

## The Real Bottleneck of the War

THE holiness of this war has been somewhat sullied by the invasion of Stalin's bailiwick by Hitler. Up to that point, the Yugoslavian and Greek absolutisms notwithstanding, the fiction that the conflict was one of ideologies was hypodermically maintained. Since the German army moved east only the Communist papers have had the effrontery to invoke the god of democracy.

What is it, then, that we are fighting for? Hitler makes no bones as to his purpose. Based upon a mystic race supremacy theory, his aim is the complete control of the world economy, by and for the Nazis. It's a sort of international AAA, with Berlin, instead of Washington, telling us what to plant, what to make, fixing all prices and taking a rake-off on every transaction. It won't work, even with a Gestapo behind it, because production sloughs off when labor is enslaved. A political system based on curtailed production must break down; particularly because the curtailing of production decreases the source of taxation on which the political system depends. Nevertheless, until the planned economy crashes of its own weakness the planner may make things miserable for everybody but himself and his gangsters.

So, we are fighting to prevent Hitler from visiting his planned economy on us even for a short time. That is a good enough reason for fighting him. But it is a negative reason at best. And because it is negative it has failed to arouse any emotional pitch in this country, as evidenced by the many newspaper anti-war polls.

Why, in spite of the practically unanimous bitter anti-Hitler feeling, is there so little disposition to make the sacrifice necessary to eliminate him and his scheme from the world? The answer seems to be in the intuitive recognition by the people of the negativeness of our war-and-peace policy; the politicians, Churchill, Roosevelt and their subordinates, have failed to offer a hope to stir the imagination, or a promise to arouse the will to war.

Why this reticence? Is it because they have nothing to offer, other than pre-war depression, doles, taxes and make-believe work that robs the laborer of his personal dignity? Is it because they do not know how to abolish the condition of poverty which has characterized our economy with such intensity for more than a decade? Or,

knowing how, have they no desire to smash the system of privilege which divides the people into a few masters and many slaves?

Maybe their failure to tell us more about war-and-peace aims, except the negative one of smashing Hitlerism, is due to the conscious desire to install, or a fatalistic belief in the inevitableness of, a sort of Hitlerism in England and in America. The evidences of a coming regulated economy here are too many to be mistaken; indeed, public statements indicate that State control of our way of living is the essence of our contemplated post-war policy. The common sense of the people recognizes the incongruity of fighting Hitler while accepting the validity of his ideas.

It is this incongruity and this complete lack of idealism that has checked our will to war. In 1917 we accepted the theory that Germans were a lower order of people, made so by God; their freedom had to be curbed for the good of the world. Atrocity stories, vouched for by men of reputation, although later proved to be either dupes or fabricators, aroused us to an ardor that only victory could diminish. Efforts to stir up similar antipathy on psychological grounds thus far have failed; and the save-democracy appeal failed even before the Russian invasion, partly because too many dictatorships were on our side, partly because years of democracy-with-poverty had somewhat deflated the political ideal.

Americans are neither cowards nor crass materialists. But they will continue to be apathetic towards this war, even though they are forced to fight, because of its negative and contradictory character. Give them hope, a positive promise and a worthy ideal, and the "panzer" divisions will crumble before their will like cardboard toys. Tell them that when the war is over the bill will be met not by a tax on their production but by the loot which the landlords collect year in and year out. Promise them land, good land, so that they can produce and exchange, as their forefathers did, without let or hindrance from bureaucrats. Give them the picture of a Free America, the kind they have always dreamed about, so that they can carry it in their hearts as they go to battle.

That, Mr. Roosevelt, is what your war plans lack. That, Mr. Roosevelt, is the real bottleneck of your war.