CAN WE WIN THE PEACE?

BY

PAUL EINZIG

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PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt at a realistic interpretation of the Atlantic Charter. My object in writing it was to try to conciliate the assurances given by Allied statesmen to enemy nations with the all-important requirements of safeguards against aggression after this war.

It is my contention that the prolonged military occupation of Germany and her unilateral military disarmament would not in themselves provide these vital safeguards. Military occupation is apt to be terminated prematurely as a result of unwarranted optimism about the change in the character of the German people. And the experience of 1933–39 conclusively proves that an efficient nation under ruthless leadership is in a position to rearm in a very brief space of time. In order to prevent a repetition of that experience, it is necessary to supplement military occupation and military disarmament with economic disarmament, by which Germany would be deprived of the means for rearming in a relatively brief space of time.

My last book contained a very brief outline of a scheme for the economic disarmament of Germany. The present book was written in response to many requests to produce a more detailed scheme. Already in the original scheme I endeavoured to conciliate the requirements of security with the desire, widespread among the British people notwithstanding its sufferings through German aggression, that the German people should not be unduly penalised through a reduction in its standard of living. In the present volume I lay more stress on this aspect of the scheme, partly because in the meantime undertakings to the effect of safeguarding German prosperity have been given by the Allied statesmen, and partly because I have realised the importance attached to it by a large section of British opinion.

British people are very bad haters. This quality of the British character is beyond doubt admirable. It is largely responsible for that degree of respect for human right that

is entirely unique even among the democratic peoples. It does not help, however, to win the war or to win the peace. More hatred of the enemy would go a long way to stimulate the war effort in every direction. And a little less capacity and will to see the other peoples' point of view would greatly simplify the task of providing a watertight system of security after the war through the application of an uncompromising clear-cut solution. The chances are that after the termination of hostilities even the moderate degree of hatred that exists now will soon evaporate, and that a large section of the British public will demand peace terms which would enable the German people to prosper.

This being so, any logically ruthless scheme for safeguarding peace after this war would be doomed to rejection by the British people. There is a very real danger that appeasement will prevail, and that the next peace will be lost in the same way as the last peace was, unless an intermediate formula can be presented to the British people, under which the vital interests of the German people are safeguarded without thereby jeopardising the security of Europe. The proposals contained in this book claim to constitute that intermediate formula.

At the time of writing, the military situation of the Allies is very gloomy, and it seems unfortunately probable that by the time this book appears the situation and outlook will deteriorate further. If so, then many people might question the timeliness of a book dealing with peace terms in case of British and Allied victory. It seems to me, however, that amidst adverse conditions it is more important than ever to try to convince British opinion that it is possible to win the peace once the war is won. For if the thesis of the appeasers, that even in case of victory Germany must be allowed to retain some of the fruits of her aggression, is widely accepted for lack of alternative proposals, then amidst adverse conditions there might be a strong temptation to accept a peace of compromise with the undefeated foe. We must try, therefore, to prove the possibility of producing a scheme which, while unacceptable to

undefeated Germany, would nevertheless give a fair deal to the German people after it has been defeated and has adopted a less bellicose régime.

While attempting to put forward such a scheme, I do not seek to conceal my conviction that I would much prefer a clear-cut solution under which the interests of the German people would be entirely subordinated to the requirements of security. I had to allow, however, for the necessity of making the scheme palatable to the millions of sentimental humanitarians who would be opposed to a water-tight scheme of safeguards if its application inflicted penalties, however well deserved, on the German people as distinct from its leaders. For this reason the scheme I advocate in this volume cannot claim to be ideal. It seeks to combine, however, the maximum degree of safeguards of peace with the minimum degree of interference with the prosperity of the German people. Under it the German people would be treated with far more consideration than they deserve. Should, as a result of the prolongation of the war and of a series of fresh war crimes, the Germans succeed in arousing the uncompromising wrath of our Allies, and even of the majority of the British people, the terms imposed on them after their defeat are certain to be much harsher, however, than anything I advocate in this book.

Throughout the book I purposely refrain from taking into account the influence of Soviet Russia on the peace terms. This is partly because the relative extent to which the peace terms will be influenced by Moscow cannot be foreseen at this stage, and partly because I do not flatter myself that anything I can possibly say could in the least influence the attitude of the Kremlin. For this reason I preferred to address myself exclusively to Anglo-Saxon opinion.

P. E.

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CHAPTER I

THE ATLANTIC CHARTER: AN INTERPRETATION

EVER since the joint declaration of President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill was issued in August 1941, the meaning of the principles it embodies has been the centre of heated controversy. The text of the statement has been subjected to close scrutiny and has given rise to an immense variety of interpretations. This is not surprising. The principles laid down in the Atlantic Charter have been kept deliberately vague and there is ample scope for their interpretation. Moreover, the eight brief points contain something to everyone's taste. It includes points which can be seized upon triumphantly by Free Traders, but also at least one point which economic planners can present as a victory for their ideas. The first seven points should rejoice the hearts of appeasers, since they rule out territorial changes without the consent of the peoples concerned; promise to the vanquished access to raw materials on equal terms; and foreshadow freedom from want for all nations. On the other hand, the concluding clause is calculated to satisfy opponents of appeasement, in that it declares the unilateral disarmament of aggressor nations to be one of the war aims of the Allies. Everybody is thus in a position to lay the emphasis on the clause which suits his political philosophy.

Evidently, the statesmen who negotiated the Atlantic Charter were reluctant to commit themselves to precise terms. It is doubtful whether they would have been able to agree on exact peace aims. In order to achieve agreement, it was necessary for them to confine themselves to broad principles acceptable to most people.

The Atlantic Charter appears to be a compromise between the realism of Mr. Churchill and the idealism of Mr. Cordell Hull, with President Roosevelt holding the balance between them. According to an article entitled "The American View", in the December 1941 issue of *The*

Banker, by an evidently well-informed contributor recently in the United States, there was, at the time of the negotiations of the Atlantic Charter, a sharp discrepancy between the British and American views on several clauses. In particular, Clause VIII, providing for the disarmament of the aggressor nations, meant for Mr. Churchill their unilateral disarmament for a long time ; according to the American interpretation, on the other hand, it meant a transitory measure, to be followed shortly by universal disarmament. Considering that Article VIII is the only clause that saves the Atlantic Charter from being a total triumph for appeasers, it is of the utmost importance to know whether even this clause is likely to be reduced to insignificance through being treated as a transitory measure.

To be able to answer this question, it is necessary to call attention to the circumstances in which the Atlantic Charter was negotiated, and to the change which has taken place since its conclusion. One of the many objects of the Atlantic Charter was to strengthen interventionists in America, both against isolationists and in face of dissent among their own ranks. A large section of interventionists insisted on stipulating lenient peace terms in favour of Germany. Owing to the great distance which separated the United States from the scene of hostilities, these people thought that they could afford to be generous even to the detriment of security, just as after the last war a large section of the British public believed that the Allies should be more generous to Germany than France, more directly exposed to the German menace, was prepared to be. Now we know better. So does the United States since December 8, 1941. Americans are no longer in a position to deliver detached judgment in a dispute with which they are not directly concerned. They have become interested parties as a result of the Japanese aggression. The attack on Pearl Harbour made it plainer than any argument could possibly have done that no nation, however distant geographically, can afford to be generous at the expense of its security.

It seems reasonable to suppose, therefore, that the American interpretation of Article VIII is now considerably

nearer to that of Mr. Churchill than it was at the time of the negotiation of the Atlantic Conference. Fortunately, the Charter did not commit its signatories to any definition of Article VIII and the hands of its signatories are free, both regarding the period which unilateral disarmament of aggressors is to cover and the actual meaning of the word disarmament. It is even open to argument to what extent the Atlantic Charter is binding as a statement of general principles. It is not a contract but a unilateral declaration. Had Germany declared immediately her willingness to conclude peace on the basis of its principles, the Allies would have been under a strong moral obligation to consider themselves bound by those principles, though even then there would have been ample scope for interpretation. Had the United States entered the war as a result of the conclusion of the Atlantic Charter on the condition that its terms should serve as a basis for Allied peace aims, then those terms would have been binding for Great Britain. Since, however, Germany scornfully rejected the Atlantic Charter, and the United States became a belligerent simply because she was attacked, the Allies are under no legal or moral obligation to abide by the Atlantic Charter. They are free to determine peace terms according to their interests.

Nevertheless, the basic principles stated in the Atlantic Charter will be respected by the Allies at the peace conference, not merely because they were included in the Atlantic Charter, but because even in the absence of any commitment they are in accordance with the fundamental character of the British and American peoples. It is safe to assume that the Allies would not aim at the annihilation of the German people, even if no undertaking to that effect had been implied in Articles I, II and III of the Atlantic Charter. Anybody acquainted with the mentality of the Anglo-Saxon peoples must realise that it will not be their policy to follow after the war the German example in Poland, by aiming at the extermination of their defeated foe. It is equally evident from Articles IV, V and VI that the Allies mean to let Germany share in the world-wide

prosperity which they hope to establish after the war. This again is in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon outlook on life, and especially with the Free Trade mentality of the British nation, by which the prosperity of other nations is considered to be an essential condition of British prosperity.

On the other hand, it is equally certain that the disarmament of Germany will be one of the indispensable conditions of the peace treaty. The question is : How will the term " disarmament " be interpreted ? Will it be interpreted in the narrow military sense, or will it include economic disarmament ? It is the main object of this book to prove that military disarmament without economic disarmament will not provide the world with adequate safeguards against aggression. For unless the aggressors are disarmed economically they will be able to rearm in a military sense within a brief space of time, as Hitler did between 1933 and 1939.

The economic disarmament of Germany is not in conflict with the terms of the Atlantic Charter, so that even if the Allies felt morally bound by those terms—as they rightly or wrongly will—they would be entitled to insist on her economic disarmament. Whether we shall win the peace or not depends largely on whether the Atlantic Charter is interpreted in this sense.

Before we are placed in a position of winning the peace, however, we must first win the war. To that end, too, it is of the utmost importance that the Atlantic Charter should be interpreted in a realistic sense. The German people must be made to realise that they must earn their right to the maximum benefits under the Atlantic Charter. They must be told that by prolonging their whole-hearted support of their present rulers they are apt to forfeit any such rights. Germany's allies must also be made to realise that it would be idle for them to assume that they will fully benefit by the first seven articles of the Atlantic Charter irrespective of the degree of support they will give to Germany.

Even if the contention that the application of the

Atlantic Charter should be conditional upon the future behaviour of the German people is not accepted, there remains a wide scope for interpreting the Eight Points in a sense enabling the Allies to elaborate peace terms in accordance with the requirements of security. It would be a historic disaster of unparalleled magnitude if through a faulty interpretation of the Atlantic Charter the safeguards of security were sacrificed.

CHAPTER II

HARD PEACE OR SOFT PEACE ?

EVER since the early months of the war, there has been a strong and persistent movement in favour of the definition of Great Britain's peace aims. In Parliament the Government was frequently pressed to state the principles of its peace aims, and after the publication of the Atlantic Charter this pressure assumed the form of agitation in favour of a clearer definition of its details. Both before and after the publication of the Atlantic Charter, however, the Government showed itself utterly reluctant to commit itself.

There has been no such reticence on the part of individuals unhampered by official position. Indeed, we have witnessed a flood of literature on the question of peace aims. It is no exaggeration to say that for each book suggesting methods on how to win the war there have been at least four or five books claiming to teach the world how to win the peace. And since books are not published as a rule into a vacuum, it is reasonable to assume that there is more demand for peace books than for war books. This is easily understandable : it is one of the innumerable manifestations of escapism that characterises war mentality. It is ever so much more pleasant to write or read about the distant problems of peace than about the immediate problems of war, especially as most writers on peace manage to produce schemes for very attractive Utopias. From the point of view of authors too, it is much safer to make long-range prophecies than to deal with immediate problems.

It would be unfair both to writers and readers of peace literature to attribute the existence of peace-aim books to such shallow reasons. Fundamentally everybody is aware by now that the last peace was a bad peace. The public was told so on innumerable occasions for twenty years by vigorous anti-Versailles propaganda, and even those who did not come under the influence of this propaganda were

bound to admit, on the outbreak of this war, that something must have been wrong with a peace treaty which could not secure peace for more than two decades. They recalled that the Treaty of Vienna following the Napoleonic wars, bad as it was, was followed by a century of comparative peace, during which none of the wars assumed the dimension of a European war.

Human nature being what it is, every peace planner thinks that it is his special brand of peace plan that is bound to appeal to the public at home and abroad. Peace planners are all too lavish with promises of victory provided that their ideas are adopted as a basis of official propaganda, and they are all too much inclined to make their readers' flesh creep by warning them of the disastrous consequence of non-compliance with their suggestions. This is by no means the only shortcoming of peace-aim literature. The whole movement has been from the very outset entirely one-sided. So much so that agitation in favour of an official definition of peace aims has come to be regarded as being identical with agitation in favour of treating Germany leniently and generously after her defeat.

The number of writers who came out openly in favour of the opposite course has so far been negligible, and the barrage of attacks directed against Lord Vansittart's " Black Record " is not likely to encourage them to take an active part in the controversy. As a result, the controversy has assumed largely a form of attack by adherents of " soft peace " on principles which are attributed to adherents of " hard peace ", but which have hardly ever been stated adequately. Judging by this one-sided trend of peace-aim literature, it would seem as though the predominant majority of the nation were in favour of forgiving and forgetting from the moment of armistice. As a matter of fact, those in a position to feel the pulse of public opinion realise that the attitude of the public is very far from being so one-sided. Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that a very large section of certain classes of the public endorses the agitation of a " soft peace " school, especially since the other side of the picture is hardly ever presented to them.

The supporters of the movement in favour of lenient peace terms to Germany may be classed into several categories. In the first place, there is the sentimentalist school: it consists of people who hate the idea of inflicting punishment, no matter how well deserved and no matter how necessary it may be to prevent a recurrence of the offence. In internal affairs, people belonging to this class are opposed to capital punishment of murderers, or corporal punishment of those guilty of robbery with violence. Many of them are opposed to the imprisonment of criminals, or at any rate are in favour of the reform of prisons to such an extent as to reduce their deterrent effect on a large number of potential criminals. In international affairs they always support the under-dog of the moment, even if it was he who started the fight originally, and even if, during the early phases while he happened to be top-dog, he showed no mercy for the victims of his unprovoked aggression. They are all for forgiving the Germans, individually or collectively, for any crimes committed against the British people and mankind.

Indeed, on the assumption that sooner or later Germany will become the under-dog, they are already prepared to forgive in advance all offences to be committed in the meantime. They shower tokens of kindness on German airmen brought down after just having machine-gunned women and children. They are ready to forget any atrocities from the moment hostilities come to an end, not because they think it is a wise policy, but because it is in accordance with their emotional make-up. A very large proportion of British people belong to this unreasoning sentimentalist school. Their percentage declines from time to time, after a particularly brutal air raid or other atrocity, but not for long. British people are very bad haters, and if a few months or even a few weeks pass without any new and particularly revolting act of atrocity the number of adherents to the sentimentalist school tends to rise rapidly.

The sentimentalist school provides excellent raw material for appeasement. Being fundamentally in favour of letting off the German people even in the absence of any argument in favour of that course, they readily absorb any argument

that claims to prove that their instinct is right. They accept or invent arguments the weakness of which would be obvious to them but for their sentimental bias. Many spokesmen and the majority of the rank and file of the various schools of appeasement are simply sentimentalists who succeed in convincing themselves, or allow themselves to be convinced by others, that reason is on their side, and that the policy of " forgive and forget " is favoured by their heads as well as by their hearts.

A somewhat more rational group of opponents to harsh treatment of Germany includes those who are inclined to judge others by themselves. While the sentimentalist pure and simple wants to be kind to Germany without regard to whether his kindness receives its due reward in this world, this group of appeasers fully expects to be rewarded for its kindness in the form of reciprocity. Its adherents assume that the Germans are fundamentally as kind and humane as British people, and that if only they are treated kindly they are bound to respond accordingly. This school denies the existence of any inherent racial qualities. It refuses to believe that there can be qualities which would make one nation more aggressive, more bellicose and more cruel than another. They ascribe all acts of aggression and all atrocities committed by the Germans since the coming of Hitler to the unfortunate but natural result of the " harsh " treatment inflicted on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. They are convinced that a generous peace treaty would eliminate the evil influences that induced the German nation to become intolerant, aggressive and brutal.

But are the fundamental characteristics of all races identical ? Is it really only surface influences that make certain tribes in Africa and certain nations in Europe tolerant and peace-loving and other tribes and nations savage or bellicose ? Is it not more in accordance with historical facts that in many instances nations whose strength has been sapped by defeat and harsh treatment by ruthless victors tend to become peace-loving, while the victors who suffered no wrong tend to become more domineering ? The peace treaties of 1864, 1866 and of 1871