

The Philosophies of Misery

by
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The First Chapter
of
The Breakdown of Nations

'There is no error so monstrous that it fails to find defenders among the ablest of men.'
Lord Acton

Matters Discussed

imaginary cause theories
the witch theory
cosmic theories
secondary cause theories
economic and psychological explanations
the cultural theory
military exploits and monstrosities in folklore and literature
the essence of Western civilization
past and present atrocities in the history of civilized peoples
man's inherent love of aggressiveness
relative splendor of monuments honouring poets and generals
why our heraldic animals are beasts of prey
Attlee, Goethe, and Bacon on the virtue of war
the war record of Germans and Allies...
...and of aggressors and lovers of peace.

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In a period of widespread tyranny, brutality, almost perpetual warfare, and other related miseries, it seems legitimate to ask by what means a more peaceful and socially satisfactory existence might be secured.

As with every question concerning conditions of misery and their abolition, a fruitful answer depends on the discernment of their primary cause. But while modern scientific methods have shed light on the primary causes of many technical and personal complexities with the resultant improvement in our private conditions, in the realm of social problems they have contributed little more than theories involving either purely imaginary or at best secondary causes. Speaking in the middle of the twentieth century, Julian Huxley could therefore justly say that 'the human sciences today are somewhat in the position occupied by the biological sciences in the early 1800s'. They have hardly penetrated the surface.

The trouble with imaginary and secondary cause theories of social misery is that they are frequently able to furnish highly seductive momentary explanations. As a result, supplying seemingly satisfactory interpretations, they not only discourage further search; they also fail to bring forth useful proposals for solutions, the ones because time sequences are not causal, the others because secondary causes are themselves nothing but consequences of primary forces. The chance of providing the world with a socially more satisfying existence seems therefore to depend on the question whether we are able to pierce the shell of imaginary and secondary phenomena and discover the hidden *primary* cause disturbing the social happiness of man. But before offering a theory which presumes to penetrate to fundamentals, let us analyse the merits of the most popular imaginary and secondary cause theories of past and present, and appraise the solutions they proposed on the basis of their interpretations.

1. Imaginary Cause Theories

The Ancients, attributing the cause of most difficulties to the wrath of the gods, thought that the simplest way of improving their condition was to resort to prayer or, if this should prove insufficient, to the sacrificial slaughter of the persons who had antagonized the gods. Sometimes, the results were stunning. Hardly had the prayers been said, than rain would pour down on their thirsty fields, the lava stream of a volcano would come to a sudden stop, or news would reach them of the defeat of a fearful invader. Occasionally, nothing would happen. However, as in the case of most bad guesses, no significance was attached to this, and no reason was seen why their theory, which might be called the *divine theory of social misery*, should be considered invalid on this ground alone, since it had proved so satisfactory in the explanation of so many other misfortunes.

In the Middle Ages, the divine theory was supplemented by a *witch theory of social misery* which attributed the cause of afflictions less to the wrath of God than to the malevolence of an evil spirit. Quite logically, the principal cure was now thought to lie in the elimination of the objects which seemed possessed by the devil. So up in flames went a behexed barn, a cross-eyed hunchback, a very ugly woman, or a very beautiful one. Again, the results were considered highly satisfactory except in a few cases when, instead of suspecting their theory, people suspected they had burned the wrong witch, and so began the merry chase anew.

Later, with man's growing interest in the mechanism of the universe, a bundle of *cosmic theories of misery* began to enjoy wide currency. Disease and wars were now attributed to the occasional appearance of a comet, the more frequent appearance of a red corona around the moon or, when it was discovered that sunspots had an irritating effect on our nervous system, to the cyclical intensification of sunspot activities. Like all earlier theories, these too were considered eminently satisfactory as there was rarely a misfortune that did not coincide with one or more of these celestial phenomena. Since nothing could be done about the latter, the cosmic theories had, in addition, the advantage of relieving mankind of the difficult task of seeking solutions and cures.

Passive submission to the forces of nature was, however, contrary to the spirit of the gradually rising age of reason. With the advent of modern times we find, therefore, a new string of theories of social misery. In rapid succession there developed an *economic theory*, attributing war and other forms of social evil to the expansive urge of profit-seeking capitalism; a *psychological theory*, attributing them to frustration; a *personal, ideological, cultural*, and a *national theory*, attributing them in turn to the design of evil men such as Hitler, Mussolini or Stalin; to evil ideologies such as nazism or communism; to evil cultural

traditions such as Prussian militarism or British colonialism; and finally, because a majority of these features seemed occasionally to coincide in the history of a particular people, to an evil inheritance, an evil nation such as the Germans as they appeared to the eyes of the Western Allies in the past, or the Americans as they appear to the eyes of the Eastern Allies now.

Like their predecessors, these newer theories proved again highly satisfactory in the explanation of those social miseries during whose occurrence they were developed. But also like their predecessors, they turned out to be singularly incapable of explaining exceptions. Confusing secondary causes with primary causes or, to use the terms of Lucretius, the *property* of things with their mere *accident*, they could explain the brutality of the Moslems but not of the Christians. They could explain the poverty of American but not of Russian slums. And as to wars, they could explain those of the nazis, but not the crusades; the wars of Germany, but not those of France; the wars of Hitler but not those of Nehru; the wars of capitalists, but not those of socialists. In spite of their subtler reasoning, they seem thus to have shed no more light on the problems they presumed to analyse than the witch or sunspot theories of earlier periods. All they accomplished was to shift attention from imaginary to secondary causes—and sometimes not even that.

2. Secondary Cause Theories

However, because of their more recent development and the seeming logic of their analysis, some of these newer theories as well as the solutions they offer merit closer attention. One of the most powerfully argued is the *economic theory*. According to its premises, most forms of social misery, and in particular poverty war, and imperialism, are inevitable consequences of the working of the capitalist free-enterprise system. Simply stated, its reasoning is as follows: at first the search of profit on the part of the businessman causes the working class to receive less for its contribution to production than is its due. Next comes the unavoidable inability of the latter to buy back from the manufacturers the goods it has helped to produce. As a result, one of two evils must follow. Either production must be cut back to the level at which it can be absorbed in the domestic market; or, with internal consumption and, hence, investment opportunities at an end, new markets must be acquired elsewhere. The first alternative leads to unemployment and its score of attendant miseries; the second to imperialism and war.

The latter consequence provides actually a double incentive for capitalist manufacturers and businessmen to stir up social trouble. For, both war production and war destruction furnish outlets for goods and new sources of profit which the secular stagnation, seemingly developing in every fully matured private enterprise economy, no longer makes available elsewhere. Hence, the absolute need for imperialist expansion and periodic warfare to satisfy the life requirements of a system whose principal driving force is the profit motive.

A socialist system, on the other hand, producing not for profit but for consumption, has the least interest on earth to engage in the enormous waste of military expenditures or in the conquest of foreign markets for goods which could so much better be used in raising living standards at home. By its very character it is as dedicated to the maintenance of peace as capitalism is dedicated to the pursuit of war. As a result the world's principal problems could be solved quite simply. All that is needed is the elimination of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist society.

This may be so. But the theory fails to explain two things. One is: why are the workers of socialist countries apparently no better off than those of capitalist states? And secondly: why are at least two of the world's present chief aggressors communist states, Russia and China, while such capitalist countries as Canada, Belgium, Luxembourg, Monaco, and particularly that last and still shiny citadel of a nearly perfect free-enterprise system, Switzerland, rank amongst the most peace-minded? This seems to indicate that, contrary to the tenets of the economic theory, a society's system of production has in itself very little to do with its social welfare, and still less with the misery of aggressive warfare which it may inflict on its own as well as on other peoples. A switch in systems could therefore contribute little to a solution of problems of which they are not the cause.

The *ideological* and *personal* theories attribute the various forms of social misery either to an evil power philosophy or to the leadership of evil men. Their solution, quite logically, is the substitution of a better for the worse philosophy or the dispatch into eternity of the evil men. Both are interrelated and may be treated as two phases of a single theory. According to them, power would be harmless in the hands of

good men animated by a philosophy of good will. This dears up some of the contradictions of the economic theory. It explains Russian and Chinese internal exploitation and external aggressiveness which the economic theory could not, on the ground that communism, by aspiring to world rule of the proletariat, represents an uncompromising ideology of power and domination. By the same token it explains German and Italian tyranny, brutality, and aggression as the result of the power philosophies of nazism and fascism, and of a leadership devoid of all moral restraint. By contrast, it explains satisfactorily the present non-aggressiveness of peoples such as the Swiss, French, or Belgians, ascribing it to their virtuous leadership and to the dedication of the democratic form of government to the cause of human happiness and peace.

So far, so good. But it fails to explain why, if fascism is a brutalizing and aggressive power philosophy, as it undoubtedly seems to be, fascist Spain or near-fascist Portugal are, at least in their external relations, as peaceful as democratic Switzerland or Denmark. It fails to explain why Nepal, a most absolutist country, which moreover prides itself on having produced one of the world's fiercest races of fighters, the Gurkhas, seems never even so much as to dream of waging a foreign war. It fails to explain why communism, which looks so fearful and tyrannical in Russia, is considered non-aggressive in Yugoslavia, and looks so charming in the tiny mountain republic of San Marino that it exhilarates instead of frightening us. And, by contrast, it fails to explain why such a non-aggressive philosophy of peace as Gandhism had no restraining effect on so peace-loving a man as Nehru who, in his first year of power, waged two wars, against Hyderabad and Kashmir, has threatened a third, against Pakistan, on numerous occasions ever since, and enforced aggressively his will on the independent neighbouring state of Nepal. It fails to explain the aggressive campaigns and accompanying brutalities of democratic France and Great Britain in their former colonial adventures. And lastly, it fails to explain why even the most perfect of peace philosophies, the teachings of Christ, could not prevent the successors of Saint Peter in the holy city and state of Rome from indulging at times as lustily in aggressions and policies of brutal design as history's worst offenders in this respect.

One would have assumed that at least in their case power was in the hands of men of good will and exalted principles. Which it was, of course. If this made nevertheless hardly any difference, it can only be due to the fact that good ideologies and personal principles have apparently as few causal relationships to social misery as we have found in the case of economic systems. This seems the reason why, though we hanged the war criminals and changed the philosophy of their former supporters, war is still with us as ever.

3. The Cultural Theory of Social Misery

The *cultural theory* goes somewhat deeper. It ascribes our unhappy conditions not to ideologies, which come and change and go in relatively fast succession, but to the long-range pattern and stage of development of a country's civilization. It maintains that savagery, tyranny, mass brutality, aggressive warfare, are nothing but offsprings of intellectual primitivism. Since this is perpetuated by a nation's literary creations and its system of education, the solution of the world's problems would once more seem quite simple. It lies in the purging of folklore and literature, and in the re-education of the retarded by the advanced. In this way social misery would disappear almost automatically. For the more advanced a civilization becomes, the more it is characterized by love of peace and the urge to help, rather than love of war and the urge to destroy.

This theory seemed again for a while to furnish satisfactory explanations for aggressive wars and atrocities such as those perpetrated by the Germans, the Japanese, or the Russians. Compared to the advanced stage reached by the civilization of the West, for example, theirs seemed to have lagged behind in the development of principles of humanism. Hence the attempt to instil into them Western concepts either by direct intervention as was done in Germany and Japan at the end of World War II, or by propagandistic enlightenment as is being done in the case of the as yet undefeated communist half of the world now.

The chief shortcoming of the cultural theory appears to be two-fold. First, it does not seem to understand its own premises. Secondly, for every phenomenon it explains, there are a dozen phenomena in the face of which it seems to collapse.

a. The Meaning of Western Civilization

To begin with the weakness of its premises: if Western civilization is indeed an effective antidote to conditions leading to atrocities and war, it must, above all, be different from the civilization of those peoples whose codes we are wont to consider as basically hostile to peaceful pursuits. In contrast to the latter's glorification of military exploits, its literature must emphasize the blessings of peace. In contrast to the latter's preoccupation with cruelty and witchery, it must dwell primarily on stories describing the virtues of saintly living. Otherwise nothing could be gained by substituting the cultural productions of the West for those of the less peace-loving peoples.

As things stand, Western or not, peace-loving or not, the cultural productions of most creative peoples seem to follow almost identical channels. Their differences are but differences of language, not of substance. If the Germans have the *Nibelungenlied* which glorifies physical prowess and military exploit, the French have the *Song of Roland*, the English *Beowulf* the Romans the *Aeneid*, the Greeks the matchless *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, all praising the same qualities with equal fervour. If Goethe's *Faust* is full of the devil and hell,ⁱ so is Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, to say nothing of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which deals not with one but seven hells, and whose poetic presentation of horror exceeds even the imaginative splendour of American funnies. And one wonders what the re-educators of non-Western atrocity lovers would do with a play such as Shakespeare's *King Richard III*, of which it has been written that it is 'certainly tragic enough to satisfy the most voracious appetite for horrors: murder follows murder with breathless rapidity; the jocose royal assassin, who in a former play had dismissed Henry the Sixth and the Prince of Wales to their account, begins this tragedy by the slaughter of his brother Clarence, and then goes on with the coolness of a butcher, killing one convenient friend or relative after another, till our memory becomes perplexed by the attempt to recall the names of the victims'.ⁱⁱ

A similar lack of difference in poetic preoccupation prevails in the culturally perhaps even more significant gems of our various folklores. Matching the Germans' fearful giant *Rübezahl*, who stalks through dense forests with his enormous club, is the Greeks' highway robber *Procrustes*. To adjust the size of his guests to that of their bed, this hospitable robber has the habit of stretching the short until they are long enough and cuffing the limbs off the tall until they are short enough for a precise fit. And in the highly Westernized United States we have such neo-classical heroes as Al Capp's *Stubborn J. Tolliver*, President of Dogpatch-West Po'kchop Railroad, who, after letting a train full of merrymakers run over a mined section of track, calls out to his employees: 'Pile th' bodies up neatly! Repair th' locomotive! Fill it with more passengers! And we'll try again!! I'm not afraid.' Our radio, television, and film folklore is even better. At one time it seemed to get so out of hand that a British board of censors felt moved to advise Hollywood 'to mop up the gore'.

Thus it seems that the cultural creations of those we consider advanced are hardly less preoccupied with violence and bellicosity than the creations of those whom many of us have come to consider as retarded. However, there is no need for undue apprehension. For, as the poetic description of violence has never been a sign of backwardness, the display of gentle attitudes has never been a sign of either an advanced or a Western concept of civilization. Contrary to the tenets of the cultural theory, the hallmark of *advance* is not love of peace but the discernment of truth, which, as it may be beautiful, may also be ugly, and as it may be good, may also be wicked. And the hallmark of *Western* civilization is not that it is the civilization of the West, as is frequently believed, but that it is based on the philosophy of individualism which, again, does not concern itself with love of peace or *social* happiness, but with love of *personal* freedom and *personal* accomplishment. It would therefore have been less confusing if scholars, instead of using the term *West*, had talked of the civilization of the *Occident*, the Spenglerian *Abendland*, whose common denominator has always been individualism, in contrast to that of the *Orient*, the *Morgenland*, whose basis has always been collectivism. Though these designations have likewise a faintly geographic origin, they refer more dearly than the others to cultures, not to regions; to ideas, not to nations.

While it is thus true that Germany, Italy, and Russia, whose recent aggressions have furnished the chief argument for the cultural theory, removed themselves from the Western orbit when they adopted racialist *nazism*, statist *fascism*, and collectivist *communism*, their *civilization* continued to remain an integral part of the great cultural family whose link was not geographic location but the individualistic spirit of ancient Greece. As a result, as Western civilization could not be conceived without the personal genius of Shakespeare, Voltaire, Rembrandt, Dante, or Socrates - men from the South and West of Europe - so it could no longer be conceived without the personal contributions of such Easterners as Tolstoy,

Dostoyevsky, Tchaikovsky, or of such Germans as Beethoven, Kant, Goethe, Heine, or Dürer. Theirs was not a retarded civilization. Nor was it a civilization different from that of France or England, which could have given a satisfactory cultural explanation for the rise of Hitler, Stalin, or Mussolini. Like that of the other members of the Western family, theirs was a civilization created by persons fulfilling the purpose of their individual existence, not by communities or peoples joining in collective effort to reach a collectivized end.ⁱⁱⁱ

Little could therefore be gained by expurgating anybody's literature and instilling into war lovers the creations and concepts of Western civilization. The productions of the various cultural realms are not only too alike in what they praise and what they condemn; most of the recent aggressors in war and perpetrators of atrocities such as the Italians, Germans, and Russians were, moreover, not alien to Western civilization but ranked, like those we consider virtuous lovers of peace, amongst its most outstanding members and contributors.

b. Culture and Atrocity

This leads to the second and principal weakness of the cultural theory - its seemingly total disregard of historic evidence, leaving more phenomena unexplained than it is able to explain. For not only has an advancing civilization never been known to act as a deterrent to social excess; the most monstrous periods of brutality and aggressiveness in the various countries have usually coincided with the periods of their greatest cultural advance. Assuming thus that the theory might indeed explain communist or nazi misdeeds, how could it account for such misdeeds as those of the thirteenth-century tyrant Ezzelino da Romano? Considering himself the divinely appointed scourge of humanity, this famous leader found pleasure in causing, for example, upon the conquest of Friola 'the population of all ages, sexes, occupations to be deprived of their eyes, noses, and legs, and to be cast forth to the mercy of the elements'. He built dungeons designed for torture, and on one occasion entrapped 11,000 Paduan soldiers, 'only 200 of whom escaped the miseries of his prisons'.^{iv} But, far from being a barbarian age, the thirteenth century was one of the great eras of Italian and Western civilization, culminating in such figures as Saint Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius of Padua, Giotto, Cimabue, Dante. And far from being a solitary phenomenon disgracing an otherwise advancing age, Ezzelino was 'only the first of a long and horrible procession', followed by 'how many Visconti, Sforzeschi, Malatesti, Borgias, Farnesi, and princes of the houses Anjou and Aragon?' If he was the most terror-striking, it was merely because he was 'the earliest, prefiguring all the rest'.^v

By the end of the fifteenth century not only princes of the world but princes of the Church began to share in responsibility for social misery, whose scale, instead of declining seemed to increase with every advance registered by civilization. A typical example was the sack of the town of Prato near Florence. After taking it by assault on 29 August 1512, the papal army, under the command of Raimondo da Cardona, Viceroy of Naples, was given licence to pillage, rape, and murder for twenty-one days. In a slaughter 'without a parallel in history...neither youth, age, nor sex, neither the sanctity of place nor office, were respected...Mothers threw their daughters into wells and jumped in after them, men cut their own throats, and girls flung themselves from balconies on to the paving-stones below to escape from violence and dishonour. It is said that 5,600 Pratsans perished.'^{vi} This during the papacy of Julius II, not a savage but one of the great art patrons of history. He ruled at the very pinnacle of Italian culture, counting amongst his contemporaries such unrivalled masters as Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Cellini, Raphael, Filippino Lippi, Giorgione, Titian, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, besides a host of others who are considered minor only because the age was so sublime.

The same pattern of cultural achievement accompanied by manifestations of social terror prevails in France. Her sixteenth century was so productive in great works of literature, philosophy, theology, and art, that it has justly been called the *grand siècle*. It was the age of Saint Francis de Sales, Montaigne, Bodin, Pasquier, Rabelais, Marot, Ronsard, Regnier, Gringoire. But it was also an age of persecution, murder, rape, and mass extermination. Protestants hounded Catholics and, when at last they stopped, Catholics began to hound Protestants until almost none was left, bequeathing to the world a drama of blood and gore that has been equalled in many other periods and by many other peoples, but surpassed by none. There is nothing the nazis did to the Jews in the twentieth century which the French did not do to their fellow Frenchmen in the sixteenth. They filled wells with corpses until they overflowed. When after a night of massacre a bishop was dragged to one of these mass graves, the busy assassins 'drew attention

to the fact that it was already full. "Pooh!" replied another, "they won't mind a little crowding for a bishop."^{vii} In Paris 'women approaching maternity were selected for more excruciating torments, and savage delight was exhibited in destroying the unborn fruit of the womb'^{viii} In Lyons, an apothecary initiated the murderers of Huguenots into the 'valuable properties of human fat as a medicinal substance', with the result that their 'miserable remains were put to new use before being consigned to the river'.^{ix} And in Orleans, where more than fourteen hundred men, women, and children were slaughtered within three days, the general degradation was such that even professors at the university were not beneath profiting from the occasion, plundering the libraries of their own students and colleagues who had been executed.^x

Only slightly less glamorous than the sixteenth century was the age of Louis XIV, *le roi soleil*. During his reign and the following years lived Montesquieu, Voltaire, Chénier, the Abbé Prévost, Diderot, Beaumarchais, and Rousseau. But alongside we find such celebrities as Marshal de Montreval who became so enraged at being interrupted at dinner by a report of one hundred and fifty Huguenots peacefully singing psalms in a mill at Carmes, outside Nîmes, that he went forth with his soldiers and massacred them, though the group was composed only of old people and children. 'A certain number of dragoons entered the mill, sword in hand, stabbing all whom they could reach, whilst the rest of the force stationed outside before the windows received those who jumped on the points of their swords. But soon the butchery tired the butchers, and to get over the business more quickly, the marshal, who was anxious to return to his dinner, gave orders that the mill should be set on fire.'^{xi} A few weeks later, the same Montreval, in execution of the king's orders^{xii} 'to root out the heresy', retaliated in a manner subsequently made famous by the destruction of the Czech village of Lidice at the hands of the nazis, by erasing not one but 466 market towns, hamlets, and villages with a total population of 19,500. And Louis XIV himself, the centre and symbol of that polished age, provided orders of the day which would have delighted the shocked prosecutors of Nuremberg. To him we owe that elegant phrase 'Ravage the Palatinate', which the Western advocates of the cultural theory might do well to remember occasionally when talking of barbarians as if they were aliens.

Under Napoleon, culture and brutality continued to follow the now familiar pattern. New instruments of extermination were developed such as the famous *étouffoirs*, wooden cages in which captured Negroes, fighting for the liberation of Saint Dominique, were shut up with burning sulphur. Cast into the sea, the victims succumbed from either asphyxiation or drowning. Since the bodies were washed back to the shore, dogs were imported to devour the remains in the interest of public hygiene.^{xiii} And as late as 1945, the French, proud as ever of the glories of their civilization, retaliated against the killing of a number of isolated French families in Algeria at the hands of their Arab compatriots by blasting 'whole communities out of existence', killing 'thousands of men, women and children who had nothing to do with the attacks'.^{xiv}

This seemingly strange parallelism between advancing civilization and intensification of savagery is naturally not confined to Italy and France. It is a feature characteristic of the history of all peoples. During the culminating era of Anglo-Latin literature in the thirteenth century, for example, we find Geoffrey, the father of Henry II of England, performing what Edward Gibbon called a singular act of cruelty on the clergy of Suez after the latter had proceeded with the election of a bishop without first securing his consent. In punishment, the then master of Normandy had all members of the Cathedral Chapter, including the bishop elect, castrated, 'and made all their testicles be brought him in a platter'. Gibbon comments on this: 'Of the pain and danger they might justly complain; yet, since they had vowed chastity, he deprived them of a superfluous treasure.'^{xv} A few centuries later, when, during the golden age of Queen Elizabeth, English civilization reached its zenith with such poets as Marlowe, Lodge, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare, it produced at the same time, in the terms of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, such 'hotheads of war' as Hawkins, Drake, Raleigh, and 'scores of others who recognized no peace beyond the line'. While some of the world's most exalted poetry was being written, the country producing it abounded with executions at home, with piracy on the seven seas, and with aggressions on the five continents such as were rarely witnessed in its less civilized periods. Another century later, the epoch is once more graced by men such as Milton, Herrick, Dryden, Locke, Newton. But along with masterworks of culture, we find again savageries such as the incidents known to the Scots as *Killing Time*, the invention of devices of terror such as the torture of the thumbscrew, mass exterminations such as the massacre of Glencoe in 1691, or a textbook example of genocide such as the expulsion of the entire

people of Acadia from their native land. During the last phase of their deportation in 1755, Governor Lawrence of Nova Scotia not only gave his soldiers licence to do with them as they pleased, 'but positive orders to distress them as much as possible'.^{xvi}

In this vein, history goes on right up to our time. There is no need to quote the well-known atrocities of fascists, nazis, and communists, their police methods, their concentration camps, their crematoria. Having been ascribed to lack of civilization, they might be understood. The more significant items concern contemporary atrocities perpetrated by admittedly advanced peoples, for which the cultural theory provides little understanding and which, therefore, have only rarely been cited except for purposes of hostile propaganda. Here might be mentioned the order of Brigadier-General Jacob H. Smith of the United States Army, issued during the American pacification campaign of the Philippines as a directive for a punitive expedition against the island of Samar. 'I want no prisoners,' it said. 'I wish you to kill and burn: the more you kill and burn, the better you will please me...The interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness.' Being asked how young 'a child must be to escape the massacre', General Smith replied 'Ten years of age'. He was subsequently sentenced 'to be admonished by his superiors'.^{xvii} This was in 1901. In 1919, General Dyer of the British army, retaliating against some local disturbances in the Punjab, took a small body of troops to a meeting of 5,000 Indians near the town of Amritsar, opened fire without warning, killed some 500 people, wounded, according to his own estimate 'about 1,000 more, left the dead and the dying where they fell, without any further concern, and departed quite satisfied with what he had done'.^{xviii} A barbarian age? It was the time when luminaries of literature such as Bernard Shaw, Max Beerbohm, and Yeats wrote in London, when the gentle Fabians began to dominate much of English thought, and the universities of Oxford and Cambridge experienced one of their most brilliant periods.

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Compared with the barbaric exploits of the civilized, the savageries of the barbarians seem to lose all significance. And as to wars, almost the only peoples refraining from this primitive form of social activity at the present time are not the most advanced but the most backward ones. In view of all this, it may safely be stated that the cultural theory of social misery, which to this day enjoys illustrious support, which served as the basis of many expurgation and re-education policies, and has led to such hopeful creations as UNESCO, sheds little light on the complex problems it set out to solve; and that the spread of civilization, be it of East or West, of Greeks or Anglo-Saxons, may contribute to poetry and knowledge, but hardly to social happiness and peace.

4. The National Theory of Social Misery

The last of the theories requiring a more detailed analysis may be called the *national theory of social misery*. It is a typical by-product of prolonged warfare. The atmosphere of perpetual frustration resulting from the inactive drag and the inconclusiveness of interminable fighting seems at a given point to lead to the spontaneous creation of the idea that the principal cause of mankind's misery is not just the leadership, the philosophy, or the culture of the enemy. It is his very race. A closer look now reveals quite distinctly that he is *born* to mischief. From his very childhood he is observed to display a degree of ferocity and love of aggressiveness unmatched elsewhere. A re-reading of history seems suddenly to make it clear that the current enemy is actually the historic enemy. And the longer the war lasts, the worse he begins to look. In the end, not only propagandists but even scholars begin to furnish evidence of his *collective* perfidy, lawyers to establish his *collective* guilt, and statesmen to think that, in the interests of a peace-loving humanity, his continued survival can no longer be tolerated. When this stage is reached, the solution of most problems afflicting society appears quite simple. It would be useless to re-educate the vanquished. He must be eliminated. Carthage must be destroyed.

Like the other theories, the national theory seems highly satisfactory in the explanation of the occurrences it is meant to elucidate. However, it leaves again more questions unanswered than it answers. In the embattled midst of World War II, it furnished a creditable account of the reasons behind the behaviour of the Axis partners, in particular the Germans. But when the question is raised why a similar behaviour seems to characterize most other peoples as well, including those pleased to consider themselves inherent lovers of peace, it begins to run into difficulties. And its answers become altogether confusing when in the enthusiasm of executing the Carthaginian provisions prepared during the mental idleness and emo-

tional strain of a long war, it is suddenly realized that the historic enemy may not be the vanquished but the ally who cunningly helped to defeat him. But up till then, its assumptions appear to defy challenge.

What are the premises on which the national theory rests? There are two. One is biological, the other historic. As already indicated, the first conceives that virtues such as love of peace are inherent in the character of some peoples and absent from that of others. The second is the confirmation of the first, based on the evidence of history.

a. Biology of Aggression

To discuss the biological premise first, and to confine the illustration to the best documented example of the national theory: great significance was, for instance, attached to the fact that the Germans had always been notorious for their admiration of brute force and their militarism. Could this account for their excesses? Maybe. But the more important question is: did this make them different from others? Or did the Germans show these *inborn* qualities not so much because they were *peculiarly* theirs but because they were inherent in the nature of man *generally*? If the latter should turn out to be correct, the national theory with its far-reaching conclusions and solutions must lose at least half of its foundation. And the latter appears to be correct, as already Cicero suggested when he wrote in his *Laws* (I, 10) that 'no single thing is so like one another, so exactly its counterpart, as all of us are to one another', and that 'however we may define man, a single definition will apply to all. This is sufficient proof that there is no difference in kind between man and man; for if there were, one definition could not be applicable to all men.'

But let us not rely on Cicero in appraising the universality of those seemingly strange biologically conditioned attitudes which under duress appear to us as inborn only to the enemy's corrupted race. Let us look at ourselves. What about our own attitude towards aggressiveness for example? Irrespective of whether we are Americans, English, French, or Germans, we have only rarely expressed a genuinely felt aversion to it. On the contrary, collectively as well as individually, most of us are usually full of praise for it. What we actually reject as slightly contemptible is not aggressiveness but peace-loving gentleness. No businessman has ever been known to have advertised an opening for a peace-loving, humble, unassuming salesman or executive. The prime qualifying virtue for these jobs is considered to be aggressiveness, and most of us say so quite bluntly. No true woman, even in war-hating societies, has ever been known to have expressed a desire for a peace-loving slipper addict as a husband who might surround her in a cloud of gentleness and verses. What she most likely wants of him is force and aggressiveness, and if he clicks his heels in addition, all the better. And the masses of people, being for ever feminine, will for ever admire the same things. 'When they treat of their love affairs,' writes the French philosopher Julien Benda, 'the most civilized people speak of conquest, attack, assault, siege and of defence, defeat, capitulation, thus dearly tracing the idea of love to that of war.'^{xix}

Were this not so, it would be a strange paradox to see that most peoples, while commemorating the creators of their civilization in obscure plaques and minor statues, should glorify the heroes of their aggressive achievements in gigantic Arches of Triumph, in monumental mausoleums, in pyramids that pierce the clouds, and in columns which challenge the magnificence of God. Shakespeare, Dante, Voltaire, Goethe, or Poe may have their undisturbed little corners in their respective countries. But what are these compared with the spine-thrilling columns the English have erected in honour of *Admiral* Nelson, the French in honour of *General* Napoleon, the Germans in honour of *General* Arminius, or the Americans in honour of *General* Washington? This is why British monarchs, who are kept so busy with state visits to military institutions or the laying of wreaths on the tombs of soldiers known and unknown, did not get around to visiting the birthplace of Shakespeare, their greatest dramatic poet, until 1950.^{xx}

But more symbolic of the disturbing similarity of our innermost aspirations than our monuments are our heraldic animals. Here we really seem to show of what substance we ourselves believe we are made. Whether peace-loving or aggressive, in one feature nearly all nations appear alike. Nearly all have chosen as the animal most representative of their soul a *beast of prey*, indicating that they consider it more appropriate to be symbolized by barbaric ferociousness than by civilized beatitude. Italy prefers the voracious wolf to the loyal dog. England and Prussia the growling lion to the sweetly purring cat. Russia the plump, tactless, but powerful bear to the swift and elegant prairie horse. The Habsburg Monarchy, one of the more civilized institutions of history, not satisfied with a one-headed eagle, chose one with two heads to make it wilder still. Others cherish panthers, hawks, snakes, or even dragons. The United States

could have been symbolized by the lark, that enchanting bird, ever singing and ever in pursuit of happiness. But it chose the bald eagle of which an inscription in the Buffalo Zoo has the following to say: 'This eagle never fishes for himself as long as he can rob the more skilful and industrious fish hawk. The Bald Eagle is our national emblem' - a statement on which the *New Yorker* commented: 'Well, it's impolite to point.'^{xxi} The only exception, or nearly so, is represented by France which, also not quite without significance, chose the ever-amorous cock. But even here the choice may have been due to the fact that the cock's amorous pursuits force him to be a perpetual fighter on the side.

However, there is nothing peculiar about these choices, for though the national theorists may be troubled by this, nothing seems to be more natural to man than aggressiveness and his delight in it. One of our first loves are the funnies, an invention of the seemingly peace-loving Americans. They are so full of lusty warriors of both sexes that their heroes, having conquered all earth, have long begun to conquer the planets and the stars as well. Our first toys are soldiers and, if a little boy fails to show interest in them, we do not hold him up as an example to the war-loving children of the enemy but rush him to a psychiatrist to find out what is wrong with him. A charming little friend of mine, aged seven, after trying for days to get sense out of my typewriter, produced as his first letter ever written the following monument to our inborn human aggressiveness: 'dear Bill when are you going to give me my 5 cent. if you don,t I will bet you up. love tommy.' His father was the most gentle of English poets who would have sworn the British were never capable of anything like this. A little American from Washington, D.C., addressed the following letter to Santa Claus: 'please send me two atom bombs, a couple of pistols and a good sharp knife'.^{xxii} And Edmund Gosse, the famous English critic, tells us how an obscure but highly belligerent poem 'greatly fired' him as a little boy, and how the following stanza, in particular, reached his 'ideal of the Sublime':

The muskets were flashing, the blue swords were gleaming,
The helmets were deft, and the red blood was streaming,
The heavens grew dark, and the thunder was rolling,
When in Wellwood's dark muirlands the mighty were falling.^{xxiii}

Even in their more mature periods, people of all countries and walks of life seem to retain these bellicose enthusiasms. Clement Attlee, the amiable socialist leader of Great Britain, confesses that as a student at Oxford, he had 'fallen under the spell of the Renaissance. I admired strong and ruthless rulers.'^{xxiv} Goethe, the great *German* humanist and poet, 'commended war'.^{xxv} Sir Francis Bacon, the great English philosopher and onetime Chancellor of the Realm, thought that 'the principal point of greatness in any state is to have a race of military men', and that 'nobody can be healthful without exercise, neither natural body nor politic, and certainly to a kingdom or estate, a just and honourable war is the true exercise'.^{xxvi} And in the United States, while perhaps not commending war through the mouths of such eminent individuals, we commend the men of war. In spite of our pride in civilian leadership, we have in our short history elected no fewer than eleven generals to our presidency - Washington, Jackson, W. H. Harrison, Taylor, Pierce, Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, and Eisenhower. Only the ancient Romans have surpassed us in this. Indeed, so high a value do we attach to a glamorous martial career, that military excellence has come to be looked upon as a special asset even in the most unmilitaristic fields. Only churches and labour unions are not yet influenced by it. But in our universities, the trend seems unmistakable. Some have already chosen as their heads generals rather than scholars. And as concerns honorary doctorates in philosophy, of all things, an increasing number is being conferred on persons whose sole distinction is that they have proved loyal and successful military leaders. A study of such degrees granted since the end of World War II by seven major American universities - Harvard, Smith, Columbia, Wisconsin, California, Nebraska, and North Carolina - revealed that generals and admirals experienced 'the biggest post-war boom'. They received 10 per cent of the total, while clergymen, the propagators of the gospel of love and peace, were found gravely 'slipping; a century ago they made up 45 per cent of the *honoris causa* list, after World War II, 5 per cent'.^{xxvii} A record in harmony with what we believe is the character of Prussians rather than of ourselves.

b. History of Aggression

Thus, when it comes to man's less flattering inborn characteristics, lovers of peace seem once more hardly distinguishable from lovers of war. Their 'natural body' is as stimulated by the implications of militarism as is the body of the most renowned aggressors. And their 'body politic' does not seem to be

much different either. For if we analyse the second premise of the national theory, we find indeed that history confirms the evidence of biology. But contrary to the original assumption, instead of revealing that some nations have a worse aggressive record than others, it merely shows we are all alike once more.

This seems strange in the face of data and figures collected during World War II, and establishing to all appearances that Germany, the then current chief enemy, had the worst war-making record of all. In fact, we proved her so bad that, in spite of the changed circumstances of today, few things keep terrorizing us more than our own figures of then. As the French still point out with a concern undiminished by the passage of years, the same Germans whom we now seek as allies have invaded France three times in less than a century. And, as others add, they have been responsible for five wars during the last seventy-five years, not to speak of three near-misses which, had they had their way, would have given them a record of one war every eight years for the last three-quarters of a century alone. Can one disregard figures?

One cannot disregard figures. But one can complement them. While it is true that the Germans have made five wars during the last three-quarters of a century, the French, during the same period, have made nineteen wars and the English twenty-one. Even if we subtract the wars the two latter fought with the Germans, the French still come out with fifteen and the English with nineteen.^{xxviii} Thus, while Germany, had she had her way with her three near-misses as well, would have made a war every eight years, the fact that France and England apparently did have their way provided the world with a war every three and a half years if we take the two countries separately, and every one and a half years if we take them together. And if the Germans have invaded France three times in less than a century, France, between 1792 and 1813 - that is in less than a quarter of a century - invaded German territory twelve times. Indeed, had it not been for this veritable mania of French invasions, the movement of German unification, which began in 1815 and ultimately led to the much deplored and long remembered three German invasions of France, might never have found the stimulus to accomplish itself in the first place. As things stand, at the rate of three invasions 'in less than a century', Germany would need another 250 years only to break even with France.

Not to confine the figures to a possibly misleading 75 to 150 years, let us go back a bit further in our search for history's chief aggressor. Professor P. A. Sorokin of Harvard has assembled a table showing the relative strength of armies of the various members of Western civilization during the last nine centuries, from the twelfth to the twentieth. Though the strength of a country's army is not necessarily an absolute indicator of its aggressive urge, an aggressor would have difficulty launching campaigns of conquest without an army of major size. As a result, Professor Sorokin's table is of considerable significance in a study of aggressive militarism. Instead of showing a single chief aggressor, it indicates that 'the comparative position of the countries is changing in the course of time, now one country occupying the first position, now some other'.^{xxix} Germany, whom we might suspect of holding the first position more frequently than others, appeared as a major military power only during the last three centuries and, of the last three, she was outranked by France in two. A similar pattern emerges if we view the problem from still another angle, and include in the analysis, besides the last 150 years and the Middle Ages, also antiquity. Comparing this time the 'per cent' of years with war of the total number of years studied, Professor Sorokin found that 'Germany has had the smallest (28) and Spain the largest (67) per cent of years with war, the other countries occupying various positions between the two'.^{xxx} Though the world's principal aggressor need not necessarily show the largest percentage of war years, again he could not possibly show the smallest.

Thus, in each of the three sets of figures covering first the past 75 to 150 years, then the last nine centuries, and finally all of Western history, the Germans, in spite of their fearful reputation as lovers of war, emerge with a record that seems not only better than expected but better even than that of some of the best. However, the purpose of these figures is not to prove that the Germans are better than others. They are not. Nor is it to show that we can have trust in the reformed intentions of our former enemies. We cannot. What the figures are meant to prove is merely that the second premise of the national theory is as unsupported as the first. For, sketchy as this brief historic survey may be, it is sufficiently representative to establish that the role of chief aggressor is a relative one. Instead of being held by a single people, it has rotated with great fluidity amongst the various nations. Sometimes it was held by the Athenians, Spartans, or Macedonians; sometimes by the Dutch, Danes, or Portuguese; sometimes by the French and English; sometimes, and more recently, by the Germans and Russians; and, unless a different

definition applies to us than to other men, at some time it will in all likelihood be held by the Americans. In the eyes of our former Russian comrades in arms, who now call us anything from *Anglo-American cannibals* to *atomshiks*, we may, in fact, hold it already.

* * *

Though the historic data could not possibly have produced a different picture, I have dwelled longer on the assumptions of the national theory than might, under the circumstances, seem justified. The reason for this is that, in the first place, in spite of the sobering effect of postwar realities, the theory is bound to regain its full persuasiveness whenever a war exceeds a certain length. And secondly, its premises have been taken so seriously by so many persons in authority for so long that they represent far more than speculations indulged in by overwrought minds or mere propagandists. They have furnished the basis on which the most eminent statesmen of our time, supported by some of the most eminent political thinkers, tried to build nothing less than perpetual peace. They provided the philosophy for Yalta and Potsdam. They have led to policy measures such as the contemplated pastoralization of Germany and the prohibition of German atomic research, or to legal concepts such as collective guilt. These are focal points of action and thought which can be defended only on the assumption that there are indeed peoples whose inborn characteristics make them less accessible to virtue than others. They are responsible for arrangements such as the perpetual disarmament provision forced into the constitution of Japan by the Allies of World War II, with the embarrassing effect that the same Allies, now suddenly anxious to have Japanese military support, are unable to obtain it because of the consequences of their own consistency. If Allied reasoning proved slightly less embarrassing in the German case, it was due not to a lingering of statesmanship but to the good fortune that the prospective measures of destruction were in this instance so vast that they never had a chance of being formalized by the signing of an undenounceable treaty. But even in the German case, the implications of the national theory proved so contradictory that many of its foremost protagonists have long come to wish they could hide in the cosy recesses of the Fifth Amendment.

The events have thus demonstrated that the national theory proved no more helpful in the search for the primary cause of social misery than any of the others discussed so far. All it revealed was that biologically as well as historically one people is just as good or bad as the other. Instead of uncovering meaningful differences amongst nations, it merely confirmed Cicero's concept of the similarity of human nature. And not only Cicero's but even God's who, contemplating His creation, came to the sorrowful conclusion that, irrespective of upbringing or nationality, 'the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually' (*Genesis*, vi, 5). Which means, that the proposal of the national theory to cure the world's misery by eliminating the evildoing nation would lead us nowhere. For the moment one evildoer disappears, the vacancy, as post-World-War-II developments have amply shown, will promptly be filled from the unsuspected but ever willing ranks of the previous defenders of better causes.

This being the case, we are back where we started, with our question as to the primary cause of social misery still unanswered. For if we are really all alike in our disposition to mischief, we have yet to explain why many of us under apparently similar circumstances nevertheless do react differently. Why should some of us write poetry under the impact of civilization while others in the same cultural orbit should delight in skinning their fellow men? Why should the leaders of communist Yugoslavia and fascist Spain oppress freedom at home while externally allying themselves with the defenders of democracy? Why should the peace-loving Prime Minister of India keep peace with Moscow or Peking but fall aggressively upon Hyderabad? Is it because of lack of civilization? Manifestly not. As we have seen, the greatest aggressions and the most monstrous crimes have been committed by nations at the peak periods of their civilization. Lack of education? Hardly. The most devilish designs of barbarism have not been conceived by illiterates, but by the most educated brains. Ideology? Economic system? Nationality? The phenomenon is too universal. The cause explaining it all must clearly still lie hidden.

ⁱ The cultural theorists seem to have ascribed great significance to this in explaining nazi monstrosities. To give a typical example: Sterling North, a well-known book reviewer, saw even in the poetry of the Grimms and Goethe typical evidence 'that (a) there is nothing even approaching a moral or ethical code in the German folk mind and (b) that few other tribes on the planet can touch the Germans for bestial,

sadistic joy in bloodletting'. And he continues that 'naturally the devil plays an important role not only in Grimm and in Goethe, but throughout German literature. Faust - the man who sold his soul to the devil - is the great German hero.' (*Washington Post*, 3 December 1944.)

ⁱⁱ Shakespeare, *Richard III*. New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1909, p. xlvi.

ⁱⁱⁱ It is the face of Michelangelo we see in Saint Peter's Basilica, not that of the Italian people which put the marble in its place. This is the main difference from the massive accumulations of stone built in Egypt not by men but a disindividualized society which, characteristically, poured most of its creative energy into the construction of tombs.

^{iv} John A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*. New York. The Modern library, 1935, vol. I, p. 55.

^v *Ibid.*, p. 56.

^{vi} F. A. Hyett quoted in G. F. Young, *The Medicis*. New York: The Modern Library 1933, p.278

^{vii} Alexandre Dumas, *Celebrated Crimes*. New York P. F. Collier and Son, 1910, vol 2, pp.425-9.

^{viii} Henry M. Baird, *History of the Rise of the Huguenots*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, vol 2, p. 501.

^{ix} *Ibid.*, p. 517.

^x This incident is related by Johann Wilhelm von Botzheim, a German student who attended the University of Orleans and, after deploring this sorry behaviour, traces with engaging sincerity his own books 'to the shelves of Laurent Godefroid, Professor of the Pandects, and the entire library of his brother Bernhard to those of his neighbour, Dr. Beaupied, Professor of Canon Law'. (*Ibid.*, p. 570.)

^{xi} Alexandre Dumas, *op. cit.*, vol.2, p. 496.

^{xii} Occasionally it is said that the particular depravity of German atrocities under the nazis lies in the fact that the Germans were the first to elevate mass extermination to the level of an officially sanctioned state policy. That they did so is beyond doubt. But they were preceded in this by every government responsible for directives of the kind of the orders of the French king 'to root out the heresy', or others mentioned in this chapter

^{xiii} Stephen Alexis, *Black Liberator*. New York Macmillan, 1949, p. 211.

^{xiv} Richmond (Virginia) *Times-Dispatch*, 8 June 1945.

^{xv} Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London: Methuen, 1900, vol.7, p.216n.

^{xvi} George P. Bible, *The Acadians*. Philadelphia: Ferris and Leach, 1906, p. 95.

^{xvii} A. Frank Reel, *The Case of General Yamashita*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949, p. 109.

^{xviii} *The Nation* (New York), 24 January 1920, p. 121.

^{xix} Quoted in an article by Simone de Beauvoir on the 'Sexual Initiation of Women', in *Anvil*, New York, Winter 1950, p.24, from the Uriel Report.

^{xx} The *New York Times* of 21 April 1950 reports: 'It was the first visit a British king made to Shakespeare's home town in the 386 years since the birth of the bard.'

^{xxi} *New Yorker*, 8 February 1947.

^{xxii} *Time*, 25 December 1950.

^{xxiii} Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son*. London: Penguin Books, 1949, p. 54.

^{xxiv} *Time*, 6 February 1950, p. 19.

^{xxv} *The Listener*, the official organ of the British Broadcasting Corporation, thought this highly indicative of the inherent war-mindedness of Germans. In an editorial commemorating Goethe's two-hundredth

anniversary it pointed out that Goethe 'served at one time as Minister of War' to the Duke of Weimar and was essentially a German and possessed most of the qualities and nearly all the defects of the German character...The grandson of an innkeeper, he praised aristocracy; servant of a defenceless principality, he commended war.' (*The Listener*, 25 August 1949, p. 300.) This statement exemplifies well the national theory in its World War II formulation.

^{xxvi} Francis Bacon, *Essays and New Atlantis*. New York: Walter Black, 1942, p. 121.

^{xxvii} *Time*, 22 January 1951.

^{xxviii} See compilation prepared by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: Memoranda Series No. 1, Washington, D.C., 1 February 1940. To give one example: between 1861 and 1945 aside from the Franco-Prussian and the two world wars, France was involved in the following wars: 1861-7 with Mexico, 1873-4 with Tongking, 1867 against Garibaldi in Rome, 1881-2 with Tunis, 1883-5 with Tongking, 1884-5 with China, 1883-5 with Madagascar 1890-4 with Sudan, 1893 with Siam, 1893-4 with Morocco, 1894 with Tongking, 1895-7 with Madagascar, 1900 Boxer Insurrection, 1897-1912 with Morocco, 1925-6 Riffian War. It may be said that none of these aggressions involved great powers, which is neither a sign of peaceful intentions nor a compliment.

^{xxix} P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. 1937, vol.3, p. 348. The table lists for each century studied the country with the largest army first and with the smallest last

- XII. Russia, England, France, Austria.
- XIII. Russia, England, France, Austria.
- XIV. England, France, Russia, Austria.
- XV. England, Poland, France, Russia, Austria, Spain.
- XVI. Spain, France, Austria, Poland, England, Russia, Holland, Italy.
- XVII. Austria, France, Spain, Poland, Holland, Russia, England, Italy.
- XVIII. Austria, France, Russia, England, Germany, Poland, Spain, Holland, Italy.
- XIX. France, Russia, Germany, Spain, Austria, England, Italy, Holland.
- XX. Russia, Germany, France, England, Austria, Italy, Spain, Holland.

^{xxx} *Ibid.*, p. 352. Sorokin's full list is as follows: Spain 67%, Poland and Lithuania 58%, Greece 57%, England 56%, France 50%, Russia 46%, Holland 44%, Rome 41%, Austria 40%, Italy 36%, Germany 28%. Regarding the almost constant involvement in war of France, the Duke of Sully, one of her most eminent statesmen, writes the following: 'The slightest knowledge of our history is sufficient to convince anyone that there is no real tranquillity in the kingdom from Henry III to the peace of Vervins; and, in short, all this long period may be called a war of near four hundred years' duration. After this examination, from whence it incontestably appears that our kings have seldom thought of anything but how to carry on their wars, we cannot be but scrupulous in bestowing on them the tide of truly great kings.' (*Memoirs of the Duke of Sully*. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856, vol. 4. p.223.)