took a statement of Hitler's that there is a struggle between Civilization and the dark

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

forces. Hitler meant that the National Socialists represented Civilization. Duranty asked which is Civilization and which are the dark forces. He accepted Hitler's premise but reversed it. "There is a struggle of ideologies going on in Europe. It is the struggle of cruelty and reaction against all that noble men from Socrates to Jefferson have fought for throughout history."¹⁰ All of Europe was to be involved in the conflict which would result when Nazi Germany moved to fulfill its aspirations. German strategy was formulated by the Nazis to insure that their goals for the Reich were realized. As early as 1934, the Reich was seen to be at work endeavoring to carry out Nazi policy. This was attempted in several different ways.

The Nation reported countries were infiltrated by Nazis agents and cells were formed. In most of the Baltic states, these groups worked toward a "coordination" of all other nations with the Nazi policies and goals. Nazi propagandists worked day and night in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. These regions, however, were not to be the only areas in Europe manipulated by the Nazi agents. In fact "at this moment a closely knit network of spies and agents provocateurs covers the whole of Europe."¹¹ As an example,

¹⁰Walter Duranty, "Hitler's House of Cards," The Nation 144 (January 2, 1937):10.

¹¹Johannes Steel, "Europe Moves Toward War: II. Germany's Dream of Expansion," p. 325.

after an investigation, the Dutch found that Nazi agents had set up propaganda cells and organizational centers in garages in Holland. Continuous propaganda expounding Hitler's principles of racial and political discrimination was maintained in most European countries in an endeavor to weaken other countries governments. One of the key factors in the Nazi propaganda work was their cells and associated agents.

Another propaganda technique, used by the Nazis, was delineated by The Nation. It was a petition made directly to the Germans living in other countries. This appeal was for the realization of a pan-Germanic movement, which was to unite all Germans in the cause for the National Socialists back home in the Fatherland. As early as 1930, the famous program of twenty-five points of National Socialism contained this sentence. "'We cannot give up a single German in Sudeten Germany, in South Tyrol [changed in 1931 to Alsace-Lorraine], in Poland, in the League of Nations colony Austria, or in the succession states'."¹² This quotation reveals that even prior to their succession to power in 1933, Hitler and his cohorts intended to appeal to and manipulate Germans living in other European countries to further Nazi ambitions and policies. Germans had settled in areas all over Europe. They lived in areas from the Metz to

¹²Ludwig Lore, "Tyrol Germans Don't Count," The Nation 146 (May 21, 1938):585.

the Volga, from the Gulf of Finland to Serbia. "National Socialism spares no effort to inspire in these Teutonic minorities a spirit of rebellion against their respective governments."¹³ If these groups with their Nazi leadership were not able to gain control of other governments directly, they were in place for future use by Hitler. He intended, through his manipulations and proposed takeovers of other governments, to complete his foreign policy aspirations.

As early as 1934, The Nation understood that the key to European peace was in the hands of the French who seemingly missed their opportunity to halt the Germans. After the election of Hitler and the Nazis, if France and her European allies had marched into Germany little resistance would have been offered.¹⁴ Since 1933, the Germans had broken the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles by rearming. By 1934, rearmament in Germany had advanced considerably. France's first step would have been to demand the League of Nations make an inquiry into German armaments under Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles. Daladier and France took no such action; again the French missed their opportunity. Even with much ground being lost by 1934, The Nation believed France still had the

¹³Henry C. Wolfe, "Fascism Charts Its Course," The Nation 144 (January 2, 1937):17.

¹⁴Robert Dell, "Will Germany Conquer France?," The Nation 138 (April 18, 1934):441.

opportunity to defend civilization from the "barbarians."
"[O]ne hopes and believes, in the power of France to
organize the forces necessary for that defense and to
repulse the new barbarian invasion. If France fails,
European civilization is lost."¹⁵ Europe's last chance for
peace was to be determined by the French reaction to German
policies.

The Nation considered France to be a relatively
strong country after the war, and that it was not bothered
by Hitler in the early years of his dictatorship. But what
of the other countries that were not as strong and
resourceful as France? Certainly Hitler wanted to dominate
other nations, and these aspirations were part of his
foreign policy. It also appeared that Germany would probably
not have to fight to gain most of that dominance. Hitler
realized that many Europeans did not want to fight after the
devastation of World War I. The costs of the last war were
still fresh in the minds and hearts of most people.

According to The Nation, Hitler's attempted conquest
of Austria was "a subtle and dangerous experiment in
bloodless belligerence."¹⁶ Assimilation of Austria was one
of the top foreign policy aims of the early Nazi regime.
Pan-Germanism was the same as Hitlerism. The Nazis wanted to

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶John Gunther, "Danger Still in Austria," The
Nation 137 (September 20, 1933):320.

assert the pure and dominant unity of the German nation by absorbing Austria. In 1933, 6.5 million Austrians were of German decent, a full quarter of the Austrian population.¹⁷ Furthermore, Hitler wanted to achieve an Anschluss with Austria. He gambled that direct warfare need not be the method used to achieve his goals. Germany was neither fully prepared for war nor was it necessary if a less violent method could gain the result Hitler wanted. Political and economic forces were brought to bear upon Austria by Germany.

Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor, refused to acquiesce to Nazi demands and propaganda; the more the Nazis attacked Dollfuss, assessed The Nation, the better pretext he had to rule semi-dictatorially. This in a sense was a defeat for the Nazis because they needed an electoral success for victory. Dollfuss, by adducing the gravity of the crisis, staved off general elections almost indefinitely. The Austrians believed they were but the first step in the fulfillment of a pan-Germanic Nazi policy. Dollfuss himself believed this: "if the Nazis take Austria they will inevitably turn toward Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia next, even to Switzerland and Denmark."¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 322.

However, The Nation knew the fight for Austrian independence would not be easy. It believed Dollfuss faced great dangers--there were four obstacles to maintaining Austrian independence. These impediments were: the general apathy of the Austrian people, the strategic difficulty of fighting a civil and external action at the same time, the overwhelming burden of the economic crisis, and treason in the form of wholesale defection of the Heimwehr to the Nazi camp. In addition to these difficulties, the Austrians were a kindly people whose government behaved with appalling lenience. Most Austrians did not seem to be aware of the nature of their enemy, the Nazis. For example, an official Austrian communique regretted the necessity of jailing rebellious Nazis; "it mentioned Austria's hope that the Nazi invasion could be handled in a 'knightly spirit'." The Nation could not believe Austrian naivety and responded with, "[k]nightly spirit my eyeball! The only treatment a Nazi understands is a mallet on his head."¹⁹ The weekly observed the Austrian national character to be much too naive when it came to understanding what the Nazis were about.

The Nation viewed Dollfuss as a reactionary parochialist who also had dictatorial aspirations. He was still better than the Nazis, according to one view at the

¹⁹John Gunther, "Keeping Hitler Out of Austria," The Nation 138 (February 14, 1934):180.

weekly. Dollfuss had one saving grace: his courage and tenacity were keeping the Nazis out of power in Austria. In fact, The Nation believed "[f]or the Nazis to take Austria would be a major European tragedy. Therefore, regretting much in his policy, I support Dollfuss so long as he does his job, the supreme job of saving Austria from Hitler."²⁰

Although one view at The Nation perceived Dollfuss as better than Hitler, another view held Dollfuss was almost as bad as Hitler. The worse thing for Austrian independence was Dollfuss' dictatorship; in fact, "the dictatorship [was] Austria's weakness."²¹ In order to maintain his power, Dollfuss had to weaken and destroy the social democrats and rely upon the Heimwehr to a great extent. Dollfuss was doing the Nazis' job for them, destroying groups that had opposed fascism. Instead, he relied upon the Heimwehr, which would support an authoritarian state, whether it was his or the Nazis did not matter. What would enable the Austrians to defeat the Nazi campaign? It certainly was not going to be Dollfuss. The journal believed there was an alternative direction for Austria. "The only way in which Austria could offer resistance to . . . German fascism and thus give real content to the present empty slogan of Austrian independence

²⁰Ibid., p. 181.

²¹Louis Fischer, "Arms Over Europe: Austria Dams the Nazi Flood," The Nation 142 (February 26, 1936):247.

would be to set up a democratic government."²² A democracy would have a chance of keeping the Nazis out of Austria. A dictatorship would surely encourage it.

By late 1934, The Nation recognized that Austria and Dollfuss would not be able to hold out forever against the Nazis. What would be the consequences of a Nazi take over for the Austrians? The weekly believed that National Socialism would certainly not benefit the Austrians and other nationalities living in Austria. In fact, the consequences of Nazi rule would be dire indeed. Aside from being the completion of the first step in the Nazi pan-Germanic dream of a Third Reich which would extend from the Baltic to the Adriatic, Hitler had other plans, as well, for the Austrians.

However, The Nation asked what of the 400,000 Jews who lived in Austria? If the Nazis applied their maternal grandmother test, they would have "at least a million victims which they can sacrifice to their insane racial theories."²³ German National Socialist rule in Austria would also mean displacement or the concentration camp for tens of thousands of non-Jewish writers, artists, teachers, scientists, and any other persons who were connected to the

²²Ibid.

²³Johannes Steel, "Europe Moves Toward War: I. The Bloody Danube and Beyond," The Nation 138 (March 7, 1934):270

Socialists or Marxists.²⁴ In addition, most of Austria's political, cultural, and social life would be replaced by Nazi ideology.

The Nation wanted to discover what the overthrow of the Austrian government would mean for the rest of Europe. The immediate threat from the Nazis would be to the Little Entente. Nazi propaganda would naturally take advantage of the moral effect the German victory in Austria would create in the German minorities in the Little Entente. In fact, Nazi propaganda, which was already penetrating the Balkans, "would then issue an appeal to the many German minorities scattered all over Southeastern and Central Europe."²⁵ Victory for the Nazis in Austria would give them the means to continue their effective work and propaganda in other European countries.

When Anschluss finally came to Austria on February 15, 1938, The Nation was not surprised. After all, coordination with Austria was the policy Germany had worked for since 1934. Once Germany had absorbed the Austrian state, its population rose to 73 million while France's population was at 42 million. Germany was well on its way to becoming the dominant power of Continental Europe.²⁶ The

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ludwig Lore, "Austria--Last Chapter," The Nation 146 (February 26, 1938):235.

democracies of Europe had failed to stand up to the Nazi dictatorship. In fact, by allowing Germans to bring troops to her border with the reoccupation of the formerly demilitarized area in 1936, France made it impossible for its armies to come to the aid of its allies in Eastern Europe. In an editorial, The Nation summed up the Austrian Anschluss as it perceived the outcome. Austria was the first step into the abyss with the results uncertain for the rest of Europe. "For in failing to take a stand against fascist aggression while they have overwhelming military preponderance, the democracies are not only making a world war inevitable, but are endangering their chances of victory when it comes."²⁷

Czechoslovakia, predicted The Nation, would be next. At the very least Czechoslovakia would face dismemberment and division by Germany, Poland, and Hungary.²⁸ Certainly as some believed, with German soldiers now on the Czechoslovak-Austrian border, Czechoslovakia faced the immediate danger of being the next nation to be swallowed by Germany.²⁹ The partition of Czechoslovakia meant there was an imminent threat for the rest of the region from the Nazis.

²⁷Editorial, The Nation 146 (February 26, 1938):233.

²⁸Ludwig Lore, "Austria--Last Chapter," p.235.

²⁹Robert Dell, "Europe Learns from Vienna," The Nation 146 (March 19, 1938):320.

The Nation understood as early as 1937 that Czechoslovakia was the key to central Europe. If the Nazis could destroy the Czech democracy, then the road down the Danube would be open for further Nazi aggression.³⁰ Because of their pan-Germanic aspirations, the German fascists needed a territory that would provide a reservoir of raw materials and an outlet for their surplus population. Czechoslovakia would certainly fulfill both needs for the Nazis. Czechoslovakia "is slated to be the first nation to fall beneath Hitler's chariot wheels in his Drang nach Osten."³¹

The Nation was not fooled by Hitler's demands of self-determination for the Germans in the Sudetenland. The weekly was certain he aspired to much more. This was, in essence, a call for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.³² Hitler's demands, essentially, confirmed that Germany was "not interested so much in 'rescuing' the Sudeten Germans as in bringing the whole of Czechoslovakia within the German orbit."³³ Hitler was using his strategy formulated earlier: reliance upon the existence of Germans in other countries to

³⁰Henry C. Wolfe, "Nazi Eyes Turn East," The Nation 145 (November 6, 1937):502.

³¹Ibid., p. 504.

³²Louis Fischer, "Why Germany Feared War," The Nation 147 (November 12, 1938):505.

³³Editorial, "If Hitler Has His Way," The Nation 147 (October 1, 1938):312.

further his racial, pan-Germanic aspirations. The rest of Europe was, indeed, threatened. In fact, capitulation of Czechoslovakia would undercut Hungary's defenses against complete Nazi domination. But the Nazis had not intended to stop with Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

A prostrate Czechoslovakia is clearly but a means to an end. It would remove the last barrier to Hitler's control of Central Europe, and would lay the basis for early demands for Memel, Danzig, Schlesing, South Tyrol, and other territories partially populated by Germans.³⁴

The Nation felt Czechoslovakia was betrayed by the English and French agreement with Hitler at Munich. Additionally, the partition of Czechoslovakia, by and with the consent of France and Great Britain, had given Hitler another form of victory, according to the weekly. Hitler's demands were based on the relationship of racial status to political status. In other words, a person's racial derivation established his political adherence. Sudeten Germans, though Czechoslovakian citizens, had the right to self-determination under German rule because of their German racial heritage. The Nation quoted Göring speaking to Germans abroad:

The National Socialist government expects every German residing abroad to put the interest of his Fatherland before his own. You Germans abroad must remember, that wherever you are, you represent the interests of Germany. Always remember that the Fatherland comes first

³⁴Ibid.

and the rest of the world after. The German living abroad can be nothing else but a National Socialist.³⁵

Prior to the partition of Czechoslovakia, The Nation believed, Nazi racial theory was nothing but propaganda. It was the Nazi claim to Czechoslovakia, British, and French acquiescence to this racial claim which raised Nazi propaganda to the level of a principle of international action and Nazi right.³⁶ The acceptance of the Nazi racial proposition, by the two leading democracies in Europe, was perceived by The Nation as a direct threat to the United States. Hitler's racial propaganda, established as a principle in Europe, was anathema to Americans. Race was left behind by the immigrants from Europe when they came to the New World. People of many different racial stocks came to the American colonies not to found a new race, but a people.³⁷ Americans of German descent did not owe their allegiance to their Fatherland as the Nazis suggested. Nor did the victory of Nazi racial theory bode well for the rest of Europe either. Europe appeared to be on the brink of war. In the meantime, Hitler's policy had come to fruition and "Germany, the only country in Europe capable of plunging Europe into a general war, has won a hand. The new cards are

³⁵ Archibald MacLeish, "Munich and the Americans," The Nation 147 (October 15, 1938):370-71.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 371.

³⁷ Ibid.

in the hands of the potential aggressor."³⁸ Initiative was now with Hitler.

When Hitler demanded Danzig and the Corridor, The Nation knew this was Hitler's next step in his scheme for the completion of his pan-Germanic policy. After the destruction of Czechoslovakia and the assessment of Munich, as a failure for gaining European security, the only question for the journal was whether there would be another Munich or not. Would Great Britain and France comply with Hitler's demands this time around? One crucial, key element that affected Hitler's tactics would be the reaction of the Poles. Poland stood firm; they refused German and Soviet demands. Hitler would have to fight to obtain Poland.³⁹ This time, with Poland, most Europeans finally realized that treaties and agreements could not be made with Hitler. He broke every one made prior to his demands for Polish territory. What was to guarantee European security? It certainly was not going to be agreements made with Hitler. "A feeling of having their backs to the wall has united the democracies and clarified the issue as one of totalitarian domination."⁴⁰ One could almost hear a sigh of relief

³⁸John Gunther, "The Rhineland Crisis," The Nation 142 (April 1, 1936):408.

³⁹Henry B. Kranz, "Poland and the German 'Peace'," The Nation 147 (September 19, 1938):533.

⁴⁰Aylmer Vallance, "No Munich," The Nation 149 (September 2, 1939):236.

expressed by The Nation with the report of the European democracies finally unifying against Hitler. The independent press, including The Nation, had asserted for years "that Hitler couldn't be bargained with."⁴¹ Most of the countries in Europe had come to realize Hitler's pan-Germanic policy was an organized system of persecution that would eventually crush their political and economic liberties. "[T]he governments of the Western nations must fight for their existence. . . ." ⁴² Conditions could only grow worse under a National Socialist foreign policy that was growing increasingly belligerent and aggressive in the Nazis' attempt to fulfill the objectives of Mein Kampf. Most now believed Hitler was using Danzig and the Corridor as an excuse to gain a greater objective--Poland, which would go the way of Czechoslovakia. "It is universally recognized that the problem of Danzig is merely incidental, but concessions based on a reliance of Nazi good-will are vetoed as involving a crisis under conditions progressively deteriorating."⁴³

The Nation discerned that Hitler did not expect the democracies to declare war against Germany over the Polish issue. "Hitler obviously believed to the end, in spite of

⁴¹Freda Kirchwey, "Munich Bears Fruit," (Editorial) The Nation 149 (September 9, 1939):259.

⁴²Ibid., p. 260.

⁴³Aylmer Vallance, "No Munich," p. 236.

rearmament and conscription and the slowly growing peace front, that he could have his way without war."⁴⁴ Hitler's diplomatic coup in Moscow with the non-aggression pact and the British attempts to negotiate to the very end probably helped to deceive Hitler. The democracies had drawn the line; Germany could no longer step over it without war. When the demands came for Danzig and the Corridor, France and England were prepared. They ultimately must have expected Hitler's actions as their war preparations had been swift. They had finally learned not to trust Hitler's promises either.

Nazi foreign policy was based on the destruction of the Treaty of Versailles, the Locarno Pact, and the weakening of the League of Nations. Hitler's actions grew progressively more aggressive in seeking his goals. He obtained the land, people, and resources Germany needed and wanted in their bid to carry out his racial, economic, and political policies expounded in Mein Kampf. In the process, all hope for a collective security was destroyed. During the period from 1934 to 1939, while Hitler's policy grew more aggressive, what had been The Nation's reactions to Nazi policy? What conduct for the United States did the weekly advocate in response to Hitler's destruction of peace in Europe?

⁴⁴Freda Kirchwey, "Munich Bears Fruit," p. 260.

During the five year period from 1934 to the beginning of the war in Europe in 1939, The Nation ran many editorials and articles on Nazi foreign policy. Its beliefs on how Germany should be dealt with by the United States and other European nations were clearly expressed. The Nation's key belief was that Hitler and Germany must be contained at the very least, and if at all possible, Nazi Germany must be cut off from the rest of Europe and strangled. If Germany, in 1934, was allowed to rearm then what? Rearmament would surely lead to another war unless the Nazis were stopped. "[W]ill they [the French] permit Hitler to continue to arm and to violate the Treaty of Versailles without acting? If so, they will find themselves in an armament race which can have only one ending."⁴⁵ This ending, of course, would be war. The Nation was well aware that a preventive war was out of the question in 1934. There was too much pacifist sentiment in both Great Britain and France for there to be another war. What then was the answer for both the European powers and the United States? In answer to this question, many liberal views were expressed and examined in the journal. Neutrality, collective security expressed through sanctions, and new isolationism were the main avenues explored as answers in The Nation. However, the editorials and the preponderance of articles clearly favored and

⁴⁵Editorial, "Disarmament Retreats," The Nation 138 (May 2, 1934):495.

supported one position, collective security expressed through sanctions. One other person, Villard, the former editor and owner, supported neutrality. His position can hardly be expressed as equally dominant with collective security in The Nation. Neutrality was very much a minority opinion.

Both the supporters of collective security and Villard wanted to keep Americans out of any involvement with an eventual war in Europe. Villard and the editors disagreed, primarily, on how this goal was to be attained. They, also, diverged on whether the destruction of German fascism was a necessity that required their support. For Kirchwey, one of the goals of any policy she supported must be the eventual destruction of fascism. In an editorial in 1935, The Nation came out in support of sanctions as a method for dealing with Hitler and the Nazis. German fascism had to be contained and stamped out; in this way, it was compared to an epidemic. "The truth is that once a major war has started, the chances of remaining out of it are slim. As in combating an epidemic, the best strategy is to prevent the virus from gaining a foothold."⁴⁶ Sanctions would put commercial and financial pressures on the Nazis, and it would be futile to invoke economic measures against Germany without the full cooperation of the United States. The

⁴⁶Editorial, "Sanctions or War?," The Nation 141 (September 4, 1935):256.

Nation believed sanctions were the alternative to war that both Europeans and Americans could support. Because the United States could assist in this way, sanctions might have a chance at success. All other measures that were tried had failed. Diplomacy, with its compromises and concessions, had not been successful and moral suasion had been futile as well with the fascists. "Sanctions may also fail, but they present the sole alternative to war."⁴⁷ Certainly, collective security expressed through sanctions was not the sole alternative, but it was the only one, according to its supporters at The Nation, that would be successful in containing the Nazis.

Proponents of collective security at The Nation realized that all economic sanctions were, essentially, backed by a military preparedness to protect each other from the aggressions of Hitler. However, there were some advocates of collective action at the weekly who believed economic measures might not be enough to contain the "barbarian" Nazis. This was one view expressed in The Nation. "The barbarian invasion will not be repulsed by pacts or conventions. It will be repulsed only by force--perhaps economic force might be enough, although I doubt it, but it will have to be force of some kind."⁴⁸

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Robert Dell, "Will Germany Conquer France?," p. 441.

Hitler and the Nazis were the barbarian forces. Barbarians are classified as such because they reject civilization's laws and use coercion to achieve their own aims. Barbarians can not be reasoned with, unless it suits their own goals. Force is what barbarians understand. The future for Europe looked bleak because

those in France and elsewhere who have been so much afraid of any resort to force that they have capitulated to threats and yielded to blackmail may find themselves obliged to resort to force in much less favorable conditions. It is possible to precipitate war by being too much afraid of it.⁴⁹

The editors of The Nation had been fighting the adoption of nondiscriminatory neutrality legislation for years. They believed laws could be enacted which would give the President the authority "to lift the embargo on shipments to a state . . . which has been unjustly invaded. . . ." ⁵⁰ This was an extremely sensitive point with the journal. Current U.S. neutrality legislation hindered the fulfillment of American obligations to other democratic nations. The United States must be allowed to direct an embargo against aggressor nations and not the victims. If the Neutrality Act was allowed to stand, without amendment, then Americans would find themselves in the untenable position of supporting the Nazis. "Neutrality followed to

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Editorial, "Strengthening the Neutrality Act," The Nation 142 (January 8, 1936):32

its logical conclusion has made America effectively pro-fascist."⁵¹ Another point of the sanctions argument stressed that if any policy was to work at containing or destroying the fascists in Europe, it had to be collective in nature. Sanctions would not work unless there was a certainty of collective enactment. This was recognized as early as 1933 when The Nation first advocated economic sanctions against Germany as the "one weapon they fear."⁵² The Nazis dreaded economic pressure; they realized international enforcement of economic sanctions would "kill even the monster they had created."⁵³

The supporters of collective security were not totally opposed to neutrality. They realized the end goals for both neutrality and collective action were the same: the prevention of U.S. involvement in a war with the Nazis. "To much in the argument of the neutrality advocates we can give unqualified support."⁵⁴ The aspects of neutrality that the weekly favored, however, were not in American policy. As a consequence, The Nation could not support American neutrality.

⁵¹Louis Fischer, "Keeping America Out of War," The Nation 144 (March 27, 1937):349.

⁵²Richard Neuberger, "The New Germany," p. 379.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Editorial, "Pro-Fascist Neutrality," The Nation 144 (January 9, 1937):33.

Advocates of collective security at The Nation believed it was "the greatest possible measure of war prevention."⁵⁵ It was a simple plan once agreed upon. If one nation was attacked by an aggressor, like Germany, then all nations, united by a collective security agreement, would march against Germany to stop the aggression. By 1936, Germany was one of the most powerful nations in Europe and the "safety of the European powers lies in combinations which will offset Germany's superiority. This is the germ idea of collective security."⁵⁶ The Nation supported the United States, France, England, and the Soviet Union as being the foundation in worldwide collective security. The journal ascertained these countries had interests in common, not only in Europe, but in the Far East as well. The Nation, in general, supported the involvement of the Soviet Union in a proposed collective security policy put forth in 1935. During the same year, the weekly responded to the "olive branch" offered by Moscow. The Third International met in the Soviet Union and "has called for a united labor party of all groups in every country which oppose fascism."⁵⁷ This was a policy the Soviet Union needed to promulgate. If their

⁵⁵Louis Fischer, "The Soviets Face the Threat of War," The Nation 142 (April 8, 1936):442.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Editorial, "Moscow Offers an Olive Branch," The Nation 141 (August 7, 1935):145.

plan was successful, the Soviets would have substantially strengthened their defenses. The Nation realized that Soviet motivation was based on self-interest. Nevertheless, that was no reason "to oppose or to minimize its importance."⁵⁸ The Soviet Union was threatened by Nazi Germany, as all the nations of Europe were menaced by the economic and political aspirations of the Third Reich. The weekly believed that the compelling logic of self-preservation should have brought about an alliance of liberals and communists as they must foster a united front to defeat their common enemy--the German fascists. The Nation summed up its belief in the importance of the Moscow offer. "The hope of the world may depend upon the reality behind the pronouncement of the Third International at Moscow."⁵⁹ In addition, the USSR was willing to compromise: "to buttress the status quo the Kremlin is prepared to consider sympathetically any new scheme for European collective security. . . ."⁶⁰ But beyond the collective security alliance of the four nations and the economic sanctions, the journal expressed little else in the way of a concrete program.

Freda Kirchwey, the managing editor until 1937 and afterwards the owner of The Nation, accepted the Soviet

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Louis Fischer, "The Soviets Face the Threat of War," p.444.

Union "as a legitimate power and a logical ally."⁶¹ In fact, Kirchwey was a staunch supporter of the Soviet Union. She hoped the USSR would eventually fulfill its promise of a worker state. Freda had been actively involved in labor causes and felt there was "an urgent need to alleviate the bleak conditions of the masses."⁶² Even though she supported the Soviets, continued repression by Stalin in Russia made it difficult for her to sustain her endorsement. The ideological struggle between Stalin and Trotsky and the purges begun by Stalin in 1934 which continued to 1938, jeopardized a united front against German fascism. Nevertheless, Kirchwey with the concurrence of two of her editors, Max Lerner and Maxwell Stewart, continued her support of the Kremlin because

the collective security system against fascism was at stake. She adopted a moral stance of good versus the evil of fascism and an expedient stance regarding the Soviet Union. Because she regarded the Soviet Union as a flawed but necessary ally, she put it on the side of good and downplayed Soviet totalitarianism, which she considered temporary. A moralist against fascism, she was a relativist toward the Soviet Union.⁶³

Kirchwey aligned The Nation with the Soviets, against German fascism, even though the Soviet Union continued its suppression of supposed Russian counterrevolutionaries. Liberals who believed Stalin was as

⁶¹Sara Alpern. Freda Kirchwey, p. 103.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 119.

great an enemy as Hitler had difficulty with her stance.⁶⁴ One of her critics responded with: "I believe in all-around disarmament also but not in moral disarmament."⁶⁵ Kirchwey downplayed her critics censure, believing a disagreement would create a split of the left.⁶⁶ Kirchwey's all-consuming passion became the desire for the destruction of Hitler and fascism.

Villard was not in agreement with Kirchwey and the board of editors and their opinions concerning the Soviets, at least not by 1935. Villard had admired Soviet pacifism. His opinion of Moscow changed after the trials of 1934-35 and the subsequent killings. As far as Villard was concerned there was no difference between Stalin and Hitler. Cold-blooded murder and tyranny, whether fascist or bolshevist, was still murder and tyranny. "Slaughter is slaughter, and

⁶⁴Included in the detractors of Kirchwey's position, were three of her own editors, Robert Bendiner, who became managing editor in 1938, Joseph Wood Krutch and Margaret Marshall. All three editors were anti-Stalinists. Michael Wreszin, Oswald Garrison Villard, p. 253.

⁶⁵Sidney Hook to Freda Kirchwey, June 8, 1939, #153, FK MSS, cited in Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey, p. 126.

⁶⁶Sara Alpern, Freda Kirchwey, pp. 125-26. Kirchwey also believed the pro-Soviet groups would create a rift on the left as their uncritical approval of Stalin would create dissension among liberals. Kirchwey viewed the Soviets as acceptable but not necessarily desirable allies, and she criticized their policy accordingly.

remains such by whomever it is done."⁶⁷ Villard believed himself to still be old-fashioned, and for him "the end never justifies the means, and no good social order can be established by bloodshed."⁶⁸ Consequently, he could not accept the Soviets even if they were out to protect themselves and others from the Nazis. His sense of moral order was rigid; he believed "in moral laws, in certain moral imponderables and inevitabilities."⁶⁹ Villard never under any circumstance was willing to deviate from his stance.

In an article debating the values of neutrality versus sanctions, the reasons why The Nation expected the failure of American neutrality were clearly exposed. Neutrality was opposed because "it requires equal treatment of two belligerents without regard to the nature and origin of their conflict."⁷⁰ Equal treatment, The Nation recognized, was impossible to achieve. No nation could remain indifferent to the nature of a conflict and the principle of equal treatment. This was especially true in

⁶⁷Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Russians Murder Again," The Nation 140 (January 23, 1935):91.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Russian 'Purging'," The Nation 139 (December 26, 1934):729.

⁷⁰Raymond Gram Swing, "Sanctions vs. Neutrality: A Debate The Case for Sanctions," The Nation 141 (December 4, 1935):641.

the case of the United States. Neutrality must involve complete impartiality. Was this possible for the United States? The Nation answered no.

We must treat aggressor and aggrieved with complete equality. Such impartiality, or disinterestedness, might be possible for the residents of Samoa or even Argentina, but it is out of the question for Americans. As a leading creditor and as one of the chief commercial nations in the world, the United States is inextricably involved in world events. No great imperialistic power, with commitments in all parts of the earth can be truly neutral unless it voluntarily chooses to renounce its widespread interests.⁷¹

In addition, the lure of profits, in a society which exalts profitmaking, was likely to transcend any legislation including neutrality measures. Neutrality would not be a guaranty against the United States being drawn into a war.

By 1936, the United States had enacted the Neutrality Act which was obviously not the answer endorsed by collective security advocates at The Nation. The weekly observed the strong isolationist sentiment that existed throughout the United States in 1936. Consequently, if neutrality was to be approved, collective security supporters at The Nation advocated the adoption of neutrality legislation that would not be inconsistent with the struggle for a worldwide collective security. Current American neutrality legislation, in addition to promoting a nondiscriminatory position, was also weak in other areas.

⁷¹Editorial, "Can We Be Neutral?," The Nation 142 (February 12, 1936):173.

The legislation had to be altered. To begin with, provisions should be included that would require all trade with belligerents be carried on at the risk of the trader. Current neutrality legislation did not carry this provision, and according to The Nation, this was one of the reasons the United States became embroiled in the last war.⁷² Also, based on the experiences of World War I, The Nation wanted the neutrality legislation to include mandatory embargoes, not only on war materials but on credit and loans as well which the current legislation did not provide for. In addition, the Neutrality Act did not stop trade in commodities such as iron scrap, oil, and copper. Effective neutrality legislation must call for the embargo of these and other war materials. Their restriction was essential in maintaining the United States' neutrality. The legislation that was finally adopted in 1936 was a far cry from what was necessary to keep the United States truly neutral. It did not contain the measures The Nation considered essential. In fact, the current neutrality legislation was

no more than a breeder of delusions, that it will break down in the event of another world war, that another war is coming, that we shall be ultimately drawn in; that it would be better for us . . . [to take] some other form of collective action, to throw our weight on the side of peace and against aggression.⁷³

⁷²Editorial, "Strengthening the Neutrality Act," The Nation 142 (January 8, 1936):32.

⁷³Geoffrey Stone, "Neutrality--A Dangerous Myth," The Nation 145 (September 18, 1937):283

U.S. profit makers opposed the embargoes The Nation believed were necessary, and as a consequence they were not incorporated in the neutrality legislation. Therefore, the United States best protection against war lay in the prevention rather than the quarantine of war, "and wars cannot be prevented except through collective action."⁷⁴ The periodical could not support the American neutrality law as passed in 1936.

By 1937, The Nation dropped most of its attempts to alter neutrality legislation and became a more determined opponent to neutrality. This trend was due to Hitler's activities and because neutrality was seen as an eventual path to war. Many events had occurred by 1937 that caused The Nation to become more determined in its position.⁷⁵ The Rhineland Crisis, the Spanish Civil war, and other belligerent actions by Hitler revealed to the periodical further evidence of the true nature of the Nazis and that divergent views on the left would not stop German fascism. As a result, week after week the journal denounced American neutrality. The Nation believed neutrality could not prevent United States involvement in the deteriorating European situation. Neutrality, of a sort, was being used as a tool

⁷⁴Editorial, "Strengthening the Neutrality Act," p. 32.

⁷⁵Also at this time, The Nation was sold to Freda Kirchwey, and her support of the Soviet Union came to dominate The Nation's position after 1937.

by Hitler to further his pan-Germanic policy. In fact, Hitler, according to The Nation, was an eager supporter of neutrality because it was paving the way to victory for the Nazis. By attacking one country at a time, Hitler used his support of neutrality to keep other nations out of his disagreements. Only the aggressor and the attacked would fight in Hitler's model of neutrality. Using neutrality as a cover, Hitler would eventually control all of Europe.⁷⁶ If the U.S. continued to follow this kind of policy, eventually, Americans would not be able to remain impartial. Continued reliance upon neutrality under these circumstances would force the U.S. into the position of aiding Hitler.⁷⁷

The lone opponent to collective security at The Nation was Oswald Garrison Villard. Instead, he supported mandatory neutrality. Villard had never favored Hitler's regime. In 1935, he believed that Hitler's government was one of the worst to ever exist. In fact, "for the first time in history a great government was being run by gangsters and with gangster methods."⁷⁸ Not only was Germany under the thumb of a dictator, but Villard envisioned Hitler as a

⁷⁶Editorial, "Neutrality Makes War," The Nation 144 (February 20, 1937):200.

⁷⁷Louis Fischer, "Keeping America Out of War," p. 347.

⁷⁸Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: Government by Gangsters," The Nation 141 (August 7, 1935):147

threat to the whole world. "As long as the Hitler Government remains, it is a menace to the peace and welfare of the world, to democratic institutions, to liberty and humanity everywhere."⁷⁹ Although Villard recognized that the Nazis were dangerous and a hazard to every other nation in Europe, he supported neutrality. Villard's position was to cause a rift with the rest of the staff at The Nation. The split became so pronounced that the disagreement took place openly in the pages of the journal. By 1937, Villard's tone began to change. First of all, he asserted that the proposal of the Secretary of State to allow the President to decide "between the aggressor and the aggrieved seems to . . . insure [Americans] taking part in future wars."⁸⁰ Villard opposed discretionary embargoes and advocated mandatory embargoes against all belligerents with no distinction between the aggressor or the aggrieved. Not only did Villard support neutrality, he believed it was the only insurance that the U.S. would stay out of war. He decried any future involvement of the United States as "setting ourselves up as judges in a war with which we have no concern."⁸¹ Villard not only thought a European war was not the concern of the

⁷⁹Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: The Boycott of Germany," The Nation 139 (September 19, 1934):315.

⁸⁰Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men," The Nation 144 (January 2, 1937):19.

⁸¹Ibid.

U.S., he also believed Americans could become embroiled on the wrong side. He asked how America was to know with certainty which side was the aggressor.⁸² Villard was not certain that Hitler was the enemy. This position was a far cry from his original belief that the Nazis were the opponents of democracy and peace. The Nation could not support Villard's new outlook as it seemed absurd to not know that Hitler was the enemy. The weekly maintained its belief that Villard's point of view would create an advantage for Hitler. Any position that cut off trade to the aggrieved during a war gave direct aid to the aggressor. For Villard to continue to support neutrality, meant he had to retract his former convictions about German fascism. Villard's ability to reverse himself put him in an uncomfortable moral position, or at least the weekly believed as much.

By early 1939, after the Austria Anschluss and the agreement in Munich, The Nation acknowledged that if events continued unchecked, the United States "shall be forced, in order to survive, to fit into a framework of a Nazi world."⁸³ The United States was faced with a crumbling world order evidenced by the unsuccessful attempts by the British and French to appease Hitler. The old rules and methods were

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Freda Kirchwey, "Loving Hitler Less," (Editorial) The Nation 148 (March 25, 1939):338.

not workable because of Hitler. The Nation knew that the existing Neutrality Law would have to be altered to permit sales of essential supplies to the non-fascist powers in Europe in the event of war. In addition, the United States should be involved in discussion with these same countries on ways of other possible resistance. This did not mean that The Nation gladly supported France and Great Britain. The weekly believed that these powers were only a lesser evil than Germany. It did not approve of the way the Spanish Civil war and, especially, the Czechoslovakian matter had been handled. These countries had been sold down the river and virtually murdered by the British and French. "Flanked by the corpses of Spain and Czechoslovakia, the powers now move to 'stop Hitler'. And they ask the United States to help. . . . We are faced with an alternative of evils."⁸⁴ However unhappy the choice between governments, the United States had to, eventually, support democracies over fascist powers. The conquest of Europe by the Nazis would only lead to the subjugation of the people of the world. German fascist rule would, for many years, obliterate human freedom. Certainly, France and Great Britain could not be trusted to create a democratic and peaceful Europe as evidenced by their imperialistic nature; however, they were a better alternative than Hitler. "It is not that we love

⁸⁴Ibid.

Chamberlain and Daladier more but that we love Hitler less."⁸⁵ The Nation's position, at this point, as at all times, revealed its liberal standing. It wanted a free, democratic, and peaceful Europe--all liberal tenets, but it was also realistic enough to know what its choices meant.

But another principle of liberalism--pacifism came into disfavor with The Nation. The weekly, which had held pacifist views in 1914, came to accept the belief that no action or policy would keep the United States out of the impending European war. Support of isolation was impossible, this being an unrealistic view of the American position in the world. Efforts to advance collective security agreements were by 1939, obviously, failures. The nations involved had never had any real unanimity, other than appeasement, among themselves on how to proceed with Germany.

The Nation, in early 1939, feared that the German fascist terror in Europe was a menace to democracy everywhere. This apprehension expressed in the journal, would eventually evolve during the next six months into a more concrete fear for the United States. At first, The Nation's trepidation was expressed in the most general terms. Democracy and fascism could not survive together. One would finally destroy the other. If it was not to be the destruction of democracy, then fascism must be destroyed.

⁸⁵Ibid.

"They cannot survive together, either in the same hemisphere or ultimately in the same world; the world is too small and fascism is too implacable. . . ." ⁸⁶ By September 1939, Americans, according to The Nation, recognized that the defense of England and France was vital to the survival of democracy. A potential defeat of both of these countries would insure U.S. involvement in the war. The commitment of the United States would come about "because their survival is fatally bound up with the hope of freedom on our continent as in the whole world." ⁸⁷ The Nation's reasoning for aid to England and France was now linked directly to American security. With the beginning of the war in Europe in 1939, the argument concerning economic aid became more cogent; it was the one possible solution that could keep Americans out of the war. "[W]e shall have to aid England and France by all means short of war. Defeat for the Allies would seriously undermine American security." ⁸⁸ If Hitler defeated England and France, he would then be at the very door of America. Due to Hitler's past record, Americans could not be certain that Nazi Germany would not attack. Hitler's record of past assurances gave The Nation no hope.

⁸⁶Freda Kirchwey, "Let's Mind Our Own Business," (Editorial) The Nation 148 (April 15, 1939):421.

⁸⁷Freda Kirchwey, "What Americans Want," (Editorial) The Nation 149 (September 23, 1939):307.

⁸⁸Editorial, "American Neutrality," The Nation 149 (September 16, 1939):281.

"Hitler is a liar. . . . [E]very reason Hitler gave for going to war--were merely pretexts [sic]. His fantastic dream of conquering the world is his only truth."⁸⁹

Though the bulk of this paper is centered on 1933 to 1939, it is necessary at this point to look forward to 1939 and 1941 to see if The Nation was consistent in its reaction to Hitler. Was the journal's response to Hitler influenced by the non-aggression pact in 1939 or Germany's declaration of war against the Soviet Union in June 1941? As Freda Kirchwey and others at the weekly had incorporated the Soviets in their stance on collective security and were supportive of them, it is important to discover if The Nation was swayed by what happened with the USSR.

Just before the beginning of the European war in 1939, Germany concluded a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. The Nation, though startled by Soviet alignment with Hitler, could not accept Stalin's actions. The journal editorialized "that the Moscow-Berlin axis is a solid and menacing fact. . . ." ⁹⁰ Though expedience probably provided the motivation for the pact, the journal could not believe there would be a continued alliance. "[T]he long-range ambitions of Stalin and Hitler are bound to clash.

⁸⁹"Hitler's Calendar," The Nation 149 (September 9, 1939):261-62.

⁹⁰Freda Kirchwey, "Moscow-Berlin Axis," (Editorial) The Nation 147 (October 7, 1939):365.

Behind the ideologies of the two countries lie older and deeper conflict."⁹¹ Even though The Nation could minimize Soviet purges in its continual advancement of collectivism, the weekly was not able to accept Soviet defection to a German alliance. The German-Soviet pact did not cause The Nation to alter its view toward German fascism in favor of Moscow. The determination of the journal to oppose Hitler can, in addition, be seen in the weekly's analysis of Hitler's attack on Russia. The Nation advocated support for the Western democracies in opposition to Hitler in 1940, long before the Soviet Union entered the war on the Allies side. Again and again the weekly stressed the one issue of paramount importance in the war, the destruction of Hitler because he threatened everyone. The Nation insisted that

it is not an issue which can be blurred by the ideological backtracking of the Communists or the past mistakes and treacheries of the Soviet Government. Hitler must be defeated and destroyed, not because he was in league with Stalin or because he is fighting Stalin today, but because he represents the one overwhelming menace to the Western democracies and to freedom throughout the world.⁹²

The Nation never wavered in its fear of Hitler and its devotion to his ruin. The journal believed the threat from the Nazis put democracy and the very continuance of civilization in jeopardy. Everything else assumed little

⁹¹Ibid., p. 366.

⁹²Freda Kirchwey, "We Have But One Aim," (Editorial) The Nation 152 (June 28, 1941):740.

importance next to its desire for the complete annihilation of Hitler and his regime.

Americans continued to want to stay out of the European war, according to The Nation, but they did not want to remain totally neutral. American interests lay with France and England; nevertheless, the United States did not want to send an army to Europe. Again, there was only one possible solution supported by the journal.

Our chance of staying out of the war depends in great part on the amount of equipment we can ship to Britain and France. . . . The more guns we send and the sooner we send them, the better the chance that we shall not have to send men as well.⁹³

The only hold out in American aid to Europe was U.S. troops. Even this was to eventually fall by the wayside in The Nation's stance on the war. By mid 1940, the journal's attitude had evolved further. It came out in support of universal military service (conscription) as the "first program for a democratic defense. . . ." ⁹⁴

The Nation's support of universal military service and its "abandonment" of pacifism caused the former editor and owner, Oswald Garrison Villard, to resign. The rift between the editors and the former owner had grown too large. He could not accept the changes that had taken place in The Nation's attitude toward American involvement in the

⁹³Freda Kirchwey, "What Americans Want," p. 308.

⁹⁴Freda Kirchwey, "A Democratic Program of Defense," (Editorial) The Nation 150 (June 15, 1940):723.

war. The weekly's "desertion of pacifism" and absolute morals violated his persistent belief in a liberal ideology.⁹⁵ Villard regretted his leaving, but it was necessary as it "has been precipitated at this time by the editors' abandonment of The Nation's steadfast opposition to all preparations for war, to universal military service, to a great navy, and to all war. . . ."96

The Nation was frightened by many well-intentioned people, which in the weekly's opinion included Villard, who recognized the nature of the horror facing democracy but seemed to believe that the terrible conditions in Europe were "our concern only if we choose to make them so."⁹⁷ The journal viewed this kind of belief as "a retreat from the grimmest reality that has confronted our nation in many generations. . . ."98 Pacifism, according to The Nation, had become appeasement. The weekly never supported appeasement. Those who continued to support pacifism believed the United States could continue to exist independent and free with a

⁹⁵Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men: Valedictory," The Nation 150 (June 29, 1940):782.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Freda Kirchwey, "Escape and Appeasement," (Editorial) The Nation 150 (June 29, 1940):773. Kirchwey's words in this quotation are almost the same words that Villard used in a previous issue about potential American involvement in the war. This was meant to be a dig at Villard.

⁹⁸Ibid.

Europe dominated by Hitler and the Nazis. For example, The Nation reacted negatively to the position of another liberal publication, The New Republic. This was because it "promised to stand resolutely against any moral urge that might carry us into war because it knew so certainly that the 'evils of a system' could not be cured by 'killing the unfortunate individuals who for a moment embody the system'."⁹⁹ The journal sarcastically responded to such a naive outmoded view of reality, which could literally endanger American liberties and security. "It [The New Republic] failed to tell us that the individuals who for the moment embody a system might possibly fasten a system of slavery upon us which would not be for the moment."¹⁰⁰ The Nation could not support the supposition that the Nazis would not bother the U.S. The journal no longer understood the defeat of Nazism to be a program to defend the unfortunate victims of Nazi aggression. The Nation now believed the defeat of Hitler was a much more vital issue. The very survival of the United States and democracy were at stake. The U.S. had to become involved in a "stouthearted resistance" as a necessary protection of America's security.¹⁰¹ The old order no longer

⁹⁹Reinhold Niebuhr, "An End to Illusions," The Nation 150 (June 29, 1940):778. Although there is no evidence that The Nation responded to The New Republic on other issues, it certainly did so in this case.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 779.

¹⁰¹Freda Kirchwey, "Escape and Appeasement," p. 774.

existed. Pacifism, collective action, and liberal principles no longer held the same meaning in a world that was rapidly changing. The Nation saw these changes, feared the consequences, and realized that people's blind faith in morality and the goodness of men could lead to the world's destruction.¹⁰² Hitler himself changed The Nation's views of the world. Because of Hitler's actions and the ineffectiveness of the policies of European countries dealing with Hitler, the weekly believed the United States would eventually be threatened by German foreign policy. The Nation was able to evolve with the changing circumstances and so progressed from a view of pacifism to a position of militant liberalism.

¹⁰²Reinhold Niebuhr, "An End to Illusions," p. 778-79.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It should be no surprise to anyone who read The Nation in the 1930s that its liberalism would bring it into continual conflict with Hitler's regime. The weekly was concerned with what happened in Germany as Hitler took over the reigns of power. It was also concerned for the rest of Europe as Hitler's despotism spread. German workers, women, and intellectuals knew a harsh life under Nazism. Jews, liberals, and leftists were hounded into exile or death. The rights of individuals were destroyed first in Germany, and finally in the rest of Europe as each country came under Nazi domination. Traditional ways of life and cultures were uprooted, torn apart, and discarded by a tyranny that acknowledged no boundary lines in Europe. Hitler, in striving to conquer the rest of the continent and create a pan-Germanic empire, unleashed methods of slaughter and terrorism unprecedented in world history. The Nation could not accept the supposition that the terrible events taking place in Europe were not the concern of Americans. Not only was it America's concern, it was also the duty of the U.S. to become involved. This did not mean that The Nation wished America to become entangled in a foreign war. As soon as the

journal realized the coming war was not simply a foreign adventure but that the preservation of democracy was inextricably bound to Global affairs; it had to recommend American support for the besieged nations of Europe. In 1917, liberals in the aftermath of World War I could argue that freedom and democracy for Americans were not involved in European affairs. By 1938, it was certain that Hitler's regime was different; these same terms were in jeopardy.

In some instances, The Nation's response to German fascism was naive. When it advocated democracy as the answer for Austria's dilemma with Germany, this was an unrealistic view. Dollfuss was able to dispose of the Austrian socialists in 1934. It is hard to imagine that democrats would have fared any better than the socialists.

The one amazing discovery made during the research of The Nation's analyses and attitudes was the precision of its predictions in so many areas. The journal believed Hitler's foreign policy goals would result in war if the rest of Europe did not act. The Nation's accuracy concerning the destruction of the Jews is almost too chilling to believe. Though the weekly did not go far enough (as who could) in its description of what was intended for the Jews under Hitler, its poignant depiction of the Jews' treatment under the Nazis and its foreshadowing of events to come were close to the mark. In addition, The Nation published the horrid reality of the extermination of Jews very early on as

it tried to force Americans to examine what was happening to the Jewish people and force a reaction to their exterminators.

It has been exciting for this writer to read the analyses of The Nation. The impact the journal had on its readership and the influence it had on intellectuals was essential in molding American opinion. As a leading journal of liberal opinion in the 1930s, The Nation helped make its prestigious readership aware of the changing realities imposed by Hitler's regime. Understanding the positions, attitudes, and concerns of a liberal periodical such as The Nation opens up the history of the period. The weekly's perspective on Hitler, the Nazis, and the rest of Europe reveals how the 1930s, an era of great stress and hardship, was interpreted and reacted to by one segment of American society--the liberals. The Nation, in addition, can be understood as the conscience of the United States. Americans may not have listened or paid any attention to the weekly's efforts, but The Nation certainly can be applauded for its crusade. Indirectly, through intellectuals and policy makers, it endeavored to influence and awaken a sleeping giant, the American public, to the nature of Hitler, the Nazis and the resultant plight and horrors for all Europeans who were affected by the Third Reich.

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