

PETER HOWARD

Ideas
Have Legs

COWARD-McCANN, INC.

New York

By the Same Author

INNOCENT MEN
FIGHTERS EVER
MEN ON TRIAL

COPYRIGHT, 1946, BY THE OXFORD GROUP—MORAL RE-ARMAMENT, M.R.A., INC.

*All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, must
not be reproduced in any form without permission.*

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FOREWORD

PETER HOWARD has emphasized a profound truth for us in that forceful and colorful language which has made him one of England's outstanding writers: ideas do have legs, and they travel fast and far, for "they need no ships to cross the seas." Indeed they move with such speed that "the idea conceived and born by the passion of one heart can shape and change the lives of millions, leading great nations on to destruction or destiny."

Unhappily, as the author reminds us, not all ideas are good. Some are evil and work through distorted minds like Hitler's. But whether they be good or bad, ideas move with the same speed and inevitability.

If all ideas were good the world might have been deprived of a great book, for Peter Howard perhaps wouldn't have been impelled to write as he has. But it is because of the evil which has swept our war-torn world like an epidemic that he has abandoned a brilliant career as journalist in London's "Street of Ink" and is devoting his life to war against wicked ideas with their speeding legs.

If you could meet Howard personally you would get a better understanding of why he should brush aside fame and fortune as a political writer in order to give his services to the world. I first encountered him in London in 1942, when a mutual friend brought us together for dinner at which I also had the privilege of meeting the Doë of whom he writes so much—his wife and co-worker who is a notable personality in her own right.

The tall and athletic Peter Howard is a fine-looking man, but it is his eyes which give the key to his character. They blaze with a fire which left me in no doubt that I had met a true crusader, and passing time has confirmed that impression.

Howard has found an answer for the evils which have beset the world. *Ideas Have Legs* tells us about it in a story embel-

lished with anecdotes of famous men like Churchill and Beaverbrook, and pertinent adventures in the author's own exciting career which, among other things, carried him to the peak in English athletics.

That answer is a moral awakening on a world scale. Howard points out that such a movement is under way today, started by an American, Dr. Frank Buchman. The author sums it up like this:

"Buchman, the man of the future, has taken the ideas of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, of the guidance of God and the possibility of a change in human nature, which had existed in the world since men killed the carpenter's son, and given them in our time an international strategy and framework—Moral Re-Armament. He gave these ideas legs, and they are on the march today. It is a tremendous revolutionary achievement extending into over sixty countries, against the force of Materialism."

If ever there was a time when the world needed a healing power it is now. I recently returned from a protracted tour of Europe, and during the war visited some twenty countries on a trip which took me clear through to China. There is indescribable chaos in many lands.

The greatest long-term disaster which has befallen Germany and numerous other parts of Europe isn't material but moral destruction. And that isn't by any means wholly the direct result of the war, for Adolf Hitler conceived and deliberately carried out the diabolical scheme of debasing not only his own people but those of conquered countries.

The point of this so far as the Reich was concerned was to rob the people of any Christian principles so that the dictator could more easily lead them to commit the terrible crimes which he contemplated against humanity. The idea as regards other countries was to render them more easily amenable to his evil dictation.

Hitler set out first to destroy Christianity in his own country. Proof of this came to my hand during my European tour in the copy of an amazing secret report that was discovered in the files of the Reich Security Department in Berlin. This report, which was intended for official guidance, analyzed the

operations of the Oxford Group movement (Moral Re-Armament) under the leadership of Dr. Buchman, and warned that it was an instrument of Christianity, dangerous to Nazidom.

The official files in Berlin also disclosed that directives for the suppression of the Oxford Group in both Germany and the occupied countries were issued on the strength of this document. The report went into detail, and said among other things:

"The Oxford Group as a whole constitutes an attack upon the nationalism of the state, and demands the utmost watchfulness on the part of the state. It preaches revolution against the national state and has quite evidently become its Christian opponent."

Finally in one brutal line the document disclosed Hitler's purpose to smash Christianity in Germany: "They [the Oxford Group] encourage their members to place themselves fully beneath the Christian cross, and to oppose the cross of the swastika with the Cross of Christ, as the former [the swastika] seeks to destroy the Cross of Christ."

The report showed that the German secret police regarded the Oxford Group as a force working "to bring about new political and ideological conditions in the Reich. At the very moment we [Nazi officialdom] are making efforts to suppress the Christian conviction of sin, which is regarded as the first step toward the enslavement of the Germans, a movement is emanating from the Anglo-Saxons, who are racially related to us, which regards just this consciousness of sin as a basis for a change in personal and national relationships."

The document emphasized the bond between democracy and Christianity, and declared that "the Oxford Group supplies the Christian religious garment for world democratic aims." It added:

"The Group and the democracies supplement each other and render each other's work fruitful. They face the common enemy; that is, all nationalistic conceptions of life which democracy opposes and fights because of its political ideology, the Oxford Group opposes because of its primitive Christian arguments. Their common opposition to the modern conception of race and nation has brought them still closer together."

Seldom, said the report at another point, has any religious movement "succeeded as the Group has in establishing itself in such a relatively short time in almost all the countries of the world. Under the slogan of Moral Re-Armament the Group has become the pacemaker of Anglo-American diplomacy."

It was in 1938, when I spent considerable time in Germany, that I first realized Hitler was anti-Christ, though it wasn't apparent then that his aim was to brutalize his people for purposes of conquest and savagery and the enslavement of his fellow men. At that time I attended the fateful conferences at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, and Munich, where British Prime Minister Chamberlain sought to appease Hitler. And after the Führer's victory at Munich I witnessed his triumphal entry into little Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland.

One could see even then that Hitler was waging a campaign to replace Christianity with a pagan belief in which he was being put forward as a messiah. That was the meaning of his feud with the churches, and of his effort to get all the children of Germany under control of his teaching through the youth movements.

One was startled on encountering such phenomena as the substitution of Hitler's name for that of Christ in the formal death notices in some newspapers. Instead of the customary: "Here died in the faith of His Lord Jesus Christ, Hans Schmidt, etc.," one read: "Here died in the faith of Adolf Hitler . . ."

And as the dictator's influence over the young folk increased he hammered home his teaching of militarism and aggression. He even descended to the extreme of urging all teen-age German girls to have children out of wedlock so that he might have more soldiers with whom to conquer the world.

Upright Germans fought back at the anti-Christ—and found themselves in concentration camps for their pains. When the time came for Hitler to march his armies, he had remolded and made savage the minds of millions of his people, and had rendered most of the rest amenable to his discipline. It was an astonishing revelation of what can be achieved by intensive education under the pressure of absolute dictatorship.

Ideas certainly have legs. Hitler changed the nature of a

nation of eighty million people in less than a decade. His most effective work, of course, was among the young folk, and I encountered a shocking gauge of his success on my recent tour of Germany. I was told by an authoritative source that for the most part all of the German population between the ages of fourteen and thirty-four are thoroughly Hitlerized and antagonistic to the Allies and their efforts of rehabilitation.

If this Hitlerization had been confined to the Reich our present-day problems would be far less formidable, but the germ traveled fast and far. Its ravages were especially fierce in the satellite nations which, largely through duress but partly from desire, cast their lot with the world-beating Germany. In some of the conquered countries, too, Hitler waged a crusade to undermine the morale and moral stamina. In at least one notable instance the whole machinery of the German army of occupation was used to try to carry out the diabolical scheme of debasing the nation.

During my trip I found that the countries whose way of life has its roots embedded in a belief in God are battling fiercely against the assault on religion. In many instances Catholics and Protestants have combined for the stand at Armageddon, and on the firing line are the fighting forces of Moral Re-Armament which knows no denomination.

What is true of Europe as regards spiritual and moral chaos is true in many parts of the Orient. Unhappily it also is true that the tidal wave which has hit the Eastern Hemisphere has piled against the shores of the Western world. Here in our own United States there is much confusion of thought and pulling at cross-purposes. In that lies danger.

Peter Howard tells us in *Ideas Have Legs* how this world sickness can be cured. He isn't theorizing but is relating the fascinating story of how he and his faithful Doë worked out all this in their own lives. It is a remarkable human document.

DEWITT MACKENZIE

CONTENTS

FOREWORD by DeWitt Mackenzie

I. YOU AND I	1
II. THE BLACK BAG	4
III. RED LENIN AND WHITE TIES	9
IV. FOOTBALL BOOTS AND SPIKES	18
V. LORD BEAVERBROOK BREAKS A HORSE	30
VI. I SPY STRANGERS	37
VII. FAREWELL, MY HEART	43
VIII. MR. CHURCHILL SHARPENS HIS SWORD	57
IX. SOMETHING HIT ME	63
X. WHATISIT?	67
XI. THE WAR OF IDEAS	72
XII. MAN OF THE FUTURE	77
XIII. SUCH MEN ARE DANGEROUS	86
XIV. WHO GOES HOME?	95
XV. BRINGING UP FATHER	105
XVI. BATTLE FOR CONTROL	114
XVII. PEN INTO PLOUGH	125
XVIII. DESTINY OF SERVICE	139
XIX. THE HOUSE WITH A HOME INSIDE IT	152
XX. WE NEED NEW MEN	159
XXI. HOW TO GET IT	170
XXII. SILVER THREAD	176
XXIII. ONCE TO EVERY MAN	182

YOU AND I

WE are alive, you and I, in an age when millions dream of death.

Never, since man started to run the world God made, has human agony been organized by humans for humans with such science and success.

But something men have yet to learn. We cannot put breath back into one of the millions of bodies we destroy.

It is our bodies, yours and mine, which enable us to talk together though we may never have met. The sinews of your hand contract and grip this page. The nerves of your eyes send the message of the print back to that three pounds of liquid, membrane and matter encased in its narrow bony cavern of the skull, which is called your brain.

The sinews of my hand grasp and direct the pen—first softly into the inkpot—then in whirls, strokes, dots and intervals across the paper. My eyes hover over the sheet like aircraft spotting for distant artillery. They wireless back a stream of information to my three-pound ration of marshy, trembling gray matter, so that the brain is able to control correctly the shape, size and sequence of the letters by which its thoughts are conveyed from me to you.

So here we sit, you in your chair, I in mine. We travel with certainty toward each other's minds and hearts by means of our bodies. For these bodies of ours are machines infinitely more complicated and competent than any which man has devised for their destruction. But we live so close to them that we miss the miracle.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Chemists tell us that our bodies are water, potash, iron, phosphates,

which can be bottled, labeled and shelved. But the story does not end at that point. There is something inside that body of ours which cannot be accounted for by the water and the chemicals which compound our frame.

It is that something which makes you *understand* the print which your brain and eye can only make you *see*. Our arms and legs, brains, hands and eyes will one day disintegrate and scatter again into the elements, to swell the multitudinous ocean, to travel the clouds and be dust and dirt in cities we have never known. Yet there is a faith in man which tells him that the *something* is there which is forever his and his own responsibility.

We know each other, you and I. There is that something in both of us which can allow us to touch hearts without touching hands.

I, like you, have felt my heart lift at the beauty of green fields, and the sound of wind through trees.

I have loved the taste of food. I have spread and stretched my body to the warmth of sunshine and of fires.

I have felt pain, and the peace when pain is ended. I have known fear and also the shame which makes the frightened man keep silent lest others sense his secret.

I have shivered with the cold and spoken in the heat of that rage which hurts, enjoys the hurting and later fruitlessly regrets. I have lusted and quarreled, slept and loved and toiled, met the gay days and the gray days in their marching cavalcade.

Death has touched me with his strange hand. Life too, with his finger of mystery, when my children puckered their faces and whimpered their first breath.

We are brother and sister, you and I, companions in a journey and comrades in a crusade. Young or old, rich or poor, female or male, handsome or ugly, drunk or dry, we are the ordinary men and women of the nation. We are part of its past.

We are its future too. Through the power of people

will a new age stir and be born. No new age has been born any other way.

For within the framework of men's bodies is generated the most powerful explosive force known in history—the explosive force of ideas.

Frail children of dust we are and feeble as frail. The commonest knife will end the noblest life. Yet from and through our minds are born ideas which conquer the skies, break and remake nations, explore the abysses of the ocean and measure the heats and vapors of the uttermost planets in the universe.

The idea conceived and born by the passion of one heart can shape and change the lives of millions, leading great nations on to destruction or to destiny. We have seen it happen more than once in our own lifetime.

Ideas are on the march in the world today. Ideas move faster than armies. They travel ahead of them as well as behind them. They need no ships to cross the seas, neither will fortifications keep them beyond a frontier.

Ideas to transform history are bidding for the hearts of all humanity today. There is the idea that one class should dominate, or that one section should dominate, or that one race should dominate or that one group of nations should dominate.

Yet in the end all these ideas will fail. For there is one idea destined to master all others in this day and age—to establish in our lifetime the fresh, brave world for which all openly long, and in which few wholeheartedly believe.

THE BLACK BAG

IDEAS change men. Ideas shape nations.

So many ideas bid for the allegiance of each human heart as it makes its journey from the womb to the tomb. And when millions of ordinary men and women begin to follow the same star history is molded.

A hundred years from now when the pain and tears and blood are only a shadow, and the outline of events is clearly and coldly seen, an historian will attach more importance to the ideas which grip men and alter the character of nations after a war than to the war itself. He will see that war is a symptom of the disease of an age rather than the disease.

What great forces and ideas gripped the lives of millions of men after 1918 and turned them down the road which led to disaster?

In order to settle that question, we need to take a sample of an age and examine the molding and shaping of events upon it during those interwar years.

So I put myself in the black bag. I am like the barley which farmers carry in their small black bags of silk to market. When a farmer has barley heaped within his barn, he bares his arm and plunges it full length into the cool, yielding heart of the grain. He brings out a handful. Into the bag it goes, and off to market for the inspection of the merchant.

I am a fair sample to choose. For I am so typical a product of our age. Between the wars my character was carved.

These incidents of my life are of the stuff which makes the character of millions—tears and triumph, exertion and

exhaustion, love and hate, folly and fun, poverty and prosperity, laughter and laziness and drive. Ordinary things in ordinary men which settle the fate of nations.

The most ordinary thing about me is the fact that for many years I prided myself on being a little bit out of the ordinary—more intelligent than many, nicer than most and with qualities which, although the rest of the world might not wholly assess them, I myself fully appreciated.

Like most ordinary people, I have memories of childhood. And one of them has a part in this tale. That memory is a man. His name was Arthur and he was my uncle.

Uncle Arthur was of lean and tempered steel. He was blue-eyed and blond, unlike the other black-browed, tough-hided Howards. He was a hero of my childhood, so gay and so gallant. He was a magnificent footballer and the crowds roared as he swept forward with the ball.

Once he set me on his back and ran with me down the street, so I felt the air rush by and a sense of peril and yet of escape from the world, as if I were borne forward in the crow's-nest of a tall-masted and lithe ship through tumbling seas. It was a relief and a regret when Uncle Arthur set me down. I said, "Again, Uncle, again," and then gulped with apprehension as he gripped and hoisted me aloft.

Uncle Arthur went off to France to fight the Germans. I saw him in uniform before he sailed away. He seemed an indestructible conqueror to my childhood gaze.

The family had given him a patent body shield. This was a steel waistcoat, proof against bullets and shell splinters. It covered a man from the neck down to the small of the back. Uncle Arthur made jokes about it before he said good-by.

Unforgettable, unforgotten, those good-bys of 1914-1918 when a generation of youth and strength and daring went away and millions fewer came back home again.

I remember, I remember, as a child.

The trains full of troops pulling out and the trains full of wounded pulling in as dusk fell.

The feverish cheers and hectic laughter under the grime and steam and smoke.

The songs "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," "Pack Up Your Troubles," "Keep the Home Fires Burning"—the potency of such music to tear the heart. These were the last words so many mothers, wives, daughters heard their menfolk sing as the trains, slowly but with gathering speed, disappeared South into the darkness.

The sudden silence after the troop trains had departed—all conversation ceased, no need now to pretend to be cheerful so as to send the boys off with the memory of a smile—the huddles and clusters of women, the strength and resolution and glory of the nation, standing silent for a moment or two straining their eyes after the red tail-lights of the trains, then turning and quietly, quickly, heads down, slipping off through the barriers toward their empty homes.

There was a dignity and a poignancy about those Southern Railway platforms in the last war, a sense of sacrifice and dedication which even a child could feel. I believe it was the thousands of unknown tears and prayers sent up from brave hearts which gave an atmosphere of consecration to those places.

Uncle Arthur and a sergeant were out one night on patrol in No Man's Land. Someone from the German lines fired a Very Light. Uncle Arthur and the sergeant lay still on the ground. A shell exploded near by. Presently the sergeant said, "It's all right, sir, we can get up now."

Uncle Arthur answered, "I'm trying to get up, Sergeant, but I can't seem to manage it." And indeed he never stood on his feet again in this world, though he was nigh seven years a-dying. They wheeled him to an emergency hospital in a barrow. A piece of shrapnel had severed his

spine. The shrapnel was the size of half a lump of sugar.

It had penetrated his spine about halfway down, just at the point where the covering of the body shield would have been most adequate.

But Uncle Arthur was generous as well as gay. That night on patrol it had been the sergeant's turn to wear the body shield.

Never again of his volition did Uncle Arthur move the lower half of his body.

It is a somber spectacle for a child to see a living man disintegrate year by year, week by week, day by day. Uncle Arthur's lower half shriveled to the proportion of a mummy during his own lifetime, those valiant legs which had kicked and run and leapt to the clamor of applauding multitudes. So shrunken was that mighty man of valor.

He died.

Most families in the world have the savagery and sadness of war focused for them by some personal tragedy like that of my Uncle Arthur.

I grew up between two wars. I disliked war. I perceived its futility. I believed that Uncle Arthur had fought in the war to end wars and that therefore war could not be for me. So I did nothing effective about it.

I disapproved of it in my heart and with my mind. I thought that was adequate. I imagined that war was something which, if enough people did not like it, just did not happen. It was a tragic mistake. The majority of the earth did not like war. But war came again.

I believed for some time in the League of Nations because that body enunciated all the vague aspirations and ideals, many of them fine in themselves, for which I stood, without calling upon me personally to do anything sacrificial about them.

I never realized, in those interwar years, that good will in a man or a nation is no answer to self-will in a man or

nation. For one is a state of mind, the other is a force. When a force meets a state of mind, the state of mind is brushed aside with violence.

For while I and millions like me in Britain were from time to time vaguely enthusiastic about the necessity for ending certain things we did not like, our country had no faith big enough to kindle the hearts of every citizen to action. But in other parts of the world millions of men were on the march for new beliefs.

Somewhere the other side of No Man's Land, on the night Arthur was hit, a lonely and self-centered artist crouched in a trench. He was a corporal. His name was Adolf Hitler.

He formed an idea. He ate, slept, toiled, lied and fought for it. It was such a fire in the heart of this unknown man that it inflamed millions, shook civilization and made inconclusive the courage and sacrifice of Arthur's generation.

The power of Hitler's idea restored strength for a time to Germany, made her probably the most hated nation on earth, shattered the old order so it can never be the same again, sentenced men, women and children all the world over to suffering beyond human power to realize, and at one point came within touch of triumph.

RED LENIN AND WHITE TIES

HITLER'S idea was not the only big idea to burst upon mankind as a result of the 1914-1918 conflict. It was not the only big idea on the march as I and millions like me grew to manhood.

For in 1917 the Germans discovered a secret weapon which, by a single explosion, put one of their most formidable enemies out of the war.

This secret weapon was packed inside the domed head of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known to the world as Lenin. The decisive and disintegrating effect of his big idea upon the framework of a nation was so well understood and so greatly feared by the Germans that they sealed Lenin in a train on his passage through their country from Switzerland and smuggled him into Russia. He created a revolution there which changed forever the shape of that land.

Lenin's idea is one of the most powerful of the new ideas which are on the march today. It has gained spectacular success. Out of that sealed train in 1917 stepped a man whose concentrated passion toward a single objective has penetrated, to a greater or less extent, within the structure of every nation in the world, working like yeast to agitate and stir and unsettle the existing order.

When Lenin was seventeen years old they hanged his brother for attempting to kill the Czar. Lenin began to hate. This fanatical genius of the hard, brilliant mind and the ruthless spirit smoldered with loathing against the power and wealth of the Czar, which had destroyed his brother. He decided to replace the rule of one class by the rule of another class.