WHY FREEDOM MATTERS

BY

NORMAN ANGELL

"Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

JOHN MILTON

Price 15 Cents

Published in the United States of America by

WILLIAM BROSS LLOYD

Room 1309 Tribune Building, Chicago, Ill.
WHY FREEDOM MATTERS

BY

NORMAN ANGELL

"Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

JOHN MILTON

Price 15 Cents

Published in the United States of America by

WILLIAM BROSS LLOYD

Room 1309 Tribune Building, Chicago, Ill.
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This pamphlet was written with reference to English conditions. But its subject matter is just as relevant to conditions created by the war in America, and for this reason it has been thought worth while to reprint it in this country.

The considerations it presents gain in force from the fact that the author was—and is—an advocate of American participation in the war, and of the necessity for the military defeat of Germany. He has, elsewhere, taken the ground that the suppression of minority opinion, far from helping in the military prosecution of the war, has produced a political condition within the Allied countries, notably in the dictation of policy by reactionary forces, which is a serious menace to the unity of the Grand Alliance, and has been responsible for policies—as, for instance, with reference to the Russian revolution and Italian territorial claims—that have had disastrous military consequences.

Since the pamphlet has been published in England, there has been a powerful reaction against the conditions which prompted its publication, a growing conviction that if there had been a greater freedom of discussion, certain grave political blunders which have rendered immensely more difficult the accomplishment of the Allied purposes, might not have been made.

The lesson should not be neglected on this side of the Atlantic.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary of Argument</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>What do we mean by Freedom?</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Freedom Through Understanding Only</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>The Political Heretic as the Saviour of Society</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>The Nation's Drift</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>The Plea of Military Necessity</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>The Coming of the New Holy Office</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Most Englishmen are of course aware that the old historic guarantees of English freedom are suspended; that the very autocratic powers given to the military authorities have in certain cases been abused and very considerable personal hardship inflicted; that freedom of speech and writing has been very greatly curtailed, and in certain respects altogether suppressed.

These things are not so much unknown as disregarded. The average Englishman would probably justify his indifference with regard to them in some such way as this:

"In the midst of a great war conditions normal to peace necessarily disappear; great powers are necessarily given to the military authorities; being human, those authorities necessarily make mistakes, and doubtless individual hardship may be caused. But really I decline to be greatly disturbed by the fact that a youth who refuses to fight for his country on "conscientious grounds" gets his hair pulled in barracks, or is even sent to jail for a year or two, when tens of thousands of our lads are being killed and maimed in the trenches. The curtailment of freedom of speech is fully justified by the fact that there is only one thing an Englishman should now want to talk about; and that is how to beat the Germans. All discussions of personal right and freedom can be resumed when that task is accomplished. These special measures, which deprive the individual of his freedom, will be strictly limited to the period of the war; there will be no danger of our not being able to assert our freedom when it is over; they are necessary if we are to concentrate everything on the winning of the war; and there is not the slightest danger that the power given to the military will have the result that it has had, say, in Prussia."

Is that sound? If it is, the matter is hardly worth further discussion. The present writer would certainly like to agree with it if possible; prefer to be optimistic if he could.

But he has arrived at the conviction that such optimism is not justified. These pages set forth some of the grounds for that conviction. His excuse for setting them
forth is that if the arguments here elaborated are well founded, no Englishman who cares for the future freedom of his country should be indifferent to them.

These pages will attempt to show, as against the arguments just summarised, that:

(1) Many of the most dangerous measures taken in restraint of freedom are not dictated by military necessity at all, but have in many cases distinct military disadvantage.

(2) Their motive is political and their introduction is prompted not so much by the needs of the present situation as by a desire to render permanent those institutions that fit the temper which war generally provokes.

(3) Their gravity does not arise from the individual hardship they inflict, but from the fact that the habit of subservience to state authority in matters of opinion which they set up tends to destroy in the individual that capacity for private judgment in politics by which alone, in the last analysis, a democracy is able to rule itself. The destruction of the right of private judgment involves finally the destruction of the capacity for public judgment. The habit of irresponsible power on the one side and docile subservience on the other must finally make impossible that moral atmosphere in which alone the general instinct for self-government can survive and develop.

(4) Unless the temper of Freedom which these measures tend so powerfully to undermine can be maintained and developed that better world order which it was the object of the war to bring about cannot be established and made permanent.
WHY FREEDOM MATTERS

CHAPTER I.

What do we mean by Freedom?

What do we mean by this freedom of which we talk so much, on whose altar ten allied nations are sacrificing millions of the best of their youth? Is it worth understanding?

Are we content that great questions of policy, involving the lives of tens of millions, the future and the well being of hundreds of millions, should be guided by a vague impulse; that our objective should be ill-defined, imperfectly realised? Can we ever be sure that we have established the principle for which we are fighting unless we have some idea of what they are? That we may not otherwise be led by our ignorance to accept some counterfeit of our object and find at the last that we have been tricked, that all this blood and suffering has gone for nothing—as so much of our blood and suffering in the past has gone for nothing.

It is true, of course, that a general discussion of the nature of freedom might lead us, on the one hand, into profound philosophical disquisitions touching the liberty of the will as opposed to philosophical necessity; and on the other, into difficult and complex problems concerning the relation of the individual to the community and their respective rights and obligations.

But the following pages deal with one aspect only of the problem: the preservation of those political freedoms upon which depend "the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience," which for Milton was "above all liberties," as indeed it is, because it is essential to the full development of individual and national life to that type of society which it was the professed object of our victory to protect. I am suggesting that in the stress and preoccupation of war we are ourselves destroying needlessly that which we accuse the enemy of desiring to destroy and that in so doing we tend to make impossible that better world which we were
to have secured by our triumph. I do not suggest that such a failure is any necessary part of victory, but that it will come because the temper and ideals that war and victory in the absence of great vigilance are almost certain to arouse, are likely to swamp—are indeed now swamping—the temper and ideas essential to a free society and what goes with it.

The first difficulty in this question is the indefiniteness and divergence of view as to the kind of nation that we want; the kind of life that we desire should be led within the British State. We cannot even say of the British people that "in any case they don't want the German kind." Very powerful groups in Britain obviously do want, and have both before and since the war worked energetically to transform our nation into, pretty much that kind of state. Those who, like the present writer, have felt, and feel a profound revulsion to the particular philosophy of life which, for want of a better word, we may call Prussianism, will certainly have been struck by the fact that it is the bitterest anti-Germans, those who do not hesitate to proclaim their hate of the German nation and their desire for vengeance, who are themselves most ready to adopt the Prussian philosophy and methods and to see them imposed upon Britain. You can put this to a ready test. Make a mental inventory either of private friends or of public men, who, even before the War, were in favour of Conscription, were contemptuous of peace ideals, of internationalism, of "pacifist prattle," who rejected the idea that the nation could ever make itself secure by anything but its own preponderant strength, who endorsed the idea that the claims of a man's country—his state—should come before all other social or moral claims whatsoever, who upheld the general principle of "my country right or wrong," and rejected the idea of any obligation to foreigners or a world order, who believed in the divine mission of the Empire to dominate the world for the world's benefit, but who also believed that by Protection and similar devices foreigners should be excluded from equal share in the benefits of the Empire; who believed that struggle between nations was the law of life and as inevitable as death, and who, for all these reasons, put first the military strength of the State, and favoured its organisation on a militarist basis with all that that involved in the way of the extension of State control and the limitation of civil freedom and individual initiative. There were, and are, large numbers of influential Englishmen with political ideas of just that order. And when you have completed your list you will find that it corresponds pretty
why freedom matters

exactly with the membership of the Anti-German Union or at least includes all those obsessed by the most ferocious of “anti-Hun” sentiment. Yet the general philosophy would give us a State so like the Prussian State that, as an English satirist has suggested, the simplest way of realizing their ideas would be to hand the job over to the Prussians.*

There is no reason to doubt the entire genuineness of the hatred of these Anglo-Prussians for their corresponding type in Germany. History furnishes abundant proof that no real difference of ideal or outlook or race is necessary for the formation of rival groups that, circumstances favouring, will throw themselves at one another with suicidal fury. The struggles of Italian cities, some of our own civil wars, the devastating wars of the Spanish-American Republics (communities of the same languages, origins, racial mixtures), are just a few illustrations that spring to one’s mind.

The things which we have commonly in our mind as constituting the main objection to Prussianism are, in large part, things which we shall in any case be led by force of circumstances to adopt. We have been apt, for instance, to rail at the order, the regimentation and regulation of the individuals’ comings and goings implied in the German system. But we are being brought to something similar in any case, not so much by our Government, but by the material conditions of our civilisation. In the old days of the sailing ships and the stage coach, men lived a life in which “time o’ day didn’t matter.” A week or twos’ delay on a foreign journey, a day or two’s delay in a home one, an hour or two’s incorrectness in the clocks, made little difference. There were no microbes in those days. In a country of small towns with a sparse population in no hurry, exactitude, order, promptitude and scientific cleanliness could really be disregarded. In our days we must regard them. We must come and go to the

*The “Daily Mail” having declared that “we want a Government which will stick at nothing which will win the war,” Mr. J. C. Squire retorts:—

“At nothing, Harmsworth, nothing?
. . . . . But pause, proud Lord, and think
. . . . . . . . . . . . . did we resort
To any measure of whatever sort,
To bullying, lying, wanton butchery,
To every kind of paying atrocity;
Might not seditious men who have no sense
Urge that the two contending Governments
Should cease to chant unmeaning Hymns of Hate
Lay down their arms and just amalgamate?”
minute, we must keep to the right on the pavement, we must
get on the motor 'bus at the regulation spot, we must mind
the microbes, we must catch the 8.18 in the morning, not be-
cause the Government commands it, but because a vast and
closely-packed population living by machinery must observe
order, system and hygiene, or no one could go about his
business or earn his living, or be sure of not being killed, or
be secure against devastating epidemics.

Indeed, the question here suggested has been pushed by
those whom no one accuses of being "pro-German," very
much farther than I have pushed it. "An immense note of
interrogation hangs over the theory that the principle of
free co-operation can secure for democracy the highest de-
gree of efficiency," says Mr. Wells. Critisising some of the
conclusions of Professor van Gennep as to the effectiveness
of that form of national organization which has marked the
western democracies of Europe, Mr. Wells says: "If the pre-
sent Governments of Great Britain and the United States
are the best sort of Governments that democracy can pro-
duce, then Professor Ostwald is much more right than Pro-
fessor van Gennep is prepared to confess."

"There can be little doubt which side has achieved the
higher collective efficiency. It is not the western side....
It is no use denying that the Central Powers were not
only better prepared for this war at the outset, but that
on the whole they have met the occasion of the war as
they have so far arisen with much more collective in-
telligence, will-power and energy than any of the Allies,
not even excepting France. They have succeeded, not
merely in meeting enormous military requirements better,
but in keeping the material side of their national life
steadier under greater stress."

And Mr. Wells concludes that if really the present Gov-
ernments of Great Britain and the United States are the best
sort of Governments that democracy can produce, then de-
mocracy is bound "if not this time, then next time or the
time after, to be completely overcome or superseded by some
form of authoritative State organisation."

What then do we object to in German ideals? What is
the form of society we are fighting to preserve?

This vagueness and disagreement as to what we really
want of our State, the kind of life that we desire should be

*"Nation," July 24, 1915.
led under its flag, is a difficulty—generally overlooked—that lies at the bottom of most of our political controversy. Until we have some sort of agreement on it our discussions obviously will be barren. If we do not know what we want, we shall not get it.

What has it to do specifically with the problem of preserving and enlarging our freedoms?

Well, until we know what we want of our society we cannot agree which freedoms are important and which unimportant; which we can give up and which we must keep. For life in society is a process of giving up certain freedoms in return for certain others: the soldier surrenders certain personal freedoms in order to be free from German conquest; the city clerk his freedom to lie in bed in the morning in order to be free from starvation.

Now, as a matter of fact, we do, when we take thought upon the matter, find substantial agreement throughout Christendom upon at least many things that we desire in our society, upon a wide range of social values. We may, it is true, in our transient passion for vengeance or mastery, forget these more permanent values, or needs, as the drunkard’s thirst may cause him to-night to spend next month’s rent. And these recurrent passions may cause us so to behave as to render the thing which we would secure, if only we could control ourselves, more remote. But we do not, when challenged in cold blood to pronounce upon the desirability of the permanent values, deny their desirability.

The western world is sufficiently agreed for practical purposes, that the abolition of chattel slavery, the winning of certain personal rights for all individuals, were real achievements; that religious toleration, the abolition of the terrors and tyrannies connoted by the Inquisition and the wars of religion, was another undoubted advance. And while we may have fallen “out of the frying-pan into the fire,” and replaced chattel slavery by economic slavery and the Inquisition by all sorts of modern intellectual and moral lynchings, no one will say that slavery, villeinage, the jus primae noctis, the ordeal, the auto da fe, judicial torture, witch burning, plagues, black deaths and famines, were good things in themselves, or that it is not an improvement to have replaced them in some measure at least, by free contract, by the right of every woman to the sanctity of her person, the right of every mind to the sanctity of its religious belief, by legal judgement based on the attempt at least to estab-
lish justice by reason; by a better understanding of the workings of nature, by a better general health, by greater physical comfort and sufficiency. These things are, for practical purposes, absolute goods.

We are also to-day practically agreed that a more equal distribution of the wealth of the world would be a good thing if it could be achieved. We are agreed that for a tiny minority to suffer morally and physically because they have more than they need, while the immense majority suffer morally and physically because they have less than they need, is an extremely undesirable condition of things. The universality of that admission is itself a very great advance. Antiquity accepted a form of society based on slavery, as a natural and unchangeable condition. It was even so accepted often by slaves themselves. And only yesterday did we in England—if, indeed, we have yet done so—shake off the notion of a privileged upper-class entitled to the life-long sacrifices of the lower classes, “a station of life in which,” they were led to believe by a convenient adaptation of the Catechism, it had pleased God to place them, and in which it was their duty to “conduct themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters,” as a divinely approved arrangement. But we accept that no longer as the order of nature or of God.

Opposition to change is now defended—if at all—upon grounds of impracticability.

We can say then that we have here two main objectives upon which we are agreed. We are all agreed in the western world that it is desirable to achieve for the mass of men freedom from the chains of poverty by, if possible, a better distribution of the fruits of the earth; and we are agreed not only that such things as actual bodily slavery, but that any arrangement which makes one caste inferior and another superior, is bad, bad for both castes; that the human dignity of the humblest deserves respect; that there should be no order of villeinage, that the same freedom should apply to things of the conscience, and that human society should not be marked by attempts like those of the Inquisition, to control thought and feeling by force. To have shaken off these things is regarded as a real advance; their re-imposition is something we should resist.

Yet while we are agreed that this obvious security of body and belief is a good and desirable thing; while we can readily realize the value of freedom as an end, or result, when thus visibly displayed, do we as completely realize the part that freedom of discussion has played as a means to
that end, and must in the future play as a means towards maintaining it?

It is very doubtful indeed whether we realize the real service of discussions which we have no particular desire to see free, and which just at present we keenly desire to see suppressed. We note our bodily security from the burdens and sufferings of slavery, or religious and political tyranny, which we once bore, but we simply do not believe that we run any danger of those things being re-imposed.

In the pages that follow I am suggesting that, because we fail to realize to what we owe these securities, we are not merely in danger of re-imposing in slightly different form equivalent slaveries and tyrannies with evils hardly less acute, but that Europe is at this moment actually suffering them. I also suggest that far from trying to render ourselves capable of winning our freedom from them, the inevitable result of the tendencies now gaining in strength—and concerning which it is the object of these pages to sound a warning—will be to render us more and more helpless to assert our freedom.

Our bodily security from inquisition, torture or religious massacre has come only as the result of a better general understanding of certain broad truths; and that better general understanding came as the result of freedom of discussion in a certain sphere of ideas. Yet we do not realize that if we are to save our children from a moral and physical servitude which will end—as the military servitude of millions of youths in our own generation has ended—in massacre not less horrible than the religious massacres of the past, it will only be through certain modifications of ideas, through an understanding which in its turn cannot come save through the very largest freedom in political discussion, a freedom which we are now busy abolishing. It is this fact, that our security depends upon understanding, and our understanding upon free discussion, that I shall attempt to make clear.
CHAPTER II.

Freedom Through Understanding
Only

Usually when we speak of the past struggles of the people against tyranny, we have in our minds a picture of the great mass held down by the superior physical force of the tyrant. But such a picture is, of course, quite absurd. For the physical force which held down the people was that which they themselves supplied. The tyrant had no physical force save that which his victims furnished him. In this struggle of “People vs. Tyrant,” obviously the weight of physical force was on the side of the people. This was as true of the slave States of antiquity as it is of the modern autocracies. Obviously the free minority—the five or ten or fifteen per cent—of Rome or Egypt; or the governing orders of Prussia or Russia, did not impose their will upon the remaining ninety-five or eighty-five per cent. by virtue of superior physical force, the sheer weight of numbers, of sinew and muscle. If the tyranny of the minority had depended upon its own physical power, it could not have lasted a day. The physical force which the minority used was the physical force of the majority. The people were oppressed by an instrument which they themselves furnished.

In that picture, therefore, which we make of the mass of mankind struggling against the “force” of tyranny, we must remember that the force against which they struggled was not in the last analysis physical force at all; they themselves furnished the instrument which was used against them. It was their own weight from which they desired to be liberated.

Do we realize all that this means? It means that tyranny has been imposed, as freedom has been won: through the Mind.

The small minority imposes itself and can only impose itself by getting first at the mind of the majority—the peo-
ple—in one form or another: by controlling it through keeping knowledge from it, as in so much of antiquity, or by controlling the knowledge itself, as in Germany. It is because the minds of the mass have failed them, that they have been enslaved. Without that intellectual failure of the mass, tyranny could have found no force wherewith to impose its burdens. To say that “freedom rests upon the sword” is not merely not the whole truth; it is very nearly the inversion of the truth, for it would be truer to say that if all men had refused to fight there could have been no tyranny because tyranny could have found no physical instrument. Physical force does not act of itself but only as the human will behind it may direct, and whether that force—the sword—is to be an instrument of suicide or salvation, depends, not upon the sword itself, which, for all our romanticising is dead metal, but upon the human mind that wills its use.

But because the sword is visible and makes a brave show as it flashes in the sun, and the mind and will are invisible, our poets have poetised the metal and said little of the mind; and the multitude have learned to love the flashes of the sword, though the flash end by the stroke upon their backs.

When, as we are just now learning to do, we attempt to read history, not as the story of the rise and fall of Empires and States and Dynasties, but as a picture of the lives of the common folk, the anonymous millions, we are astonished how little difference all the external changes for which men bled so lavishly, seemed to make in the lives of those common folk. For them indeed it was truc that the more it changed the more it was the same thing. It requires a real effort to realize, in our wonder and delight in the pictures that have been drawn for us of brilliant Asiatic, Roman and Greek civilizations, that they were all based upon the slavery of the greater part of the populations; that vast masses of human beings who lived during those thousands of years were the mere chattels of a tiny minority. But when we make that effort and take a long view we see history as the picture of the never-ending slaughter of one set of these human chattels by another set; or, if not thrown at one another as groups of human chattels, flying at one another as puppets of vague hates, as in the wars of religion and in the religious persecutions, or in the wars of the nationalities like those of the Balkans: one race or tongue blindly throwing itself at a different race or tongue merely
because it was different, because, as Mr. Bertrand Russell says, like dogs "something angers them in each other's smell"; and when that welter disappears in some degree in the western world, we find it succeeded by all the sordid meannesses of the industrial revolution, as in our own land.

A student of Italian peasant life, both in the past and in the present, has questioned whether in the four thousand years more or less of which we have some record of life in the Appenine Hills, the lot of the peasant has improved at all; whether "progress" and invention and political changes have in fact done anything whatsoever, either spiritually or materially, for the majority of the population living in those provinces; whether the goat-herds and shepherds two thousand years before Christ—they and the women they loved and the children these bore (the few relics they left enable us to judge with some degree of certainty of the character of the life they led)—did not live as freely and as fully as the peasants living there to-day. If he had gone to the countries of the Old Testament, he might have pushed his comparison over even a longer period. He points out that less to eat they could hardly have had, for if those to-day had less they would starve; more toil they could hardly have had, for those of to-day toil almost to the limit of human endurance. Those of the past were not free, but neither are those of to-day. The servitude of the ancients did not bear more hardly upon them probably, than the economic and military servitude does upon those of to-day. The burden of debt, taxation, of a military machine that may at any moment call for them to sacrifice their lives in some cause which they do not understand, or may not approve, certainly does not leave them free men.

And does that apply only to the Italian hills? Circum-spice!

We have struggled during these untold centuries for bread and freedom. With this result. That the great majority have not yet enough to eat, suffer from insufficiency or overwork in one form or another. And our principles of Government have been such that there is not now, in theory at least, and very nearly in fact, in all the millions of Europe, one man physically able to kill, whose life and conscience belongs to himself. From Archangel to Bagdad, from Carnarvon to Vladivostok there is not one to whom an impersonal entity known as THE STATE may not suddenly come and say, "you shall leave your wife and children and
the tasks to which you have devoted your life, immediately, and put yourself obediently at my orders. The task which I assign to you is to kill certain men; as many as possible, whether you think them right or whether you think them wrong. Kill; or be killed.”

These millions find themselves as much bereft of freedom as were the slaves of antiquity. With this difference: The slavery of antiquity, the slavery of biblical times for instance, made you a slave to a person, a human being, to whose ordinary human sentiments you could appeal. But in the modern world you may at any moment become the slave of an abstraction, a machine.

Of course, when we break down the poetic hypnotism and face facts, we find that “the sword” has become a complicated machine—the vast impersonal military organisation of a State—of which other machines, like sixteen-inch howitzers, poison gas generators, and bomb-dropping airplanes, are part. “Ordeal by battle” is a phrase that has been used to justify the competition of armaments between States as a desirable or inevitable condition of their life together. Yet such a competition, in which each State is forever tending to put forth its maximum military effort, must inevitably end in making man the slave of the machines which he has created, of blind soulless matter which his mind ought to control. Just think: we may be on the eve of the discovery of the secret of the release of atomic energy. Such a discovery would multiply overnight the wealth of the world very many times. If man knew how to use such a discovery he could liberate himself once and for ever from poverty and soul destroying toil. But the instrument will simply use him: it will kill him in ever increasing numbers if our present ideas in international relationship, our present attitude in certain large human issues continue, if we continue to believe that “ordeal by battle” is the right method of settling difference between peoples. For the atomic bomb will bear about the same relation to the present high explosive that a sixteen-inch howitzer does to a child’s toy pistol. And as, with greatly increased mechanical power, the women could perfectly well keep the men and youths fed and clothed there is no reason why—given the continued competition in armaments—such a discovery should not result in the whole male population of the world giving themselves permanently during periods of peace to preparation for slaughter, and during war to the accomplishment of slaughter.
It comes then to this: the mind of man in the sphere of social relations has so failed, that a discovery capable of giving ample wealth to the very poorest, of abolishing all poverty and nine-tenths of the disease of the world, that could place creation definitely in man's power—that discovery would be a curse. For there would be a real danger that man would use such an instrument for collective suicide. Let the world to-morrow, during this war, discover how to control atomic energy, so that both sides could drop on the hostile cities, bombs like those described for us by Mr. Wells, and the killing would be multiplied by ten. Europe, in sober fact and not rhetorical figure, would become a waste; and the fantasy of Samuel Butler, in which man is faced by extermination by his own machines, would become true, in fact. And if to-day it is not actual extermination which faces him, it is a dreadful form of slavery—the consecration of his life to fulfilling the bloody behests of these soulless, mechanical monsters. Indeed, that slavery is already here. We have all wanted to do one thing; we have all done another. No one pretends that the common people of Europe—not even the common people of Germany—wanted war, wanted to be dragged from their fields and factories for what was to be for millions, certain death. But though everybody hated this act, everybody committed it. Each had to take his place in the great machine he could not control; or it would crush him. Nobody could stop it. It was the master.

How can man regain his freedom, his power to control the forces he himself has created, or of which he is a part? Obviously not by any increase of "force." It is force, his own force, and that which he calls into being, that is overpowering him. He must once more command the will that puts that force in motion. He must "know how"—how to co-operate with his fellows for their common liberation.

What is the nature of that knowledge, and its relation to freedom of thought and discussion I shall now try to establish.
CHAPTER III.

The Political Heretic as the Saviour of Society

The minds of men have been unequal then to the task of devising a workable society—as the results to-day demonstrate. But where we have made a step of some sort, as in the emergence from chattel slavery or religious persecution, what seems to have been the process of such relative enlightenment?

Man’s outstanding failures are often ascribed to his selfishness, his grasping materialism, his lack of readiness to give himself to the service of others. But those millions of lads throwing their lives away with a smile—and they include the German lads, too—are not doing it from selfishness. They, at least, are not actuated by materialism. Surely, the marvellous fact which stands out in all this story of man’s bloodshed, his submissions, his poverty, is the vast unselfishness, the incalculable heroism and sacrifices that it reveals. We find men, generation after generation, giving everything that they possess—the well-being of their lives, their places as bread-winners, as guardians and protectors of their families, and family life itself—for causes, the triumph of which could not only not benefit them, but which attached the burdens they bore still more firmly to them. It is not from any insufficiency of the impulse to sacrifice that untold generations have fought and died. It is from want of knowing how to combine to rule themselves for their common good; from failure of the social instinct in the largest sense of the term.

Yet, as we saw, man has made advances at points—as in the abandonment of religious persecution. What is the nature of the “social sense” that has enabled him to do it, that has given him some capacity for self rule? To what do we owe our emergence from the Europe of ecclesiastical tyrannies and the religious wars, from a condition of society
which exposed its members to the risks of the Inquisition, to torture or to popular massacre; in which the heretic, the man of unusual theological ideas, was a thing of horror supposed to carry with him an intolerable bodily odour? The change in feeling in this matter is widespread, not confined to just a few thinkers on a special subject; it applies to whole populations. For the extraordinary thing is not so much that men should have given up killing one another on account of religious differences, but that they—the great number—should have ceased wanting to; not so much that the Inquisition should have disappeared, but that the personal odour which attached to the heretic should be no longer discernible.

Lecky has pointed out that the motive which dominated European politics for centuries, which overweighed all others, which seemed destined to condemn western civilisation to never-ending conflict, which was perhaps the very greatest difficulty with which statesmen had to wrestle, has almost disappeared as a major motive in statecraft. What then is the nature of this change of mind, of attitude? What has brought it about?

It is not that the experts in Statecraft are more learned or acute in our day concerning this detail of Government. The theological and political experts who defended the principle that the State should properly have authority over men’s beliefs—were acuter reasoners and had greater knowledge of most aspects of the subject with which they dealt, than have those perhaps who deal with it to-day. (In the same way the disappearance from our life, of the slavery or helotry which marked Roman life, is not due to the superiority of the modern to Roman statesmen. Roman political literature reveals often a type of ruler as able and understanding as ours of the present day—to put it at its very lowest!)

The Europe of the wars of religion and of the Inquisition was not, so far as the few were concerned, a savage Europe. It was the Europe at one point of Montaigne and Shakespeare. Nor was the theory upon which the State prosecuted heresy and which led one group to fight another an absurd one. It was based upon an argument which has never been fully answered.*

* Elsewhere I happen to have written:—
"Civilised Governments have abandoned their claim to dictate the belief of their subjects. For very long that was a right tenaciously
Indeed, we know that the minority who ruled the Europe of the religious wars were sometimes as tolerant—and as sceptical—in matters of religious opinion, as are the educated of to-day.

It was the feeling and attitude, the general public opinion, which made the wars of religion (and sometimes made it impossible for the ruling few to prevent them) and sanctioned these persecutions, as an earlier opinion, which included often the opinion of the slaves, sanctioned slavery.

Nor can we assume that the section of the public which made public opinion, was less informed in the details of theology than is our own. The modern man who is tolerant of hostile religious views, where the man of an earlier generation would have been intolerant, is certainly not so by virtue of any superior knowledge of the special issues of theological controversy, of the texts. Indeed, expert knowledge of these matters to-day, does not, as a rule, imply toleration, or even wisdom. He who is learned in the

held, and it was held on grounds for which there was an immense deal to be said. It was held that, as belief is an integral part of conduct, and that as conduct springs from belief, and the purpose of the State is to ensure such conduct as will enable us to go about our business in safety, it was obviously the duty of the State to protect those beliefs, the abandonment of which seemed to undermine the foundation of conduct. I do not believe that this case has ever been completely answered. A great many believe it to-day, and there are many sections of the European population and immensely powerful bodies that would reassert it if only they had the opportunity. Men of profound thought and learning to-day defend it; and personally I have found it very difficult to make a clear and simple case for the defence of the principle on which every civilised Government in the world is to-day founded. How do you account for this—that a principle which I do not believe one man in a million could defend from weighty objections—has become the dominating rule of civilised government throughout the world?

“Well, that once universal policy has been abandoned, not because all arguments, or even perhaps most of the arguments, which led to it have been answered, but because the fundamental one has.... The world of religious wars and of the Inquisition was a world which had a very definite conception of the relation of authority to religious belief and to truth; as that truth could be, and should be, protected by force.... What broke down this conception was a growing realisation that authority, force, was irrelevant to the issues of truth (a party of heretics triumphed by virtue of some physical accident, as that they occupied a mountain region); that it was ineffective, and that the essence of truth was something outside the scope of physical conflict. As the realization of this grew, the conflicts declined.”—“The Foundation of International Polity.” (Heinemann.)
texts is generally intolerant of those who draw conclusions from them contrary to his own.

We may fairly conclude that if the theological experts had had the settlement of the troubles which arose out of religious differences, and which did in fact for a time wreck civilisation in much of Europe, we should be fighting wars of religion yet; and our populations sanctioning religious massacre.

If we have a vast change in the general ideas of Europe in one particular, in the attitude of men to dogma, to the importance which they attach to it, to their feeling about it, a change which for good or evil is a vast one in its consequences, a moral and intellectual revulsion which has swept away one great difficulty of human relationship and transformed society, it is because the mass, the common folk, have been led to challenge the premises of the learned, of those in authority. By so doing they brought the discussion back to principles so broad and fundamental that the data became the facts of human life and experience—data with which the common man is as familiar as the scholar. And that challenge and discussion authority always at the first regards as blasphemous and impious, and would prevent if it could. And the great event I am here touching upon would seem to suggest that it is correct reasoning about the daily facts of life and experience that is needed before we can hope to apply learning with any advantage—or even without disaster—to such things as the management of society.

The conclusion that it was not the learning of the expert, but common thought upon broad issues, which changed our attitude in this matter does not rest upon obscure or complex historical data. It may be proven by reference to any mind that typifies modern feeling. Most moderns for instance, reject such beliefs as that in the eternal damnation of the unorthodox or of unbaptised infants. Of the present-day millions for whom such a belief would be morally monstrous, how many have been influenced by elaborate study concerning the validity of this or that text? The texts simply do not weigh with them, though for centuries they were the only thing that counted. The things that do weigh with them are profounder and simpler—a sense of justice, compassion—things which would equally have led the man of the sixteenth century to question the texts and the premises of the Church, if discussion had been free. It is because it was not free that the social instinct of the
mass, the general capacity so to order their relations as to make it possible for them to live together, became distorted and vitiated. And the wars of religion resulted. To correct this vitiation, to abolish these disastrous hates and misconceptions, elaborate learning was not needed. Indeed, it was largely elaborate learning which had occasioned them. The judges who burned women alive for witch-craft, or inquisitors who sanctioned that punishment for heresy, had vast and terrible stores of learning. What was needed was that these learned folk should question their premises in the light of facts of common knowledge. It is by so doing that their errors are patent to the quite unlearned of our time. No layman was equipped to pass judgment on the historical reasons which might support the credibility of this or that miracle, on the intricate arguments which might justify this or that point of dogma. But the layman was as well equipped, indeed he was better equipped than the schoolman, to question whether God would ever torture men everlastinglly for the expression of honest belief; the observer of daily occurrences, to say nothing of the physiciast, was as able as the theologian to question whether a readiness to believe without evidence is a virtue at all. And questions of the damnation of infants, eternal torment, were settled not by the men equipped with historical and ecclesiastical scholarship, but by the average man, going back to the broad truths of life, to first principles, asking very simple questions, the answer to which depended not upon the validity of texts, but upon correct reasoning concerning facts which are accessible to all, upon our general sense of life as a whole, and our more elementary intuitions of justice and mercy, reasoning and intuitions which the learning of the expert often distorts.

Authority always tries to prevent this questioning of its premises by the unlearned. To the bishop it seems preposterous and an obvious menace to society and good morality that his conclusions in theology should be questioned by any bootblack. But experience has shown over and over again that the Bishop is sure to go wrong unless his conclusions ARE questioned and checked by the bootblack; and that unless the bootblack has the liberty of so doing both will fall into the ditch.

The fact that the bishop or the statesman should need correction by the unlearned is not so paradoxical as might at first sight appear. For what is the function of those learned and authoritative persons? It is to do the best for
the bootblack in this world and the next. But if the bishop is separated from his wards by his learning, his intellectual pride in his own conclusions, his class interest even, he is no fit judge of the needs and conditions of the bootblack. And the bootblack himself is no fit judge of his own case even, if he has lost the habit of private judgment. That is why slaves have been generally in favour of their own slavery; and have so often fought to prolong it.

Exactly the service which extricated us from the intellectual and moral confusion that resulted in such catastrophes in the field of religion, is needed in the field of politics. From certain learned folk—writers, poets, professors (German and other), journalists, historians and rulers—the public have taken certain ideas touching Patriotism, Nationalism, Imperialism, the nature of our obligation to the State and so on, ideas which may be right or wrong, but which—we are all agreed, curiously enough—will have to be very much changed if men are ever to live together in peace and freedom*; just as certain notions concerning the institution of private property will have to be changed if the mass of men are to live in plenty.

It is a commonplace of militarist argument that so long as men feel as they do about their fatherland, about patriotism and nationalism, internationalism will be an impossibility. If that is true—and I think it is—peace and freedom and welfare will wait until those large issues have been raised in men’s minds with sufficient vividness to bring about a change of idea and so a change of feeling with reference to them.

* Says the “Daily Chronicle” (October 4, 1916):—

“Did anyone at the meeting of the Congressional Union yesterday detect the irony—of course the unintended irony—of Lord Bryce’s recommendation addressed to a branch of the Christian Church that international machinery should be created for the preservation of peace among men? It must occur at least to the reader of the address that in the Christian Church itself we have had such a machinery for some nineteen centuries. Nothing in this war of revelations and revolutions has astonished the world more than the failure of all forms of internationalism to be international—Christianity, Socialism, civilisation have all become as distinctively national as the several belligerent armies themselves, and in Germany they fight for the Zeppelins and in England against them. Nationalism appears to be the master virtue of the day to which all others have to conform. Whether new international treaties and understandings will prove to be more successful than Christianity in securing for the rational side of man chance and time to develop remains to be seen, but it is doubtful.
It is unlikely, to say the least, that the mass of Englishmen or Frenchmen will ever be in possession of detailed knowledge sufficient to equip them to pass judgment on the various rival solutions of the complex problems that face us, say, in the Balkans, when the settlement of Europe comes. And yet it was immediately out of a problem of Balkan politics that the war arose, and future wars may well arise out of those same problems if they are settled as badly in the future as in the past.

The situation would indeed be helpless if the nature of human relationships depended upon the people, as a whole, possessing expert knowledge in complex questions of that kind. But, happily, the Sarajevo murders would never have developed into a war involving fourteen nations, but for the fact that there had been cultivated in Europe suspicions, hatreds, insane passions and cupidities, due largely to false conceptions of a few simple facts in political relationship; conceptions concerning the necessary rivalry of nations, the idea that what one nation gets another loses, that States are doomed by a fate over which they have no control to struggle together for the space and opportunities of a limited world. But for the atmosphere that these ideas create (as false theological notions once created a similar atmosphere between rival religious groups), most of these at present difficult and insoluble problems of nationality and frontiers and government would, as the common saying is, have solved themselves.

Now the conceptions which feed and inflame these passions of rivalry, hostility, fear, hate will be modified, if at all, by raising in the mind of the European some such simple elementary questions as were raised when he began to modify his feeling about the man of rival religious belief. The Political Reformation in Europe will come by questioning, for instance, the whole philosophy of patriotism, the morality of the validity in terms of human well-being of a principle like that of "my country, right or wrong"; by questioning whether a people really benefit by enlarging the frontiers of their State; whether "greatness" in a nation particularly matters; whether the man of the small State is not in all the great human values the equal of the man of the great Empire. Whether the real problems of life—not alone for the Boers or Quebec Frenchmen or the millions of India, but for the Europeans as well—are greatly touched by the colour of the flag. Whether we have not loyalties to other things as well as to our State. Whether we do not in our demand for national sovereignty ignore international
obligation without which the nations can have neither security nor freedom. Whether we should not refuse to kill or horribly mutilate a man merely because we differ from him in politics. And with those, if the emergence from chattel slavery is to be completed by the emergence from wage slavery, must be put similarly fundamental questions concerning institutions like that of private property and the relation of social freedom thereto; we must ask why, if it is rightly demanded of the citizen that his life shall be forfeit to the safety of the State, his surplus money and property shall not be forfeit to its welfare.

To very many, these questions will seem a kind of blasphemy, and they will regard those who utter them as the subjects of a loathsome moral perversion. In just that way the orthodox of old regarded the heretic and his blasphemies. And yet the solution of the difficulties of our time, this problem of learning to live together without mutual homicide and military slavery, depend upon those blasphemies being uttered. Because it is only in some such way that the premises of the differences which divide us, the realities which underlie them, will receive attention. It is not that the implied answer is necessarily the truth—I am not concerned now for a moment to urge that it is—but that until the problem is pushed back in our minds to these great yet simple issues, the will, temper, general ideas of Europe on this subject will remain unchanged. And if THEY remain unchanged so will its conduct and condition.

Now I am suggesting here that we are drifting to a condition of institutions calculated to suppress these heresies, to prevent those questions being asked. We believe that it is pernicious that they should be asked at all, and the power of the State is being used for the purpose of preventing it. In the chapters that follow, I attempt to indicate the process of these controls and prohibitions. What I have been concerned to show in this chapter is that our welfare and freedom really do depend upon our preserving this right of the individual conscience to the expression of its convictions; this right of the heretic to his heresy. And I base the claim here, not upon any conception of abstract "right"—JUS, DROIT, RECHT—but upon utility, our needs of heresy, upon the fact that if we do not preserve it it is not alone the individual heretic who will suffer, but all of us, society. By suppressing the free dissemination of unpopular ideas, we render ourselves incapable of governing ourselves to our own advantage, and we shall perpetuate that con-
dition of helplessness and slavery for the mass which all our
history so far has shown.

I have stressed the point because the protagonist who
attempts thus to place the case for freedom and welfare
upon its real foundation feels always this difficulty: that
in the mind of most perhaps, certainly of very many who
call themselves democrats, there is a feeling not avowed,
but real, that the mind and opinion and temper of the com-
mon folk do not matter, that the science of government,
like other sciences, should be left to the experts, and that
there is something ridiculous in the spectacle of a brick-
layer's labourer laying down the law in matters of high
policy and passing judgment upon an authority who has
given his life to the study of the matter under judgment.

It would be out of place here to review the arguments
which ought to be familiar to us, but are not, that justify
the democratic foundation of government. But it is suffi-
cient perhaps to point out that as a matter of simple fact
no Government ever has accomplished for long, save by
virtue of the quality of those whom it governs, those ends
we are now agreed upon as the proper ends of governments.
Mexico or Venezuela may have constitutions as excellent
as that of England; they may have a small class drawn
from their universities as educated as the members of our
own Government. But neither the Constitution, nor the
education of the minority, can assure to Mexico or Venezu-
ela the results which are assured in England by virtue of
the better general sense, understanding, capacity for self-
government of the mass of English folk. And whether one
tests this general proposition by such cases as Russia or
India or certain cases of the past, its validity is unshaken.

Do we sufficiently realise that a nation cannot think,
any more than a corporation can? That a nation's thought
can only come from individual thought—by the thought of
certain definite men. If a committee composed of Jones and
Brown take a certain decision, and Jones votes a certain
way because Brown does, and Brown votes that way because
Jones does, what is the value of their "collective wisdom"?
Unless each questions his own mind, exercises his own in-
dividual judgment, there could be no collective wisdom.
Nothing multiplied a million times is still nothing. And a
million Calibans are not less dangerous than one.*

*"Though the customs be both good as customs, and suitable to
him, yet to conform to custom, merely as custom, does not educate
or develop in him any of the qualities which are the distinctive en-
WHY FREEDOM MATTERS

The need of individuality in thought increases in direct ratio to the increasing complexity of our social arrangements. The very fact that we do need more and more unity of ACTION—regimentation, regulation—in order to make a large population with many needs possible at all, is the reason mainly which makes it so important to preserve variety and freedom of individual thought. If ever we are to make the adjustments between the rival claims of the community and the individual, between national sovereignty or independence and international obligation, between the need for common action and the need for individual judg-

dowments of a human being. The human faculties of preception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice. He who does anything because it is the custom, makes no choice. He gains no practice either in discerning or in desiring what is best. The mental and moral, like the muscular powers, are improved only by being used. The faculties are called into no exercise by doing a thing merely because others do it, no more than by believing a thing only because others believe it. If the grounds of an opinion are not conclusive to the person's own reason, his reason cannot be strengthened, but is likely to be weakened, by his adopting it: and if the inducements to an act are not such as are consonant to his own feelings and character (where affection, or the rights of others, are not concerned) it is so much done towards rendering his feelings and character inert and torpid, instead of active and energetic.

"He who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation. He who chooses his plan for himself, employs all his faculties. He must use observation to see, reasoning and judgment to foresee, activity to gather materials for decision, discrimination to decide and, when he has decided, firmness and self-control to hold to his deliberate decision. And these qualities he requires and exercises exactly in proportion as the part of his conduct which he determines according to his own judgment and feeling is a large one. It is possible that he might be guided in some good path, and kept out of harm's way, without any of these things. But what will be his comparative worth as a human being? It really is of importance, not only what men do, but also what manner of men they are that do it. Among the works of man, which human life is rightly employed in perfecting and beautifying, the first in importance surely is man himself. Supposing it were possible to get houses built, corn grown, battles fought, causes tried, and even churches erected and prayers said, by machinery—by automatons in human form—it would be a considerable loss to exchange for these automatons even the men and women who at present inhabit the more civilised parts of the world, and who assuredly are but starved specimens of what nature can and will produce. Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing."—Mill's "Liberty," p. 34 (Edition 1913).
ment, if ever our minds are to be equal to the task of managing our increasingly complex society, we must preserve with growing scupulousness the right of private judgment in political matters. Because upon that capacity for private judgment, a capacity that can only be developed by its exercise, depends the capacity for public judgment, for political and social success, success, that is, in living together in this world of ours, most largely and most satisfactorily.

The truth of which I am trying to remind the reader is not precisely a new discovery. It troubled Plato some four hundred years before Christ and was demonstrated by Mill some eighteen hundred and fifty after. But it is one of those truths that our primitive passions are perpetually smothering: If the great truths were not in this way repeatedly being smothered we should not now be fighting the ten thousandth war of history—the previous ones, of course, having been fought to establish a “lasting peace,” though they do not seem to have been notably successful in that respect.

It is not the mind of the heretic which suffers most, as Mill has reminded us, in the suppression of heretical opinion. “The greatest harm done is to those who are not heretics, but whose mental development is cramped and their reason cowed by the fear of heresy. . . . It is not solely or chiefly to form great thinkers that freedom of thinking is required. On the contrary, it is as much and even more indispensable to enable average human beings to attain the mental stature which they are capable of. There have been, and may be again, great individual thinkers in a general atmosphere of mental slavery. But there has never been, nor ever will be in that atmosphere an intellectually active people. Where any people has made a temporary approach to such a character, it has been because the dread of heterodox speculation was for a time suspended. Where there is a tacit convention that principles are not to be disputed; where the discussion of the greatest questions which can occupy humanity is considered to be closed, we cannot hope to find that generally high scale of mental activity which has made some periods of history so remarkable. Never, when controversy avoided the subjects which are large and important enough to kindle enthusiasm, was the mind of a people stirred up from its foundations, and the impulse given which raised even persons of the most ordinary intellect to something of the dignity of thinking beings. Of such we had an example in the condition of
Europe in the times immediately following the Reformation; another, and although limited to the Continent and to a more cultivated class, in the speculative movement in the latter half of the eighteenth century; and a third, of still briefer duration, in the intellectual fermentation of Germany, during the Goethean and Fichtean period. These periods differed widely in the particular opinions which they developed; but were alike in this, that during all three the yoke of authority was broken. In each an old mental despotism had been thrown off and no new one had yet taken its place . . . Every single improvement which has since taken place in the human mind or in institutions may be traced distinctly to one or other of them. Appearances have for some time indicated that all three impulses are well nigh spent; and we can expect no fresh start until we again assert our mental freedom.”

If the German nation as a whole has lost its capacity for sound political judgment, if its public opinion is at times such as to shock civilisation, it is largely because of the readiness of the individual to yield to governmental authority in matters of opinion. You cannot have sound public opinion without stubborn and scrupulous private opinion. You cannot have enough liberty without having too much of it. If the English race has developed the capacity for freedom, democracy and parliamentary government, a little perhaps ahead of that shown by other peoples, it is because that kind of obstinacy and stubbornness have been found among us, and our Government heretofore has never been quite able, even in the very highest causes, to stamp it out.

Mr. Edmond Holmes, the educationalist, in a work in which he attempts to analyse the moral and intellectual causes of the catastrophe which has come upon Germany, a work which he has called “The Nemesis of Docility,” and in which he sketches the fashion in which the State has bit by bit captured the mind of the people, says:—

If, as a soldier, the German citizen is the victim of the iron discipline on which the army has always prided itself, as a civilian he is subjected to a less severe but more insidious pressure. For, whatever harm this pressure may have done to his character he is in part to blame. As I have already pointed out he has allowed the State, through its control of the various moulds and organs of opinion, to suggest to him what he is to think, to believe and to say; and to do this so effectually that he has come at last to regard those thoughts, beliefs and words as his own. In other words, he has allowed the

State to take possession of his moral and spiritual springs of action, and so usurp the functions of his own higher self.

Under the influence of this insidious pressure, changes of vital importance may be expected to take place in his inner being. The stern, direct, dogmatic pressure of military discipline, which tends to deaden the moral sensibility of the soldier, affects the citizen for two years of his early life, then its influence lessens and begins to wear off. But if his moral sensibility should survive or recover from that experience, it would be exposed in civil life to a new danger, the danger of undergoing a morbid transformation in two distinct directions. The man who allows the State to take the place of his higher self surrenders his judgment—his power and his right to think out and solve his moral problems for himself; and he loses his sense of responsibility to his own conscience. These changes come upon him so stealthily that he may never become aware of either of them. He may flatter himself that he is exercising his judgment, when all the time he is really thinking, desiring and purposing whatever the State wishes him to think, desire and purpose. And he may hold himself responsible to his conscience, when all the time the State has usurped that seat of authority, and is whispering from it suggestions to him which he mistakes for the dictate of his own higher self. And while the changes are going on in him, the uniform pressure of State control is crushing his individuality on all the planes of his being, and the dominant theory of the state is perverting the latent idealism of his heart. With all these insidious influences brought to bear on him by the ubiquitous State can we wonder that the ethics of humanity cease to appeal to him, and that, as the soldier looks at things from a point of view which is exclusively military, so he gets at last to look at things from a point of view which is exclusively national, and therefore anti-human and profoundly immoral.*

The question which it is surely the duty of every Englishman at this time to put to himself is this: are the tempers and tendencies of war-time pushing us towards methods and institutions similar to those which have been so disastrous for Germany?

*I want in the chapters that follow to suggest that those tempers and tendencies are carrying us in that direction; and that we can only hope to check the drift by a very definite effort of our will, a moral and intellectual reaction that we ourselves must create.

* pp. 158-160.
CHAPTER IV.

The Nation's Drift

Anyone coming from the open air into a closed room where several persons have been sitting is astonished to find that they do not notice how close is the atmosphere. They may be persons liking fresh air, but they are quite unconscious how foul and heated that which they are breathing has become.

Something similar to the surprise of this person from the outside is produced in the mind of an Englishman coming from abroad after an absence of a year or two; or one who, really remembering what was the general feeling in respect of certain fundamental things in national life as it existed before the war, compares it to that which now exists. That enables him to realise how vastly that feeling has changed, and how unconscious of the change are the great mass of his countrymen.

It is not—and the illustration just used must not be taken as implying such a thing—that the national atmosphere as a whole has become bad. In many respects it is obviously better than before the war; many very splendid qualities have been developed; “Tens of thousands of our young men have shown themselves ready to sacrifice everything, their future, their lives, to the cause of their country; they have gone to death as to a feast; our women-folk have suffered hardship and sorrow as readily; where flagrant luxury and idleness once reigned there is now willing toil and glad sacrifice; futile divisions and mean strife have given place to a unity of national purpose that it has not known in our generation.” All this is true, and we justly enough rejoice in it.

But it is curious that when we do this, we praise ourselves most for just those qualities which the Germans show in an almost equal degree—the readiness of the men to meet death, the women sorrow and hardship, the whole people to work unitedly in the national purpose. Indeed, the
German sacrifice is heavier than ours; the loss of life greater, the hardship greater. The passage just given between inverted commas is taken from the letter of a German writer telling an American friend what the war has done for the German people; and he added much more concerning such things as the revival of religion through Germany.*

But the net result in Germany is the demonstration, to us at least, that these things do not suffice; that they are compatible with the gradual crystallization of ends that are morally pernicious in themselves and a disaster to Germany and the whole world.

Admitting, then, to the full that the period of the war has seen in England the development of many magnificent qualities, in what respect has there been this suggested decline—unnoticed in large part by ourselves?

It is especially true of the thing to which, but a year or two since, we were apt to look as the very foundation—

* A phenomenon which has been dealt with by Dr. A. Shadwell in the Hibbert Journal (July, 1916), in an article on “German War Sermons.” He examines fifty sermons preached by 30 German clergymen, and these are his conclusions:—

“It is clear from all this that the German Protestant clergy have seized upon the war as a great opportunity for re-affirming the moral law and re-establishing the authority of religious teaching, which has been driven more and more into the background by the growth of materialism and rationalism. They have a long score to settle on their own account with the forces of irreligion which have been fostered, as they always are, by material prosperity, and have gained a rapidly increasing hold on the German people . . . .

“At the same time, these pulpit utterances must not be read as indicating any revolt against the national regime or any weakening about the war. On the contrary, the preachers insist on the necessity of fighting it out, holding on to the last, and suffering all things to win. (It is worthy of note that at least five-sixths of the texts are from the New Testament and many of them from the Epistles.)

“Now it seems to me that, taken broadly as a whole, these sermons reveal a stratum of thought and feeling in Germany which is not apparent from newspapers and other publications. How deep or broad it may be we cannot tell, but according to my experience there is a great deal more of it than appears on the surface. The German clergy have not been preaching to empty churches during the war. And the essential feature of this stratum of thought is its maintenance of the moral law and the claims of conscience . . . .

“I cannot but see in the spirit of the self-examination and high ideals running through these sermons the potential elements of a strong moral revulsion when the facts, which cannot be concealed forever even in Germany, become known. Ethical principles will come into their own again when Force has visibly broken down, but not before.”
stone of all that we most valued in our political life; that upon which the great movements of a thousand years of English history have been built: Freedom—of the person, of the mind, of conscience, of speech. To appeal now to an ideal which has animated generation after generation of Englishmen in the past, which dethroned kings, upset dynasties, brought the country to civil war, which drove the most stalwart among our stock to the renunciation of the fatherland and exile in a new world, provokes now only impatience and derision, particularly, perhaps, among the official guardians of conscience. The pillars of organised religion have taken an attitude which is one of open hostility to those guilty of so inconvenient a thing as invoking the categoric imperative. There are more Englishmen in gaol or suffering crippling civil disability to-day “for conscience sake” than, perhaps, in any period of the Test Acts, and ninety-nine out of a hundred of us are not even aware of the fact, and would probably deny it.

The powers given to the military authorities in the matter of the control of speech and discussion are certainly in no way inferior to the powers enjoyed by, say, the Russian authorities in the worst period of Nihilist repression. For although—by a stroke of humorous logic in the art of repression—it is a penal offence to have in one’s possession even a simple record of the facts which would justify the two statements just made, we know that men are sent to gaol for passing remarks about the desirability of peace; newspapers suppressed for criticising a Cabinet Minister; private houses raided for incriminating documents (which may include, we are told by an ex-Minister of the Crown, whose reputation has heretofore been based upon his advocacy of freedom of thought, a reprint of the Sermon on the Mount, “if used for the deliberate purpose of preventing men from enlisting”); teachers and intellectual leaders of international reputation not permitted to leave the country (as in Russia), placed under police surveillance (as in Russia), not permitted to travel in prohibited areas (which include most of England). We find Parliament so little in control of military authority that a solemn ministerial statement of Thursday to the effect that in no circumstances would a conscientious objector be sent abroad or sentenced to death is followed on Monday by the condemnation to death of thirty-five conscientious objectors in France. And this Zaberneseque defiance of Parliamentary control is fitly paralleled by the individual brutalities of which objectors
are the victims, and the actual rejoicing of civilian authority in its subservience to barrack rule. "I had to back up the military, whom I hope I shall never desert in any matter of this kind when any allegation is made against them," says an English Minister with, let us hope, an unconscious plagiarism, not merely of the Hohenzollern philosophy, but of Hohenzollern phraesology, after a public meeting had been broken up by soldiery.

And the ultimate thing, of which, perhaps, we were proudest, the English sense of justice, of fair trial, has in like fashion been calloused, in that the authorities can adopt and opinion sanction, a course coming morally very near to that which in the case of the Dreyfus trial shocked the conscience of mankind. While it is true that the condemnation of Casement was not secured by the secret use of documents, which neither he nor his counsel had an opportunity of answering or explaining, the defeat of the movement for his reprieve was so aided. In circles where it would be likely to produce the desired effect there was circulated a document which seemed to implicate Casement in offences which had nothing whatever to do with those for which he had been condemned, but which would be calculated to arrest any movement for reprieve. Casement had no opportunity of answering it; though upon it, possibly, his life depended. And, while a paper here and there did find it "un-English," only a tiny majority see in it a gross violation of legal decencies and elementary right.

But more subtle and more dangerous than the legal tyranny of the Defence of the Realm Act, or the irresponsibility of an autocratic ministry, are the accompanying tyrannies outside the law to which it gives rise: "upholders of the law" helping to break up public meetings which it was their business to protect, encouraging a ruffianism it was their duty to suppress; the action of public bodies, who, following the lead of the Government in the general treatment of the conscientious objector, refuse to employ those who avail themselves of a completely legal provision; of schools or universities which, quite in the German fashion, dismiss lecturers or teachers whose politics do not happen to be those of the Government of the day; of newspapers which can with impunity bring shameful accusations of treason against public men, because they know that no jury would give a verdict in favour of a "pro-German." These things are an even greater menace to freedom than the legislative act.
The importance, whether of the latter or the former category of tyranny, is not, of course, in the individual hardship inflicted. In a world where suffering and sacrifice, to say nothing of life or justice, are held as cheaply as they are to-day, it is, in so far as the individual is concerned, a small thing that a few thousand conscientious objectors should starve or go to prison: that English teachers and men of letters of international reputation should be reduced to penury. The hardship does not matter.

But what does matter is that the habit of tolerating this sort of thing is bound, sooner or later, to destroy that political morality, that sense of playing the game, which has made British democracy a possibility, and has in some measure set the standard of self-government throughout the world; that the quality of life which we associate with free society, and which renders possible a certain quality of men, self-reliant and capable of individual judgment, will have been fundamentally altered.

Let us examine a little the particular case of Mr. Russell.

"Mr. Russell's forbears," remarks a paper which does not share his views on the war, "have had a good deal to do with the government of England. There is nothing German or even Continental about them. They are, and have always been, an able, insular and singularly original stock. If Mr. Russell himself is well above even their high intellectual level, he has something of their rather rigid outlook. He is a philosophic Liberal, and he has taken a more detached view of the European struggle in which we are engaged than we can endorse. He thinks, we imagine, that its cause is more general than particular; that the European nations have reached a period of general malaise in their state life and that our governors must bear their share of blame for the overwhelming disaster which is its symptom. He has expressed the view, so far as we know, with about a hundredth part of the emphasis with which Mr. Lloyd George denounced our conduct of the Boer War. For this offence, and for a technical infringement of the Military Service Act, which we do not believe that any competent lawyer would condemn, he has been forbidden to lecture to the students of Harvard University. He has been brought under a regulation of the Defence of the Realm Act which forbids him to reside in the greater part of his native land, and he has had his flat ransacked in his absence. The regulation in question was designed to protect the country
against traitors giving aid and comfort to the country's enemies. The assistance which Mr. Russell would have afforded them would have been a series of lectures on his general principles of politics and philosophy. Any direct reference to the war was, we understand, excluded. Nevertheless, we understand that it was the avowed object of the military to prevent Mr. Russell from delivering them. 'You shall not endeavour to form opinions, even on abstract questions of political conduct, because we do not approve the conclusions you have arrived at on the most urgent political questions of the day,' says our neo-Prussian monitor."

The Council of Trinity College, no doubt, shelter themselves behind the technical excuse that he had been condemned under the Defence of the Realm Act. But, one may doubt whether if, before the war, one of the Fellows of Trinity had got into trouble in Ireland for advocating rebellion against the Home Rule Act, he would have been dismissed from his lectureship. Mr. Russell was really dismissed because the Council of his College disagreed with his political views. A colleague of Mr. Russell's suggests that the contrast with Germany is instructive. Professor Förster, of Munich, has written and spoken since the war against the tradition and spirit of Bismarck and of militarism. Such views are very unpopular in Germany and, in particular, were so unpopular among Professor Förster's colleagues that they issued a joint protest against them. But Professor Förster retains his professorship. He continues to teach. His pupils have received him with enthusiastic applause. And the most creditable organs of the press have supported him and condemned his colleagues.

And we may be sure that if this sort of thing takes place in the case of a member of a great English family, and a philosopher of world-wide reputation, tyranny of an even grosser kind is likely when the victim happens to be poor and unknown.

I take one example among many:

The other day a Mr. Thompson, a teacher in the Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, was brought before the local tribunal as a conscientious objector to military service. Mr. Thompson was born and brought up a Quaker, and there was therefore no question of the genuineness of his religious objection to war. This was not disputed, and he was given exemption. But in granting it, the Chairman of the Tribunal informed him that he would not be allowed to resume

**"Nation," September 9, 1916.**
his teaching, and must report himself to the Friends' Ambulance. In vain Mr. Thompson pleaded that he had one commanding interest in life, that he had been ten years a teacher, that all his training and knowledge centred in the work of teaching, and therefore that this was the work of “national importance” he was best fitted to perform. The Chairman was not to be moved. “You must understand,” he said, “that we follow certain rules on this tribunal, and yours is not the only case we have so decided.” We do not know whether the kind of law under which we live enables a tribunal of this kind thus to proscribe a civil occupation; but let that pass. The special piquancy of the situation lay in the fact that the Chairman of this tribunal was also the Chairman of the Educational Committee of the Liverpool City Council. Thus, this superintendent of the educational life of Liverpool withdraws from it a skilled servant who cannot be treated as a soldier, and transfers him to a work in which he has no skill at all. This, we can only conclude, is his measure of the value of education to a people struggling for its place in the world against another people which puts education above every other State function but soldiering. Skill, knowledge, interest, the adaptation of talents to the common use count, we know, for very little in the least intelligent or most conservative governments of the world. How much do they count for in England?*

Even a summary examination of the facts shows the dangers here indicated to be only too plain. But popular inertia with reference to them is generally excused on two grounds: that the condition is temporary “for the period of the war,” and that we must submit to these evils for the purpose of securing immunity from a still greater evil, which is German victory.

As I write these lines I find Mr. Lowes Dickinson reflecting pathetically that even though we did recover the freedom which we had before the war, “the significance of what is occurring is that it shows how little we really did have. The eloquence of Milton, the reasoning of Mill, have passed in vain over the heads of the British nation. We are still only ready to tolerate the opinions with which we agree. The mass of the nation in all classes has no belief in and no comprehension of the doctrine of tolerance. And we see in consequence that unpopular opinion is not only silenced, it is actively persecuted, if it runs counter to strong popular feeling. There is no merit in tolerating difference of opinion or conviction when there is no risk or even any inconvenience in doing so. It is precisely when the opinion seems dangerous that the real issue is raised. We see how the British people is emerging from this test.”**


**“War and Peace,” October, 1916.
But shall we ever recover what we had before the war? When we say that these tyrannies are only for "the period of the war" what do we mean in this connection by "the period of the war"?

It is unhappily becoming increasingly evident that it may, for the purposes of the special legislation of the last two years, include that "war after the war" which those responsible for such things as the Military Service Acts are determined shall follow the cessation of military operations. After destroying Germany in a military sense we are to do so in an economic sense, in order that she may not in the future use her wealth to our detriment.

It is a theory of national defence for which, if protectionist premises are admitted, a great deal can be said.

And if our rulers decide that the policy of a trade war is a necessity of national defence—as they seem already to have decided—why should not agitation against it, the advocacy of Free Trade that is, become a penal offence, as the agitation against Conscription has in fact become a penal offence? And just as any propaganda against Conscription (despite the most solemn promises of the Ministry to the contrary before the Act was passed) is now carried on at imminent risk of imprisonment and persecution, of raidings and domiciliary visits, of the confinement of persons to indicated areas, so in the future the same penalties may be attached to any criticism of the fiscal legislation to be based upon the resolutions of the Paris Conference.

One remembers that Bismarck, after the war of 1871, was able to create a school of "Nationalist" economics in Germany by pretty much the same methods that the British Government has already begun to apply in a small way in England. In any case, if those resolutions are carried into effect the period of militarization will not end with the destruction of the German armies.

This anticipated condition of "war after the war" is not one about which those who have become most powerful in opinion and politics now make any secret.

When at the outbreak of the war we found men, who for years had been arguing that war was not only inevitable but desirable as a moral discipline, justifying the present war on the ground that it was the war which was to end war, one was entitled to some suspicion that they had got their motives badly mixed. Happily this pretence is now quite frankly abandoned, and we hear no more from life-long advocates of militarism that our victory is to mark the end of
militarism. Measures introduced for the "period of the war" are quite likely by an easy transition to become measures for the period of "war"—which we are now frankly told is to be a normal condition of European society during our generation at any rate.

In the chapter which follows this I have attempted to examine how far the tendencies just described have been due to military necessity and how far other motives lie concealed beneath that plea. But as a matter of fact the unavowed and perhaps unconscious motive of desiring to extend the field of arbitrary authority is revealed most unmistakably in unguarded moments—as when the military authorities attempt to justify their treatment of Mr. Russell. They are evidently of opinion that their conduct would be justified if it could be shown that Mr. Russell's activities might undermine the national will to continue the war. The fact that they can make that plea and the public accept it shows how completely the Prussian conception of the relation of the army to the nation and their respective functions has taken possession of our minds.

Let us consider for a moment the right place of the military power in a State which is still free, which is not yet militarily enslaved.

In the free State the army is the instrument of the nation, an instrument used for the execution of its policy. The army as such has no politics. It begins war only when it is told to do so by the nation; it ceases war when it is told to do so by the nation. It is the will of the nation which commands it. This is a distinction thoroughly well realised by all who have thought about the free State or have any feeling for it.

Very good. Note what has happened in Mr. Russell's case.

They enforce against him a clause of the Defence of the Realm Act which was intended to facilitate the tracking of spies; it prohibits his going into areas where information of military value might be obtainable. He may go into Manchester, but not into Liverpool.

In passing it may be noted that such a clause was obviously not designed to empower the military authority to control peace propaganda. Arguments for peace which would be harmless in Manchester could hardly be seditious in Glasgow or Liverpool.

Mr. Russell had prepared a course of lectures on the Philosophical Principles of Politics, to be delivered in vari-
ous provincial towns. As three of these towns were in prohibited areas, he could not go to them without permission in writing from the War Office. In reply to a request for this permission, he was informed that he must submit the lectures to the War Office censorship. He replied that this was impossible, as they were to be spoken, not read; but he sent the syllabus of the course.

In reply, he received a letter (dated September 13) acknowledging receipt of the syllabus of lectures, and stating that "in the absence of further details" it was "impossible to advise the Army Council whether they might properly be given during the war." It concluded, however, by offering to give permission for the lectures if he would give "an honourable undertaking" not "to use them as a vehicle for propaganda."

It comes, then, to this: that the first condition of the free State, namely, that it is the nation which decides the policy and the army which executes it, has passed away. The army not only executes the policy; it decides, what it is to be in that it decides whether the people as a whole shall be allowed to discuss the desirability of concluding the war now or later. The military authority has decided that it is a crime to lay before the people the question which is of all questions the most important to them—what they are fighting for and whether, in order to achieve it, it is necessary or worth while to continue the war.

A negative decision may be a wicked and shameful one, but it is one which it is the right of the nation to make; it is their responsibility. It is not for the military authorities—the War Office—to make and impose it upon the people, however good it may be. As it stands the people are not by free discussion to decide their foreign policy: for what purposes the war shall be fought and what sort of peace is most desirable. All that comes within the scope of the military authorities acting under the Defence of the Realm Regulations! The army is not an instrument of foreign policy under the control of the national will: it is the dictator of foreign policy, and can use its powers for manipulating the national will by suppressing one side—and one side only—of public discussion. The army is no longer the servant of the nation, but its master. We have the full flowering of the Prussian principle.

In a personal explanation concerning this Mr. Russell says:
My proposed course of lectures on "The World as it can be made" is not intended to deal with the immediate issues raised by the war; there will be nothing about the diplomacy preceding the war, about conscientious objectors, about the kind of peace to be desired, or even about the general ethics of war. On all these topics I have expressed myself often already. My intention is to take the minds of my hearers off the questions of the moment, and to suggest the kind of hopes and ideas that ought to inspire reconstruction after the war.

But when I am requested by the military authorities to give an "honourable undertaking," as regards my lectures, that I will not "use them as a vehicle for propaganda," I am quite unable to do so, for the following reasons.

First and foremost, because I cannot acknowledge the right of the War Office to prevent me from expressing my opinions on political subjects. If I say anything which they think prejudicial to the conduct of the war, they can imprison me under the Defence of the Realm Act, but that is a proceeding to which I am not a party, and for which I have no responsibility. If, however, I enter into a bargain by which I secure certain advantages in return for a promise, I am precluded from further protest against their tyranny. Now it is just as imperative a duty to me to fight against tyranny at home as it is to others to fight against the Germans abroad. I will not, on any consideration, surrender one particle of spiritual liberty. Physical liberty can be taken from a man, but spiritual liberty is his birthright, of which all the armies and governments of the world are powerless to deprive him without his co-operation.

Apart from this argument of principle, which is hardly of a kind to appeal to militarists, there are other more practical reasons for not giving such an undertaking as is required. My lectures will be spoken, not read, and will no doubt be followed by questions. It is impossible to be absolutely certain what one will say when one speaks extempore! And it would be obviously absurd, in reply to an awkward question, to say, "I am under an honourable undertaking not to answer that question." Even if these difficulties could be overcome, it is utterly impossible to know what would be covered by such an undertaking, since there is no precise definition of the propaganda to be avoided, and no indication as to whether only certain conclusions are forbidden, or also the premises from which they can be deduced. May I say that I consider homicide usually regrettable? If so, since the majority of homicides occur in war, I have uttered a pacifist sentiment. May I say that I have a respect for the ethical teaching of Christ? If I do, the War Office may tell me that I am praising conscientious objectors. May I say that I do not hold Latimer and Ridley guilty of grave moral turpitude because they broke the law? Or would such a statement be prejudicial to discipline in His Majesty's Forces? To such questions there is no end.

And even though these special measures against Mr. Bertrand Russell be withdrawn, as they may be if some vestige of Parliamentary criticism remain, it is too much to hope that lesser victims will escape the local tyrannies and the social pressures. Mill has pointed out that the chief mischief of the legal penalties is that they strengthen the
social stigma. "It is the stigma which is really effective, and so effective is it that the profession of opinions which are under the ban of society is much less common in England than is, in many other countries, the avowal of those which incur risk of judicial punishment. In respect of all persons, but those whose pecuniary circumstances make them independent of the good will of other people, opinion on this subject is as efficacious as law; men might as well be imprisoned as excluded from the means of earning their bread. . . . But though we do not now inflict as much evil on those who think differently from us as it was formerly our custom to do, it may be that we do ourselves as much evil as ever by our treatment of them. . . . The price paid for this sort of intellectual pacification is the sacrifice of the entire moral courage of the human mind. A state of things in which a large portion of the most active and enquiring intellects find it advisable to keep the general principles and ground of their convictions within their own breasts and attempt in what they address to the public to fit as much as they can of their own conclusions to premises which they have internally renounced cannot send forth open, fearless character and logical, consistent intellects. . . . The sort of men who can be looked for under it are either mere conformers to commonplace or time-servers for truth."

And though the particular measures against Mr. Russell may be withdrawn, the spirit which dictated them will still be there.

To-morrow, if Mr. Bottomley, or the "Evening News," is clamorous enough, it will be the turn of Mr. Lowes Dickinson, or Mr. Graham Wallas or Mr. MacDonald or Mr. Trevelyan or Mr. Ponsonby or Mr. Snowden or Mr. Massingham or Mr. Buxton or Mr. Brailsford or Mr. Nevinson, and the English public will enter the most difficult period of reconstruction that it has ever known in the foreign field without any real discussion—without having heard two sides at all: merely the Governmental view coloured by the temperamental peculiarities of the editors of the "Post" and the "Express," or of "John Bull."

Is the settlement, then, to be so simple that it can be left to the uncriticised dictation of these gentlemen? Has the British public no need to hear two sides in order to form sound judgment?

We know, of course, that, even though not another German were left alive, the difficulties of the settlement as between the ten Allies, and as between them and the neutrals,
would be such that only the most balanced statesmanship, the largest give and take, and the sense of need for a live and let live spirit, of "othermindedness," can avoid the perpetuation, under slightly changed roles, of all the old chaos of suspicion, armament and war. That, without a better spirit there can be not the faintest hope of a better world.

And by way of making sure of that better spirit, of a larger sense of other-mindedness, we have introduced into the English Government and administration a spirit of persecution, a police control of opinion which it has not known for generations. And because we do not allow our Bertrand Russells to make any contribution to the general stock of feeling and opinion, the Horatio Bottomleys and the spirit THEY stand for have become the dominant note in the moral tone of the people; the keeping of the national conscience has almost passed into their hands. It is THEIR political philosophy and morality that these new governmental powers for the control and manufacture of opinion are deliberately rendering triumphant in the country. And it is on such moral and intellectual foundations that we are to erect the newer world our soldiers died to make possible.
CHAPTER V.

The Plea of Military Necessity

To say of an individual or a nation that the avowed motive is not the real motive is to make no accusation of hypocrisy. Modern psychology has taught nothing if it has not taught that motives which we ourselves may quite honestly believe to be of one order, are as a matter of fact quite different.

There was, perhaps, very little of conscious hypocrisy in the rallying of pronounced militarists in England to the temporary advocacy of pacifist principles at the beginning of the war. The English professors, journalists and writers who for years had been pouring contempt upon the ideal of a world without war as a "sheep's paradise," or as Mr. Strachey put it, a "sty," in which everything worth while in human nature would decay, really could go before the public and urge that if this war were fought to a finish it would end war—would bring about, in other words, just that kind of "swinish" world, against which they had been railing. It is not necessary to suppose that these publicists were consciously insincere in urging that this was a war against war, for the ending of militarism, because it is a commonplace of psychology that the motives which we honestly believe we are obeying may not be at all the motives which we are really obeying. The human capacity for self-deception in this respect seems illimitable.

It is necessary to put some emphasis on that point for this reason: it justifies our examining whether the motive now urged by militarists, or men of militarist minds and feelings, on behalf of the special measures now enforced is in fact the real motive at all. It is seriously urged that unless we harry and persecute the conscientious objector and prevent Mr. Bertrand Russell from lecturing on logic in Cambridge we shall not win this war. And every protest against this invasion of freedom is answered in the same way: "Very regrettable, of course, but necessary if we are
to beat the Germans.” Or, at least, “If we allow this kind of thing to go on it will make it HARDER for us to win the war; it will deprive us of men; it will encourage the Germans.”

Let us examine that proposition in the light, first, of the most important moral problem that has arisen in connection with the military measures taken for the prosecution of the war: the treatment of the conscientious objector to military service.

What would be the loss in effective recruits if the Government, as the simplest and shortest way out of all the difficulties that have been created for them and for the military authorities by the problem of the conscientious objector, were to decide that henceforth the simple affirmation of a conscientious objection to military service in any form, direct or indirect, should be sufficient to secure absolute exemption?

It is certain that the loss to the Army in actual numbers of men would at this juncture be small, because most of the claims for exemption that can affect the numbers in this war are already made, and exemption from combatant service is already provided for. The punitive treatment of objectors on the grounds of the need of deterring shirkers cannot be justified by the facts of the present war. The number of shirkers in the remaining fraction of unconscried men that will be available for the war could not be very considerable; the social and moral pressure upon them would be stronger than it is if simple affirmation of conscientious objection were accepted. Moreover, the present difficulties put in the way of the objector—cross-examination by the tribunals, etc.—probably deter the ingenious shirkers much less than the sincere man. As against tribunal cross-examination, for instance, the glib, talkative or unscrupulous man has probably an advantage, a considerable advantage, over the sincerely convinced or religious man who may be inarticulate and reticent. But even assuming that among the fraction of unconscried men a few shirkers did escape, would they be a great loss to the combatant army? Do the military authorities really desire to keep their services at the cost of the disturbance to discipline which the presence of objectors, sincere or not, must involve. And as against the loss of a few shirkers who might slip through must be put the final disposal of the very serious difficulties represented by the detention in military and civil prisons or herding into labour camps of some two thousand objectors. Not only
would the army be relieved of a problem of indiscipline, but two thousand men or more—at present virtually no use—would be restored to productive work for the nation; the administrative energies of a considerable number of military men would be liberated for something more useful and worthy than attempting to bully men into acts which their convictions do not sanction.

There can be no reasonable doubt that all the practical as well as the military and political advantages are on the side of this very simple solution of the conscientious objector problem.

But the arguments which have just been used, although unassailable if we assume that conscription has been adopted solely for the period and purposes of this war, do not apply if conscription is to continue after the war. While in practice, so far as the war is concerned, the number of men to be affected by “severe” treatment of objectors is negligible, the number affected might not be negligible if conscription is to go on for years. In the same way, while the solution suggested would facilitate the working of conscription as a war measure, the principles of conscientious objection, working in peace time, would, in the course of years, threaten the whole institution.

And that is why those who have persuaded this country to adopt conscription will not solve the problem that confronts them in the way suggested. They know that absolute exemption on grounds of conscience would not embarrass the prosecution of this war. But it would render conscription after the war impossible.

It would be out of place to revive here the controversy that preceded the adoption of conscription. But one or two facts stand our pretty clearly. It was the voluntary system which brought the great majority of available Englishmen into the new armies—something like five millions of men. Conscription was introduced for a remnant. The whole conscriptionist discussion revealed pretty plainly that the major factor in the introduction of that system was the energy of those who had always urged conscription as part of a political theory—who believed that it was the “duty” of every able-bodied citizen “to bear arms in the defence of his country.” It was in pursuance of this theory of the State that they prosecuted their campaign, and not from any demonstrated military need. There were earnest advocates of the
principle twenty years ago in England, long before the German danger had arisen.*

Let us see how far the need of getting soldiers and of not encouraging the enemy is at the bottom of some of the most serious and insidious forms of Governmental persecution of opinion and freedom of discussion.

Mr. Lloyd George, for instance, tells us that he intends to make as hard as possible the pathway of the man who refuses—what? Military service? Not the least in the world. He has admitted the objection of the man who refuses to go into the trenches. The discussion on that point is closed. The man for whom Mr. Lloyd George reserves especially severe punishment is the one who refuses “alternative” service—the one objector of the genuineness of whose objection there can be no possible doubt. The law has no special severity for the man who is mainly concerned to escape the risks of the trenches by taking non-combatant service or civilian service under military control; but the man who refuses to accept the safety of cabbage planting—the escape from danger provided by the Government—who refuses to become part, however easy and free from danger that part may be, of the State machine which is carrying on the war and doing the killing, and by virtue of that refusal knows that he exposes himself to the risk of being forced into the army, that man is to be punished by Mr. Lloyd George with a quite especial ferocity!—Yet it is not even pretended that the object of the ferocity is to turn the man into a soldier, that even if it were successful it would have any military value. The plea of justification commonly brought forward does but the more plainly reveal the real motive behind it.

*That the element of compulsion is sometimes introduced when there is no real need is avowed by the terms of the interview granted by the Rt. Hon. W. E. Massey, Prime Minister of New Zealand, to “The Pall Mall Gazette” (October 9, 1916).

Alluding to the Compulsory Service Act passed recently by the New Zealand Government, the Prime Minister said:—

“It would hardly be correct to call it conscription though it is so framed that there is no possibility of any man who is physically fit and of military age escaping his responsibilities. There was really no need for the measure at the time, for men were enlisting freely under the voluntary system. But the Government thought it wise to look ahead; we could not foretell what the future might require, so we provided for contingencies. In every country, I suppose, there are always a few men to be found who do not want to do their fair share, and this act will, if necessary, enable us to get at them.” Thus, the mere conveyance, and the desire to “get at” a small remnant, is deemed sufficient motive for the introduction of this dangerous element of compulsion.
We are told that, being a part of the community and reaping the advantages of the social organisation, all should be prepared to co-operate in the social purpose. Did, then, these miners and labourers and clerks and doctors and teachers and professors furnish the community no service for the wage which was paid them and by which they lived? Have these men in the past been idlers who refused to work? Did they belong to the parasitic class? The question never arose until these men were asked to become a cog in the military machine; until they were asked to form a conscious part of a new national organisation created specifically for the purposes of war.

I say "conscious part" advisedly, because, left to themselves, following their daily avocations, these men, however little they may have desired it, would have co-operated in the national organisation. Every cup of tea they drank and every cigarette they smoked would have contributed to the funds by which the war was carried on.

But it would not have been a conscious and formal surrender of their will; a bending of the knee to Moloch; an admission to themselves and to the world that they surrendered their individual conscience. And consequently it did not satisfy Mr. Lloyd George, Minister of War. What he desired was the surrender of the will of these men to his own, even though in the process of obtaining that submission and docility there was a sacrifice of military as well as social advantage. It was the pinch of incense on the altar that the War Office, the military order, acting through Mr. George (who rose to eminence in politics by setting himself in more violent opposition to a war carried on by his country than do the men he now persecutes) was determined to exact. He would have no heretics to the State's political faith—unless the heresy happened to be his own.

An attempt is sometimes made to give a military justification to measures like that forbidding Mr. Russell to leave the country, or to travel within it, by the plea that the declarations of such persons "encourage the enemy."

That such a plea could possibly be made shows our infinite capacity for hiding our real motives—perhaps even from ourselves—by parading what is sometimes a palpably impossible one.

There are a considerable number of very influential persons in England who undoubtedly have encouraged the enemy's resistance. Their utterances are so useful to him in stimulating the German purpose and maintaining the
German determination to prosecute the war, that the German Government have taken great trouble to circulate the declarations of these Englishmen among the German people. Particularly is that true of speeches made by Mr. George and Mr. Hughes and certain newspaper articles supporting the resolutions of the Paris Conference. These articles and speeches have been particularly useful to the Kaiser, and to the extremist "bitter enders" in Germany, because they enable them to say to any section of the public likely to be war-weary: 'Now you see why you must fight to the last. If you are beaten the British are determined to take your trade, to destroy your nationality, to reduce you to helplessness. Just read what these English statesmen intend to do with you when you are beaten.'*

*The excellent summary of "Foreign Opinion," published weekly by the "Cambridge Magazine," particularly in the issue of September 9, clearly reveals this. In this number I note the following:—

In an article entitled "Always Annihilation," the "Reichspost" declares that the programme of the "destruction of Germany" is again in the ascendant. Germany must be completely overcome, her military power destroyed, her colonies taken. The more reasonable the disposition of the German Chancellor, the more haughty and brutal become Asquith and his friends. The only choice, therefore, left to the Central Powers is to fight on for a complete victory, short of political death and eternal war in Europe. In the "Deutsche Politik" Professor Schiemann writes that the aims of the Entente are the "breaking up of Germany into fragments never to be re-united." The resolutions of the Paris Conference mean that "Germany is to be shut out of the world-market in order that she may not possibly recover from her wounds, and reflect the cold, calculating trade-envy of England."

The "Kölische Zeitung" says, "For God's sake let us not deceive ourselves about England's determination so to force Germany to her knees that she must accept England's conditions without resistance, and be wiped out for ever as a competitor in the world's markets. It cannot be too firmly insisted that such a victory for England would mean an irreparable catastrophe for the German Empire. Not only would the German Empire be dissolved, but our people itself would be most seriously threatened with extinction, especially in view of the Russian torrent pouring in from the East. Such an English victory would not only mean the bankruptcy of our industry and our oversea trade, but it would be the ruin of our whole middle class. It would be felt especially by our trading middle-class, because such an English victory would totally exclude the possibility of our enemies being made to pay our war costs, and for generations to come our own war burdens would grow enormously. Among our workmen there would be misery which would throw them back eighty years."

Even the "Daily Mail" is witness to the same fact. In its column headed "Germany Day by Day" occurs the paragraph:—

"Another transparent War Loan advertisement is the reproduction in the 'North German Gazette' (the Government newspaper) of an article in the September 'National Review,' of London, giving the
And there is no sort of doubt that this propaganda by English public men and newspapers has aided the German Government. It has been of direct and undoubted encouragement to the enemy. But has the British Government ever restrained the violence of a Hughes or a Maxse or Bottomley or Northcliffe or "Morning Post" or "Daily Express"? Or has "prevailing opinion" ever condemned these things on such grounds? Not a bit of it. Government restraint and popular condemnation are reserved for those whose writings, if they ever influence German action at all, could only influence it in the direction of weakening German resistance to our aims and arms. For the net effect of writings like those of Mr. Bertrand Russell or Mr. Lowes Dickinson or Mr. John Hobson or Mr. Brailsford or Mr. Gilbert Cannan upon any German reader would be to provoke him to reflect: "English policy is not fundamentally hostile to German welfare. We are not really fighting England for our existence, because England has evidently no designs against our existence. Why, then, did our Government enter the war? Are we really fighting in self-defence? Should we not compel an examination of this question?"

It is these latter writings that the British authorities suppress or embarrass, and it is the former which they encourage. Does anyone really believe that the motive behind the respective actions is that the enemy shall not be encouraged?

Had Mr. Bertrand Russell been a fervent supporter of the proposals of the Paris Conference and of Mr. Hughes, and had he so supported the "punishment of Germany," her dismemberment, the destruction of her trade, that the German military authorities were circulating his writings in the trenches (an honour which it is reported has been accorded to Mr. Hughes' speeches), would the Government have used the Defence of the Realm Act to prevent his lecturing in England or going to America? He could have write's opinion of what the Allies 'minimum peace terms' ought to be. Comment by the Wilhelmstrasse's editor is to the effect that no German can now any longer be in doubt of the 'sheer greed' at the bottom of England's determination to overthrow Germany or that Germany's struggle is a 'defensive war,' to win which at all costs lies in the holiest interest of each and every class."

Thus, Mr. Leo Maxse's organ is used by the German authorities to contribute to the success of the German loan.

And it was Mr. Hughes' opinion that the Paris Resolutions would hasten the end of the war!
talked terms of peace and encouraged the enemy all that he pleased.

I venture to suggest that the reasons which those responsible for the acts just dealt with put forward as justification of their action to the public and even in some measure to themselves are not the real reasons. The military advantage of these measures is so small and the disadvantages in some cases so obviously great, and the net result so obviously the contrary of that which is urged as their justification, that the real motive of those responsible for this Prussianisation of the English State—however little that motive may be avowed even to themselves—is pretty obviously something else. There is the perfectly sound instinct that the encouragement or toleration of individual thought on fundamental political issues will tend to make a unified militarist State impossible and so balk the desire of autocratic rulers (having whetted that appetite for irresponsible power dormant in all normal human beings) to deal with a docile and unquestioning people who will take their political opinions obediently from the Government; and, in the case of the general public, the desire of a people who have lost in the passions of war the habit of toleration to punish those who have the insufferable impudence to disagree with them. It was just such a combination of motives which gave us the era of the wars of religion and of religious tyranny, and is likely to bring about the same moral condition in our generation, the place of ecclesiastical dogma being taken by political dogma.

Every period of intolerance and persecution or the extension of State authority over opinion raises the same question of whether the persecutors have not a lurking fear that the opinion they are suppressing is in fact the truth, or very largely the truth, and that which they are supporting is not, in part at least, false.

Always does authority in justification of its powers over opinion plead that the ideas which it is suppressing are wicked and pernicious. It is the plea now made. The ideas professed by conscientious objectors are the result of loath-some moral perversion; those who oppose the war are outrageously wicked or absurd. Then in that case, they cannot possibly be a national danger, and can be safely ignored. Why need authority worry, for instance, about Mr. Russell?

Here are the constituted authorities having on their side all the vast powers of the State, the prestige of the established fact, the irresistible current of nearly the whole
national feeling, practically every paper in the country, the weight of wealth and fashion, practically all of organised religion. And there rises here and there an isolated thinker, with no great organisations behind him, no great daily papers, no churches, but just the force of the ideas which he presents. And forthwith the State has to distort its already extraordinary powers to persecute these men, deprive them of their occupation, fine them, imprison them, subject them to the barrack bullying and physical torture. Is it, then, afraid of the only thing these men possess: an idea? If not, why not let them freely expound those ideas, circulate their leaflets, publish their pamphlets? If the ideas are as absurd and pernicious as the authorities would have us believe, who will listen? A few, let us say, the degenerates, the cowards, the foolish and unworthy. But those could never be a danger to the State, could never seriously interfere with the military machine. Why, then introduce the methods of Torquemada for so negligible a danger? If those in authority really believed the ideas as monstrous and foolish as they pretend, they would simply take no notice of them. The ideas would condemn themselves. The fact that the authorities do believe it necessary to suppress the dissemination of those ideas is demonstration that they feel at the bottom of their hearts that “there is something in them”; that they are capable, if freely disseminated, of reaching others than the negligible and unworthy. They dislike these ideas, they fear them. And that is why they suppress them.

And, unfortunately, we cannot console ourselves with the thought that force is never successful in the suppression of ideas. It is often successful. The quality of our society improves so slowly largely because it is so successful. We know of the heretics that have survived, that have given us the ideas that have served us best, that have given us the advances that we have made. But what of the heretics that would have given us those liberations centuries earlier if we had not managed to suppress them?
CHAPTER VI.

The Coming of the New Holy Office

One of the rarest things in any democracy is a sense of the momentum of ideas and any consciousness that the mass are being carried along by that momentum. Vast changes come unconsciously. Thus, when it is suggested that Europe is quite capable of doing once more what it has done so often before—of turning its Governmental institutions into instruments of gross oppression for establishing a political orthodoxy and imposing it by force just as in the past they imposed religious orthodoxy by force—the thing is regarded as preposterous. Yet I want to suggest that we are in danger, in real and present danger, of just that thing; and that the institutions which we are creating are now being so moulded as to be easily used in that way, and that the net result of the consequent suppression of political free thought will be political struggles and wrangles over difficulties which we shall have lost the capacity even to understand.

Let us see how an institution like that of conscription, unless watched with vigilant suspicion, might quite well, unconsciously, even in the hands of men pledged to freedom and liberalism, become an instrument of moral and intellectual oppression.

In an earlier chapter I called attention to the fact that Mr. Lloyd George had adopted an attitude of particular ferocity towards the conscientious objector to the present war.

That is a fact which indicates how vastly English political traditions have changed in a very short time; how far and how fast we have travelled in the Prussian theories of the rights of the State over individual opinion. For less than fifteen years ago Mr. Lloyd George was himself a violent opponent of a war which his country was waging. And he opposed it, as the Liberal paper I have quoted points out,
with far greater violence and directness than Mr. Bertrand Russell opposes the present war.

Let us just see what would have been the situation, and how it would have affected the development of British policy and political institutions if the British State fifteen years ago had possessed that power for the suppression of hostile political opinion which it possesses to-day. And it is worth pointing out that if conscription had then existed the State probably would have had this power, though the supporters of conscription invariably imply that if that institution had existed in England during the last generation or two it would not have checked the development of English freedom or hampered English democracy in its fight against imperialist and anti-democratic forces. I suggest on the contrary that if during the last few generations England had had conscription, possessed of the powers with which it is already endowed the operations of that system would have resulted inevitably in checking the liberal tendencies of English political development and strengthening the reactionary and imperialist, by limiting freedom both of discussion and institution, and by curtailing popular right; and would have made English political influence in the world very much less beneficent than happily it is.

The Boer War and its sequel indicate the existence of two opposing forces in English political development—in the development of Western democracy, indeed; the forces which brought on the war, and the opposing forces which dominated the post-bellum settlement. Because, of course, the final settlement which has given us a loyal and united South Africa was carried out by a pro-Boer government, a party who had bitterly fought the policy that precipitated the war, and who in a large degree reversed its object. But so complete a victory of Liberal forces would have been impossible if the powers now possessed by the Government—and conscription would have given the Government these powers—had been in existence. That system would have strengthened incalculably those reactionary forces which played so large a part in the war itself. Let us see why.

Although the Boer War is a very controversial subject in English history, there are very few Englishmen who would seriously challenge the view that there entered into its motives—whether the war as a whole was just or not—very ugly elements of capitalist exploitation, a Prussianisation of English temper shown in a crude desire of domination, excuse or justification of things like the Jameson
Raid, a refusal to see an "enemy" point of view, a systematic vilification of the Boer character and finally, in the conduct of the war itself, methods which the Englishman who after the war became British Prime Minister, declared curtly to be "methods of barbarism"—farm burning, concentration camps, etc.

Now, not merely had this lapse into Prussianism ranged the opinion of most of the civilised world against England—certainly as much as it was against France in the Dreyfus case—but what is much more to the point, most English Liberals fought the whole policy and tendency of the war. The pro-Boer agitation (in which Mr. Lloyd George was perhaps the most violent figure) did not, it is true, stop the war, though it shortened it; but it produced a reaction against the Prussian temper so great that the pro-Boers, electorally triumphant after the war, virtually restored to the Boer Republics their independence under the guise of responsible Colonial Government; and to the bitter anger of British Junkerdom at the time, allowed the Boer element to become once more politically dominant throughout South Africa; so that within a year or two of the close of the war the virtual ruler of South Africa was the man who had led the Boer forces in the field against British arms.

But that conversion of the British people, and their revolt against their own Government, would have been impossible under conscription and the powers we have now given it. The war, which lasted nearly three years, called from first to last for nearly half a million men, drawn not only from the regular army, but from militia and irregular forces. Presumably those who offered their services for the war did not share the views of the pro-Boer party of the day.

But what would have been the position of English soldiers under the existing powers of the State? The Government would, of course, take no account of political opinion. While the pro-Boer might be taken to the front, the pro-Chamberlainite might have been left at home. Young Liberals and Nonconformists were reading in Mr. Lloyd George's speeches that the war was a monstrous, wickedness, tainted at its source, carried on by methods of barbarism. Inflamed by all this these young men would, under conscription, have been sent to the veldt to kill Boers, burn Boer farm houses, and drive Boer women and children into concentration camps.
Would they, in such conditions, have done those things? I can answer personally for at least some; they would have flatly refused. We now know—the 1906 election taught us that—that pro-Boerism had gone much deeper than was generally supposed. The refusal would not have been isolated and sporadic, for though pro-Boerism presented what was at the time a minority, it was a passionate and convinced minority. And that minority—the editors, writers, bishops, professors—would certainly, some of them, have followed Mr. Lloyd George in supporting that mutiny and encouraging it.

What would the conscription authorities have done? Shot the young conscripts, and let Mr. Lloyd George—the pro-Boer agitator—really responsible for their mutiny, continue unchecked? Let the conscript choose whether he should go to war or not? Then that—in contradistinction to the circumstances of this war—would have been the end of conscription. And would the military authorities accept surrender to sedition in war times?

There was only one thing, under conscription, to have done: suppress the pro-Boer agitation. For conscription to have worked at all in the Boer War would have meant a very thoroughgoing censorship of newspaper opinion, suppression of public meetings, control of university professors and religious teachers, and the suppression of the speaking and writing of the men who have since ruled England and guided her policy.

It would have suited the Government of the day, of course; notably Mr. Chamberlain. He would not have needed to answer Lloyd George or the other very violent pro-Boers. He would have sent them to jail. Incidentally, such a step would have been very popular just at the time.

But such a course would have altered not only the subsequent history of the South African settlement, but of all English politics. The discredit which fell upon the authors of the Boer War and finally swept them from office and so completely checked the Prussian temper and tendencies, was due largely to the educating influence of the pro-Boer agitation. The movement which accounted for the landslide of the 1906 election was largely a moral movement, a realisation of the true character of Chamberlainite and Milnerite politics, due largely to just that agitation during the war which conscription must have suppressed.

Let us see what is the relation of the mechanism of those State powers to political freedom of opinion in pres-
ent-day circumstances. Put the thing in the concrete fashion of Carlyle's two Dumdrudges. The young man of France, or Austria, or Prussia, or Bavaria, having been in no way consulted as to his opinion concerning the matter, and with no option of refusal, finds himself one day confronted with the order to enter the trenches and kill the man opposite. Now suppose, being a Prussian, he should say: "I don't feel justified in killing the man opposite. I have followed this particular dispute between his Government and mine, and upon my conscience I am not at all sure that he is wrong. I think there is a good deal to be said for his case. Particularly am I a little doubtful of my case when it is marked by the daily slaughter of children on land and sea. I cannot see that I do the best service to my country in killing the man opposite. He may not be altogether right, but I am at least sure that he is not so wrong as to justify me in putting him to death or torture."

Now, if what the Allies and their supporters have so often told us is at all true, Western Europe has taken up arms on behalf of that young heretic—to bring about, that is, just the moral revolution on the part of his people represented in his attitude. Mr. Asquith has told us that the war is a spiritual conflict fought to defeat "a monstrous code of international morality" into which the German people have been entrapped "to the horror of mankind." The war was undertaken to liberate them and Europe from the menace of certain political doctrines and moralities (such as that whatever the State does is right, and that obligations to it overrule all others, and that men should be, as certain members of the German Government have so proudly proclaimed themselves, "for their country, right or wrong"), and to replace those dangerous doctrines by—again to quote Mr. Asquith—"the enthronement of the idea of right as the governing idea" in international politics.

But if a nation is to know what IS right in its relations with others it must in that matter allow freedom of conscience and discussion, particularly freedom to state the view of the other side. It is not an easy thing for even a third party to determine the rights and wrongs of a quarrel. As for the interested parties, it is humanly certain that each will be convinced he is absolutely right and the other absolutely wrong unless there is a deliberately cultivated capacity to "hear the other side." And, as Governments are made up of human beings, they too are just as likely to be incapable of fair and reasonable judgment in a case in
which they are interested parties, unless drawn from a population that has cultivated the capacity for such judgment in the only way in which it can be cultivated—by the habit of forming individual decisions based on the weighing of both sides; unless, in other words, they have learned to "tolerate the heretic" and are dominated by the tradition of the need of heresy in forming opinion.

Now the simple truth is that the form in which we have established conscription has given to the State such powers that it makes political heresy—opposition to the political religion of the State—in international affairs, a crime punishable with death. It sounds fantastic, but it is a mere statement of fact. Let us go back to the young conscript I have imagined refusing to kill the man opposite. Whether he be German, French, Italian, Russian or Turkish, and whether his situation be that of a submarine commander refusing to sink Atlantic liners or an Allied aviator refusing to throw bombs at Baden health resorts, if he really persists there is only one result for him. He is shot.

Conscription, to be effective, must be a conscription of minds as well as bodies, just when freedom of minds is most needed. To allow real cleavage of opinion concerning the justice of a State's cause to grow up by allowing the advocacy of a rival cause would be to break down national solidarity, to affect gravely the efficiency of the military instrument by tainting its morale at the source. Moreover, the State must take charge not only of the expression of opinion, but of the dissemination of facts which lead to the formation of opinion. And if the incident of the trenches I have described is not commoner than it is (though it is commoner than we suppose it to be), it is largely because States which, like Germany, knowing their military business, have carried out the intellectual conscription, the "mobilisation of the mental and moral forces of the nation," so thoroughly before the beginning of the war that the mind as well as the body of the conscript has been suitably drilled. The control of the Press and of education, of the careers of all who teach or have influence, has been as much part of the organisation of the nation for military purposes as the physical drill and regimentation. And if we wonder how it is that not only sixty or seventy millions of people in the mass, but great scientists, teachers and theologians as individuals, can subscribe to doctrines and support conduct which appear to the outside world as monstrous, it is merely because we have forgotten that any case, however
monstrous, can be made to appear reasonable and acceptable if we never hear anything that can be said against it.

If we think that a people like the French could not possibly, when a like efficiency of organisation has had time to do its work, show a like moral result, then we have probably forgotten certain incidents of their history, even quite recent incidents like the Dreyfus affair and what we said about it and all that it meant at the time. I do not pretend of course that no freedom in political speculation can exist under conscription or allied systems. There has been freedom of political speculation of a kind in Germany, as her social contrivances like workmen's insurance acts, which are models to the world and which we have copied, show. In the same way you had periods of bold intellectual speculation, of a kind, under the Inquisition. The influence of men like Thomas Aquinas, one of the acutest and most penetrating thinkers of all time, was felt in the most priest-ridden period. But although you had intellectual innovation in the nineteenth century in Germany and in the fourteenth century in Spain and Italy, authority intervened to arrest innovation at just those points where it was most needed. And with all her political heresy the power of the military machine in France has undoubtedly worked to maintain for the most part the old ideas in such things as nationalism, patriotism—the worth of political sovereignty—to maintain just that group of ideas which of all others needs most radical modification. But for the momentum of the old Nationalist conceptions, which are so closely allied with the military organisation, the result of the attempt of the Caillaux ministry to compose the differences between the great two rival groups in Europe might have been very different.

But the French, as a matter of fact, have escaped the full flower of the Prussian result because the circumstances of their history during the nineteenth century—the fact that not once during the whole of that century did they have a Government sufficiently national to set up a national orthodoxy—made it impossible to organise the system on its intellectual side. Since the Revolution there have always been in France, until this war, large groups ready to put certain social and moral principles above national defence, above the State. The revolutionary wars of France were fought with a whole class of Frenchmen opposed to them, many members of that class actually fighting with the enemies of France. It is but a symbol of what has always
been in post-revolutionary France that on the news of the fall of Sedan, because it meant the end of the Empire, Paris was illuminated; and that in Paris, in the struggle of the Commune, more Frenchmen were killed by Frenchmen than had been killed there in the war by Germans. You had here such ingrained habit of political heresy that no machine could readily cope with it. No wonder France has been intellectually fairly free. Sufficient numbers of Frenchmen have always been ready to make national defence, the efficiency of the military machine, subservient to the retention of certain freedoms, as the Dreyfus case showed. But conscription—the military organisation—has steadily fought these freedoms, and the tendency for the needs of the machine to override all other considerations has at times been so strong that, again as in the Dreyfus affair, the control of such tendency demanded for years at a time all the energies which the heirs of the liberal tradition could summon to the task. If, as a result of this war, France is “nationalised” in the sense of making all political differences really subservient to the needs of national power, the increasing efficiency of the military machine will make the next Dreyfus affair in its outcome a Zabern affair.

The question surely is this: If the democracies like England and France are to put first the efficient working of the national military machine over a period of years, will it not be at the price of a control of opinion by the State, as complete as in Germany? And, if so, why should we expect sensibly different moral results?

I am not urging that the difficulties here indicated necessarily condemn resort to conscription in any circumstance whatever—that is quite a distinct problem—but that we must face squarely what permanent conscription involves. And it involves undoubtedly the suppression of freedom of conscience in the larger and deeper political problems, in some degree at all times, and with ruthlessness just at the time that such freedom is most needed. Indeed, the position of the modern political heretic is in one respect perhaps worse than was that of the old religious heretic. The latter, in order to be secure from the attentions of the Holy Office, had only to remain silent. That does not protect the modern heretic. He is taken out and compelled to kill with his own hand those whose political faith perhaps he shares, or himself be executed.

The Europe of the past entangled herself in a net of her own weaving—the work largely of theological profes-
sors, as our net to-day is woven so largely by political professors. Each religious group had convinced itself that everything it most valued on earth, the existence of any kind of morality, its spiritual freedom here as well as its eternal salvation later, depended upon its defending itself by military power against the power of the other—defence, of course, involving preventive wars. There was only one thing which could, and finally did, put an end to the resulting welter: a revision of the prevailing conceptions as to the relation of military force and power over the other group to those moral and spiritual values.

The modification of conception, theory, "sovereign idea," what you will, was only possible as the result of certain heresies, of the conflict of one idea with another, and so the correction of both. But that one solution, the one means of egress, the man of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe deliberately closed by making heresy the gravest moral offence which men could commit. Each side killed its heretic. What was more important was that they killed with him the capacity of the mass to think clearly—or to think at all on the subjects that the heretic raised, for a community which has no heretics, which is of one mind on a given matter, is on that matter mindless. If the rival communities had been successful in the attempt to protect themselves by military means from heresy within and without, we should have been fighting wars of religion yet, and perhaps organising our massacres of St. Bartholomew. But certain forces, mechanical, like the cheapening of printing; moral, like the readiness of the heretic to suffer, were too strong for the imperfect organisation of the State or the Holy Office. But the modern State—as Germany proves—can be more efficient in the control of opinion and the consequent suppression of heresy. And we can hardly doubt that if unity of political belief seems—even though it may not really be—necessary to the successful conversion of a nation into a military instrument, the modern State will kill political heresy even more successfully than the Church-State killed religious heresy; and in lesser or greater degree with the analogous result of rendering Europe impotent to solve the very problems with which our institutions were created to grapple.
THE DANGERS OF
HALF-PREPAREDNESS
A Plea for a Declaration of American Policy
(An Address delivered in Washington)

By NORMAN ANGELL

"THE NEW REPUBLIC" (the most authoritative organ in America advocating an Anglo-American Alliance) says (September 16, 1916):

"Mr. Angell spent last winter in the United States lecturing and writing. In the weeks preceding the last crisis with Germany over the Sussex, he formulated the doctrine that neutrality was obsolete . . . . There can be no doubt that the most important sentence in Mr. Wilson's speech (of acceptance) was written by Norman Angell . . . . who served his country and ours beyond all Englishmen who have come to us since the war began. Most of the semi-official visitors have hurt more than they have helped by their insensibility to America and their moral pretentiousness. But Mr. Angell quickly and effectively did an incalculable amount to convince leaders of American Liberalism of their international responsibilities. He drew us closer to that England with which alone an Anglo-American understanding is possible."

Published by G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 24 Bedford St., London, W. C.

IN PREPARATION

The Great Illusion and the War
THE TEST OF FACTS

By NORMAN ANGELL
A Live Paper For Live People!

THE EYE OPENER

Four-Page Weekly

Containing news, special articles and editorial comment on the progress of the peoples the world over.

PRICE: 50 CENTS PER YEAR

Send all subscriptions to:

THE EYE OPENER

105 W. Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois