

EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUESSY

SURRENDER TO WHOM?

1944

FIRST PART: GERMANY AS FOSTER CHILD OF THE WHOLE WORLD

CHAPTER ONE: MADESS BETTER THAN NON-EXISTENCE

I

1

*A house divided in itself cannot stand.*¹

And Allies who do not even room in one house yet, have no mailbox in which the letter of unconditional surrender could be posted.

2

The debate on peace terms has centered on the contents of the peace; it has neglected the issue in whose name it will be proposed. Shall Germany surrender to England, Russia, the United States and a little bit of France?

3

The Italians surrendered in this manner. The result was that Italy was divided as in Solomon's judgement between Hitler and Alexander.

4

To receive an unconditional surrender is not as simple as it sounds; one must have the power to dispose of the surrendered powers.

II

1

Who, then is this entity which can receive the incredibly efficient German body of economy, this going concern, going in the midst of ruins?

¹ Matthäus 12, 25

2

The oversight of this central question is inherent to abstract thinking. Our intellect always tries to state the truth objectively.

Politics, however, puts the truth which we represent as persons, first.

3

Mr. Dewey might have done most things very much in the way in which F. D. R. will do them. The true difference - never admitted by the intellect but always acted upon at the polls - is that it makes all the difference whether Dewey does it or Roosevelt.

4

Applied to the peace, the rule means that we still are at war because there is no real recipient of a German offer. The allies have not formed one ear to listen to Germany.

III

1

Accordingly, the Germans try to speak to every ally in his language. And Mr. Himmler felt pretty sure during the whole last year that eventually he could go Bolshevik and secure a separate peace.

2

What else can these people think?

Of course, they have lost the war. Of course, they must surrender. But if the British take the Ruhr, if the Americans flood Germany with their movies and school teachers, if the Russians keep Stettin (even though through a stooge), the Germans have no incentive to hasten the day of collapse.

3

It would be a collapse, they know, since there is nobody to whom the core of the historical Creature Germany, could surrender. It would disappear in a form free-for-all.

4

Created life does not dissolve in this manner. And so any German must say: Mad as this war is, mad as Hitler is, Germany still has some kind of sad existence and existence is preferable to non-existence.

IV

1

People who doubt this truth in their parlors where nothing is quite serious, may take out of their library the works of Lessing, the great German humanist and Philosemite, of Kleist, the violent Prussian, of Nietzsche, the good European. The place which in the United States is held by Patrick Henry's famous: "Give me liberty or give me death", is held in the middle of a crowded Europe by their unanimous choice of: "Madness is better than non-existence."

2

Madness appeals to the German because it is the only way of keeping alive at all. While Carnegie said: "Make money, my son. If you can, honestly, but make money", the German tradition in a small world without elbow room and without goldmines ran: "Keep alive, my son. If you may, reasonably; but keep alive."

3

And so, "Give me madness if non-existence is the only alternative," is a German recipe enacted before our eyes.

4

This lies behind the indescribable atrocities. They are more horrid than reported.

Germany has chosen madness.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WHOLE WORLD MUST SPEAK TO GERMANY

I

1

Germany will not surrender before it has come true beyond the shadow of a doubt that a lasting form has been established which will deal with German affairs in the name of the world. Neither Mr. Stalin nor Mr. Churchill nor Mr. Roosevelt represent anything but a single nation.

The Germans would have to see some firm reading "*The world*", before they could feel that they would not be submerged but merged.

2

The Germans are willing to surrender their army and their state to a world superior to the national state. This is the whole content of the "*Twilight of the Gods*". But they say that there is no family of nations to which the *prodigal son* can return.

3

And they are right so far. And Hitler and Himmler whose horizon ends inside the era of a world permanently divided in economics, will vanish on the very day that a world which can receive Germany as the really functions, has become articulate.

4

Is this possible?

The paradoxical answer is that it is possible and impossible both.

II

1

It is possible to have one world loosely organized for all political problems which might occur all over the globe; it is possible to organize the world effectively with regard to all the problems concerning Germany.

2

It is impossible to have one and the same organisation for both tasks.

China, India, Africa, South America, Alaska – how big and unsettled all these parts of the world are! China is perhaps now at the age of the Cluniacs in Europe, nine hundred years back.

How foolish it would be to organize a Superstate or even a league with right to dabble with the whole of politics.

3

We represent different stages of ripeness. Our life cycles differ. We must remain disunited politically.

The United States are unable to surrender one particle of their youthful expansiveness to some piece of paper. No superstate of the world is “ripe” at this hour.

4

Unfortunately, Americans always deal with the whole world in their schemes. Nothing seems worthwhile which is not conceived in comprehensive and universal terms.

III

1

This is the hypocrisy of Dumbarton Oaks. The solution found there is correct for the German situation; it is utopian for the world.

But the Americans thought that the formal inclusion of the whole field was needed.

2

By this quality of mind, we are apt to prolong the war with Germany. In the abstract, the world may be thought of as one. But it is nowhere ripe to be one except in one particular instance.

This particular instance is Germany.

3

Will Americans condescend to a particular form of world organ and sacrifice the generalities of a world organization in the abstract to this particular historical task?

Nobody is more cruel to history than the abstractionist. Millions can be killed, if only his abstraction remains unshaken. (May we plead with the ghost of Elihu Root, this finest and most abstract of the American idealists?)

4

Twice in a generation, the Germans have tried to find a world organ to speak to. They have preferred madness to the obsolete mythologies of national sovereignties.

IV

1

The Allies can put an end to the slaughter – the announcement of the United States in August 1939 that they would send ten thousand airplanes over, would have sufficed – then – if they construe a listening post, a receiving end whose existence is so indubitable that the Germans become convinced: this time the world has coalesced around us as the stumbling block.

2

All the symptoms point, unfortunately, in the opposite direction.

With the exception of Berlin, the military occupation is expected to be maintained by separate armies. Technically, this may be right and harmless. Politically, it is terrible to announce this procedure.

3

The Germans must realize that despite the different uniforms, one world speaks to them, in occupying them.

But in this case, the unity would have to be really real; unity cannot be a mere pretense. Such a lie is too easily found out.

4

This political or psychological mistake foreshadows the lasting mistake. I am afraid that Mr. Bidault is right when he thinks the great powers may grow tired of this occupation and leave the matter to France exactly as in 1923.

This would mean that the second world war was lost as the first.

CHAPTER THREE: EAR AND MOUTH

I

1

Why is this true?

Because these wars are the World Revolution made in Russia so often wrongly ascribed to the Bolsheviks. The World Revolution made in Russia is a very small part of the upheaval embodied in the period 1914 to 1944.

2

This World War Revolution was anti-ideological, anti-nationalistic.

3

It set out to overcome the partisan shouts of any one ideology. For this reason, it was not represented by any one party or nation but forced all of them, great and small, to become mere actors in its *Total Drama*.

4

And I mean *Total*. The so called totalitarianism is not understood if one does not see the ghost against which they all fought: the approaching One World made its entrance in the form of World Wars.

II

1

And these wars, in turn, prepared the permanent interaction of the world's economies.

2

In this sense, Hitler embodies the last counter-revolution, the World War Revolution.

Germany is the center of this earthquake of our time, not Russia. Bolshevism is peripheral compared to the pressures from the whole world pressing on central

Europe and compared to the fissures produced there under this pressure like the mad separation of Czechs and Germans within Bohemia.

Mad things had happened before the Germans went mad.

3

How long can Hitler's counter-revolution last?

As long as the pressures and fissures remain and produce the impression of a world in anarchy, left to accident.

The fifty and one voices of

*Japan, France, the United States, Chile,
Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary,
Italy, Spain, Sweden,
Soviet Russia, Poland, Ireland,
Baltic, Bulgaria, Canada,
Turkey, Argentine, Rumania,
Holland, Finland, Belgium,
China,*

pressed on Central Europe's daily routines by threatening economic changes from every corner of the compass at once.

4

All the divisions the United States have within and of which *the Ballad for Americans*² can make so much in pride and hope, attacked Germany from outside herself, not in the form of divisions but of pressures.

III

1

This made the *Witches Sabbath* complete. The very moment all these pressures become organized and articulate, they will appear normal and then Germany could calm down.

² 1939 "I'm just an Irish, Negro, Jewish, Italian, French and English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Polish, Scotch, Hungarian, Litwak, Swedish, Finnish, Canadian, Greek and Turk and Czech and double-check American – I was baptized Baptist, Methodist, Congregationalist, Lutheran, Atheist, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Presbyterian, Seventh-day Adventist, Mormon, Quaker, Christian Scientist – and lots more."

2

The impression of normalcy keeps our minds balanced. Anybody might have lost his mind, under the circumstances.

3

If the whole world as one partner will trade with Germany as the other partner, the world will have to constitute itself as the one correspondent of economic activities on the one end of the line; then, Germany can constitute herself as the other correspondent on the other.

4

This would give her orientation which now is lacking.

IV

1

To form ears and a mouth, is the permanent problem of organized society.

The abstract world organization of all the nations of the world would not have such real ear or mouth to talk to Germany because, in its theory, it would contain all the nations inside its organization. So, it would talk to none!

2

These kinds of world organizations are good for stamp collectors and post departments. They never add to the stature of their individual members. They presuppose their full fledged existence.

3

The organ which we have in mind, would do more: it would, by its very existence, give Germany a world status as the world's economic foundling.

4

The ear and the mouth which will make Germany respond immediately, must be visible and audible. They must have the authority to dispose of Germany's coal and

to import coffee or to hire two million German workers for the reconstruction of Russia etc. etc.

CHAPTER FOUR: WHEN WAR BREAKS OUT

I

1

This ear and this mouth will have to represent the economies of the world, despite their variety, as one Board of Production and Trade and Labor.

We deliberately say: *Production, trade, labor*. Money Banks won't do, this time. Money is a secondary question because the divisions of labor between the various economies is our stake in this world upheaval.

2

The form of wars which it has taken, must not blind us to the issue.

It had to be war because all the entrenched ideologies of the nations lead to be broken down sufficiently to hammer this unwanted fact home that a new degree in the division of labor needed acceptance.

3

The error of pure Capitalism was that it thought of itself as unlimitable.

The fallacy of pure Marxism has been to confuse the world revolution and the communist party activities.

The world revolution by world wars is a technical and material travail brought on by the Fords and the Pierpont Morgans and not by Earl Browder or Bridges.

4

Ownership of the proletariat, ownership by individuals? - utterly irrelevant questions compared to the greater human question of solidarity in the division of labor all over the globe.

The trade of the 19th century was a harmless man making and exploring the world's markets. Today, the degree to which the world shall divide its labor permanently, is paramount to every other consideration.

II

1

And this comes to a head in Germany. She cannot come back to reason without her finding some such division of labor explicitly articulated and organized.

She is, and I am utterly serious, no doubt a mental case. But she had plenty of reason to lose her mind.

2

I have advised her ever since 1918 to take the plunge into such a new dimension of her existence as the world's economic foster child. But only now do I fully realize how hostile the whole world was to this only way out for Germany.

3

*Russia wanted her to swallow communism,
the neutrals wanted her to be a nice little sovereign nation,
America wanted to invest in her,*

nobody wanted her as that which she actually was, the center of Europe and therefore the necessary first step in a gradual order of the whole world.

4

Don't we love our mind when we have not one person who recognizes our identity?

The one step which would have made her defeat in the first world war meaningful to her, was denied: the world spoke of tariffs to her between the two wars.

III

1

Tariffs are the opposite of the positive solution for which Germany held out:

In the division of labor, the self-supporting villages once appeared a great progress.

City and State organized economies.

Colonial and imperial economies followed.

Unions and continents superseded even these.

And now the world as one whole alone can determine the very existence of the German economy: the frame of reference within which Germany can find some rational existence is the whole world; this point needs full consideration; it means that Europe is too small for Germany.

2

Because Europe is not the frame of reference for the German problem, the dream of a United States of Europe is a dream of 1860. *The United States of Europe* – besides defeating the very ends for which America entered this struggle – would cheat mankind out of the real significance of this calamity.

3

The world and nothing but at least the Western World including Russia, the European nations, U. S. must make ready to receive as *One Recipient* the surrender of Germany.

She cries and will cry in the economic wilderness so long and so violently until the neighbors get together and answer collectively.

Then, all the military aspects of the struggle will collapse as though they never had been.

4

The bigness of a people's armies is colossal as long as their life is contained inside the territory defended by these armies.

But a people like a man always expects to disarm into the next integration in which these limitations no longer exist.

We humans are born peculiarly disarmed and feel pretty much that all our shining armor is of a transient nature. After which we disarm again since this is our more permanent nature.

IV

1

Sometimes wars may be unjust and wanton. But no all wars are wanton and superfluous. There shall be wars and Jesus brought a sword.

The justification of a righteous war is not a break of the peace but some indifference and isolation of parts finally destined for each other.

2

The world's nations were - and are - indifferent to each other's economies. They might even gloat over their own higher standards of living. War brings on the conflict which makes this indifference - or in the case of other wars some similar indifference - impossible.

3

War, for this reason, is not absolutely negative. It exposes some preceding lack of integration, some non-solidarity. It brings out the need for some further degree of solidarity.

4

We never seem to set war against its real background. We always compare war to peace and then, we reject it. But the Roman Empire certainly created by terrible wars the first unity in which Christianity could have been possibly understood.

No Christ without Caesar.

Hence it is worth noting that wars do not break out for the things peacefully settled. They break out for the things not yet settled at all.

SECOND PART: AFTER A RIGHTEOUS WAR

I

1

These World Wars are fought on an issue never raised before: *How far is one division of labor to comprise the whole western world?*

All the other issues are minor compared to this one.

2

Of course, the cultural lag produced by universal education always delays the recognition of a new war issue. For, our school teachers are expected to teach the children the ideals of their parents and grandparents. And this is influential when most of the people who mould public opinion, mistake textbooks of history for actual experience.

3

Hence, it happens that the real issue is overlaid for a long time by so called war aims. In the listing of war aims, the parties concerned simply dream out loud their wishes.

War aims are extensions of the prewar world in the interest of one of the two parties.

4

Unfortunately, all the time, this prewar world recedes from reality by the war itself. Finally, the changes wrought by the devastation become so impressive that the wish-dreams disappear or shrink at least do dimensions in which peace on the real issue becomes possible.

II

1

This time, for twenty years, all the mere extension dreams of the prewar world had their say. All these dreams have more and more disunited the world.

Perhaps, the human mind, by now, may be willing to replace the mechanical term of post-war reconstruction by the more religious question: how can we listen to the

issue raised by the war itself, rewardless of our religious or philosophical or political or economic preferences and predilections?

2

After a righteous war, there simply is no reconstruction of our own houses of cards. A war should make epoch. And out of its sacrifices, a new, unthought-of order grows.

3

Wars speak louder than the schemes of Mr. Ziff or Mr. Rosenberg or Mr. Vansittert.

This time, the choice is between an all inclusive abstract plan for a world league or the creation of a world office authorized to take decisions for the world, Inc., in its economic dealings with Germany.

History moves forward by specific institutions. It collapses from abstract generalities.

4

The very minute the Germans can see and touch and believe that the divisions of capitalism and communism are shelved and that the world recognizes the task of common work by setting up the office to which Germany can effectively respond economically, the Germans no longer need their army.

III

Then, despite their situation surrounded by innumerable states, they can surrender since for them, the world then would have become one.

Before, they can't.

LETTER BY ARNOLD WOLFERS

(in Freya von Moltke's handwriting: *Has this to do with Surrender To Whom?*)

YALE UNIVERSITY
NEW HAVEN CONNECTICUT
PIERSON COLLEGE
THE MASTER

January 30th 1945

Professor Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy
Four Wells
Norwich, Vermont

Dear Eugen,

Yesterday morning your two memos arrived and I spent a most exciting day with them - my thought stimulated both in the direction of hearty agreement and in the direction of criticism and questioning.

I have missed the companionship of your imaginative mind for a long time and was glad that the silence was broken.

I

1

Before going into any of the practical problems, let me throw out some of my views.

I was, of course, delighted to find you at my side on many theses which I have been trying to defend. I sought in vain to convince Dorothy Thompson that the United States of Europe offers no solution. Practically all of the German Refugee Scholars have been on her side, all insisting on identifying the European problem with the German problem. You are the first to take the small powers of Europe, my special protégés, seriously.

Of course I am with you in your fight against the abstract Utopias, the *Dumbarton Oaks* universalists, the economic monomaniacs. I like your idea of the *polyglot world*; I also agree that the age of closed, self-centered, sovereign national states, if it ever existed, is over. Even the Nazis, who tried to create a state according to this concept, had their international Fascism and their New Order.

I am all with you when you say that Germany cannot become a second Sweden. I am equally convinced that she cannot forever be forced into the position of a great power deprived of military strength - a kind of crippled, would-be great power in a

straight-jacket. I saw no other alternative but to keep her in confinement until she would be willing to join as a satisfied member the world concert of great powers.

2

But I have been skeptical about my own solution since, if Poland annexes large sections of eastern Germany, Germany cannot become satisfied with her new status except on the grounds of another partition of Poland.

I was full of happy anticipation, therefore, when I found you suggesting that there might be another solution – a special German solution which would make her neither a resigned small country nor a crippled great power nor an equal of the world powers.

You have circumscribed this novel and unique solution by demanding that Germany be transformed into a “*global land*”, a “*world organ*” and, more specifically, a “*buffer economy*”. The trouble with your proposal is that you have not made clear at all what you mean by a “*peculiar buffer economy*” for the benefit of all the other economies.

Apparently this economy is to be run by a world production board. It would not, therefore, give the Germans the “German leadership ... in economics” which you hold out to them on Page 27. Even economically they would be a world colony.

3

Why capitalist America and communist Russia should be able to agree on how to run this buffer economy also remains an open question. You seem to assume that the Germans will be satisfied with it in the same way that they were satisfied with their status in the days of the *Holy Roman Empire*, but the political and military framework in those days was their empire and not the hegemony of other world powers.

You speak a great deal about the division of labor between various economies. Is Germany to become the great producer of consumer’s goods while the guarantors of the peace produce the arms and weapons? Is the standard of living in Germany to be decided by Germany’s competitive economic ability at a time when she can concentrate exclusively on her economic enterprise?

4

Excuse me for putting forward these awkward, practical questions, but knowing my friends here I realize that those are the questions which will immediately come to their minds.

I can see why the London Times might have liked your idea; there is a large group in England which believes one need only to give the German people economic prosperity and they will resign themselves to a pariah position for their country in political and military matters.

I know that that is not your view; on the contrary, you are trying to find a way by which the Germans could see their nation embarked on a great pioneer mission for the society of the future. That, I agree with you, is the least that would be needed if they are to resign themselves to military impotence.

I believe that you have hinted at the direction in which a solution should be sought. I don't think you have actually described it.

II

1

But now let me turn to the practical aspects of publication.

Your memo in its present size is too small for a book or separate publication and too large for a magazine article. I don't know whether you think it should be read by the policy makers or by the broad reading public. In both cases there would be better chance for reaching their ear if it could be published in a magazine with reprints going to the policy makers.

The other alternative would be to increase it to book size, but that, I realize, would be a long and difficult enterprise.

2

In my opinion your memo contains at least three magazine articles, each dealing with a different subject. It would make an excellent series. One would deal with the *polyglot peace*³, another with *the economy of economies*. The two might, however, be handled together.

3

And then there is the problem of Germany within this broader framework. It would be possible, I believe, to cut down your present memorandum to the size of a magazine article, if it were concentrated on the German problem. Now it contains so many ideas on so many subjects that most readers would be bewildered.

³ see Rosenstock- Huessy, *Mad Economics or: Polyglot Peace*, 1944

I realize that they all belong together in your total view of the future world situation, but the German problem could be understood and would be better understood if it were not embedded in so many ideas to which the reader might take objection.

4

I should add, however, again that in my opinion the German solution could not be presented effectively without some more specifications about the "buffer economy", its purpose, its organization, the part Germany will play in it.

Also I feel the term, "social autonomy" is unfortunate because it is too unfamiliar. I don't know why you substituted it for cultural autonomy which at least has gained some determined usage.

III

1

I hope you will forgive me for having been so frank in my criticism. I wish I could sit down and go over the manuscript with you page by page and paragraph by paragraph.

Perhaps you would find in the end that I had spoiled everything by dragging it down into the unimaginative lingo of my profession, but after all, you want to reach the reader and influence policy.

2

I am sending you two more articles which I have published and which you may not have. I would like you to read them only for the purpose of discovering for yourself to what extent we see eye to eye in the matters in which we are both so passionately concerned.

3

In any case, I have found your suggestion of a unique solution for Germany which would help in the transformation and integration of the world most hope-inspiring and of striking originality.

Hoping to hear from you soon, and with kindest regards to both of you, I remain,

As ever yours,
Arnold Wolfers

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Letter of Arnold Wolfers January 30th 1945

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SENTENCES

History moves forward by specific institutions. It collapses from abstract generalities.

It had to be war because all the entrenched ideologies of the nations lead to be broken down sufficiently to hammer this unwanted fact home that a new degree in the division of labor needed acceptance.

No Christ without Caesar.

The justification of a righteous war is not a break of the peace but some indifference and isolation of parts finally destined for each other.

To form ears and a mouth, is the permanent problem of organized society.

War aims are extensions of the prewar world in the interest of one of the two parties.

NOTE

1

One could say: he was the only one to give voice to the need of the hour 1944: born of Jewish parents, baptized, war veteran of the First World War, combating for what he saw, believed, stood for: the World War as World Revolution from 1918 to 1933, emigrating from Germany 1933, immigrating to the United States 1933, combating again for the new approach to social creation of ear and mouth, having lost his mother 1938 in Berlin, with his wife and son living in Norwich, Vermont, teaching at Dartmouth College, friend of many soldiers in the Second World War against Hitler.

2

The letter of Arnold Wolfers attached to this speech (or paper) by Freya von Moltke shows how difficult it was (and is) to understand this full voice of historical man: even the well meant answer destroys the full content and weight of the argument.

And - one might add - we in Germany wait to this form of peace until now (and longer): the united voice of America, Russia, Great Britain and France, who were united in being the occupation forces and envisaged as unity during the time of 1945 even unto 1990, is no longer there, the solution of Dumbarton Oaks where the UNO was planned during the weeks of August 21st to October 7th - i.e. following this memo of Rosenstock-Huessy's half a year later - is still envisaged as well as the solution of Dorothy Thompson and the German refugees, a united Europe.

3

The paper is here presented in a form which might ease the understanding the "bewildering" lot of ideas, as Arnold Wolfers said. Here you might here the voice, calling for the building of ear and mouth for the problem of Germany. The text is articulated according to the change of tone and adverting to the cross of reality - as Rosenstock-Huessy practised it - calling for attention, making certain of being heard, proposing what is to be said, summing up for memory what has been said.

And this process on more than one level: parts, chapters, segments and paragraphs.

4

The table of contents, the names, the pithy sentences may facilitate forming the answer in the reader: what he (or she) has to do after having read this paper.

Cologne, February 21th, 2018 (fortyfive years after Rosenstock-Huessy's death – he was fortyfive when he left Berlin in 1933)

Eckart Wilkens